



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PrEP HIV Prevention Now Available Directly from Illinois Pharmacists

Standing order from IDPH will make lifesaving HIV prevention drugs more accessible

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has issued a standing order that will allow Illinoisans to obtain the HIV preventive medication known as PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) directly from a pharmacist without first requiring a doctor's prescription.

PrEP is one of the most effective means of preventing HIV infection. Studies have shown that when taken as directed, it reduces the risk of HIV infection through sexual transmission by as much as 99 percent. The order, signed by IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra, will make it easier for people at risk of exposure to HIV to obtain either of the two oral medications used in the PrEP regimen. It also streamlines the process for pharmacists to receive reimbursement for providing PrEP services.

HIV remains a concern in the state, although the picture is improving under Governor JB Pritzker's Getting to Zero Illinois (GtZ) program, with a goal of zero new HIV transmissions in the state by the year 2030. In 2024, there were 1,386 new diagnoses of the virus statewide, down nine percent from the previous year. Unfortunately, new infections disproportionately impact Black and Hispanic communities, accounting for more than 60% of new infections annually. IDPH's PrEP4IL program provides medication assistance to relieve financial burdens for those in need of PrEP. There were more than 900 new applications for the program last year, with significant growth among Black and Hispanic populations. The new standing order represents another important step to improve access to PrEP for individuals at highest risk.

"IDPH continues to value the leadership of Governor JB Pritzker and our tremendous partnerships across Illinois all striving to help our State get to zero," said Director Vohra. "IDPH is very proud of our PrEP4IL program and the impact it is making to reduce HIV rates. This standing order now takes our efforts even further, opening additional doors of access so more individuals and communities can have the opportunity to take this preventative treatment and dramatically reduce their risk of acquiring HIV."

The Illinois Pharmacy Act authorizes pharmacists to provide PrEP if there is a standing order approved by a physician or, as in this case, by the IDPH Director. Under the protocols set up by statute and authorized by the standing order, any pharmacist wishing to offer the service must undergo a training program, following the conditions outlined. Training will include how to provide these services in a private and



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confidential environment, order and interpret the necessary tests, and maintain records as required under the Act. IDPH will be collecting information on the utilization of this standing order through a reporting form designed for pharmacists. Oral PrEP is a regimen most commonly taken as one pill per day which can prevent at-risk persons from contracting HIV. Those considered at-risk are people who are HIV-negative but may have other risk factors such as:

- Have a sexual partner who is HIV-positive.
- Have partner who injects drugs.
- Don't use condoms consistently.
- Were diagnosed with an STI (sexually transmitted infection) in the past six months.
- Share injection drug equipment (needles, cookers, syringes, etc.).

Persons seeking more information about PrEP can visit the IDPH website at [Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis \(PrEP\)](#). For information on the state's PrEP Assistance Program, contact IDPH's HIV Section PrEP Helpline at **1-833-773-7445 (1-833-PREP4IL)**, by email at DPH.PrEP4IL@illinois.gov or through the website www.PrEPforIllinois.com.

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