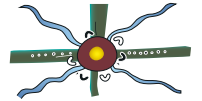




Western Australian
AIDS COUNCIL



NGALA KAADITJ WADJUK MOORT KEYEN KAADAK NIDJA BOODJA

We acknowledge Noongar people as the original custodians of the land on which our office sits

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Publication

Friday 9th February 2018

ONCE A DAY PILL THAT PREVENTS HIV APPROVED BY PBAC

The Western Australian AIDS Council applauds the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee's (PBAC) positive recommendation to list Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), announced today.

PrEP is taken once-daily and is highly effective at preventing HIV transmission with 99 per cent effectiveness among gay and bisexual men. However, until now access to the medicine has been patchy. The full commercial cost has been prohibitively expensive at almost \$5,000 per year. Australian PrEP users have mainly accessed it through state and territory trials or online imports.

Today's recommendation will make PrEP available and affordable to people most at risk of HIV through their GP, with the Australian Government committed to implementing the PBAC decision.

"Making PrEP available and affordable is not only a public health goal, it will also save millions of dollars. Access to PrEP makes enormous financial sense. A single averted HIV transmission will save the Australian taxpayer \$1,000,000 in lifetime costs," said Darryl O'Donnell, chief executive of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. "However, this is only the beginning of the end. We need coordinated leadership and resources to achieve Australia's true potential of ending HIV transmission. The challenge now is to spread the message about PrEP to everyone who needs it."

It is important to remember that subsidised PrEP will not be available in local pharmacies for several months. People who would believe that are at risk of HIV and would like to use PrEP can do so through a number of methods in Western Australia.

1. Enrol in the Western Australian Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Implementation Trial (PrEPIT-WA). This is available to people living in metropolitan and regional Western Australia.
2. For people not eligible for the trial, they can see a specialised GP and purchase generic PrEP online through personal importation.

More information on finding a GP that prescribes PrEP, personal importation of PrEP, and how to access the PrEP trial can be found at www.WAAIDS.com, www.MClinic.org.au and www.PrEPIT-WAstudy.org.au.

The WA AIDS Council will provide updates on news relating to PrEP being available through the PBS. You can sign up to the WA AIDS Council newsletter if you'd like to receive updates straight to your email, or follow the WA AIDS Facebook page.

ENDS

The WA AIDS Council can be contacted for information on how the PBAC decision affects WA and the PrEPIT-WA trial. (M Clinic Manager, Justin Manuel, 08 9328 9720, jmanuel@waids.com).

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) can be contacted for information on how the PBAC recommendation affects the national access arrangements for PrEP. (AFAO Media Contact, Nick Lucchinelli, 0422 229 032, nick@hortonadvisory.com.au).