

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Implementation in New England: A Snapshot

CONNECTICUT

Since the 2014 Connecticut PrEP Summit, the CT Department of Public Health has expanded the CT PrEP Provider list (http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/aids_and_chronic/prevention/pdf/prep_services.pdf) that is also available on the Positive Prevention CT website (<http://positivepreventionct.org/uploads/files/prep3-23-15.pdf>). The DPH is participating in an upcoming webinar on June 4, 2015 in collaboration with Fenway Health on PrEP implementation and health departments (<http://tinyurl.com/june4PrEPwebinar>). In addition, the CT DPH is currently finalizing a PrEP print material and bus ad campaign. Finally, the CT DPH will be hosting the 2nd PrEP Summit on October 29th, 2015.

MASSACHUSETTS

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of HIV/AIDS is doing the following to advance PrEP as a prevention strategy:

- Implemented a Community of Practice, which is comprised of clinicians, providers, researchers, health educators and consumers who advise MDPH on how to implement PrEP as a prevention intervention in a public health framework.
- Engaged with eight PrEP implementing sites. Each site has presented to the Community of Practice and MDPH on the status of their efforts, to promote provider buy-in, policies/procedures/protocol developed, implementation lessons, barriers/supports and partnerships related to PrEP.
- Applied for CDC grant for Health Department Demonstration Projects to Reduce HIV Infections and Improve Engagement in Medical Care among Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) and Transgender Persons. Massachusetts is eligible for the component to scale-up PrEP services primarily for MSM and transgender persons at high risk for HIV infection.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The state of New Hampshire has undertaken several efforts in 2015 to increase knowledge and access for consumers seeking PrEP services in NH, as well as provide additional information for clinicians interested in providing PrEP to their patients. The statewide HIV Planning Group (HPG) has conferred the development of a "PrEP" ad hoc subcommittee. The committee is made up of clinicians, service providers, health department representatives and consumers from across NH and meets regularly. The PrEP committee is currently gathering information about available resources for consumers and providers and working on the development of a NH PrEP webpage that will make these resources readily and easily available. Specifically, NH is developing resources on clinical guidelines and assessment, implementation and billing/cost and evaluation. The website will also serve as the central repository for updates on where PrEP services can be accessed in NH. The PrEP committee will also be working with the HPG to bring some clinician and consumer specific training to NH in the near future.

Questions/issues for discussion:

1. Cost and coverage for PrEP services
2. How do we get primary care providers to get interested and educated about PrEP and feel comfortable providing PrEP to appropriate patients?

RHODE ISLAND

Through the leadership of Dr. Philip A. Chan, The Miriam Hospital STD Clinic represents the primary location in Rhode Island for individuals to receive PrEP services. Background clinical information and the benefits of PrEP are described on the Rhode Island Department of Health website (<http://www.health.ri.gov/diseases/hiv aids/for/providers/>). In addition, there are two websites for the general public that include PrEP information: a special website designed by Dr. Chan (www.DoltRight.org), and a gay men's health website created AIDS Project RI (<http://www.men2menri.org/play-safe/pep-prep/>). The Rhode Island Department of Health promotes PrEP services by referring partners of newly diagnosed HIV cases to The Miriam Hospital STD Clinic, as appropriate. Dr. Chan conducts an assessment and prepares a plan for ongoing medical care/evaluation of potential PrEP patients. In 2014/2015 the RI Department of Health plans to work with Dr. Chan to determine what unmet PrEP needs exist in Rhode Island and how to build capacity to meet this need in the future.

VERMONT

The Vermont Department of Health has been deeply invested in the topic of PrEP since its initial release by the FDA. Through the work that the Vermont Department of Health has done with Vermont's integrated Care and Prevention HIV, STI, and Hepatitis Community Advisory Group (CAG), CAG has endorsed PrEP as a significant tool for HIV prevention. The Vermont Department of Health is currently working to update webpages to disseminate information regarding PrEP and its support of it to consumers and medical providers. Also, the department continues to educate medical providers and consumers regarding the benefits of PrEP. Additionally, all cases that are interviewed by the Vermont Department of Health's STI Disease Investigation Specialists are assessed and if appropriate referred to a medical provider to obtain PrEP. Finally, with the support of CAG, the Vermont Department of Health will make PrEP a part of the core components of the next Request Fund Proposal for HIV Prevention that is anticipated to be released in June of 2016.

Questions/issues for discussion:

1. The CDC has endorsed PrEP – when will they allow HIV prevention funds to go towards supporting PrEP for individuals in which it is medically appropriate or where insurance is a barrier?
2. Condom Distribution is a part of core programming of PS12-1201. In the next iteration of funds, should PrEP also be in the same mandated core programming as condom distribution?