



For Immediate Release

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APLA Health Releases New Report Showing Significant Disparities in PrEP Awareness and Use Among Young Gay and Bisexual Men in California

Majority of participants in a statewide survey were interested in taking PrEP, but less than 10% had ever used it; black and Latino men faced more barriers to accessing PrEP

(Los Angeles; September 12, 2016)—APLA Health, in partnership with the University of California HIV/AIDS Research Program (CHRP), today released a new report on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) titled “Addressing PrEP Disparities among Young Gay and Bisexual Men in California.” The report includes results from a statewide survey of over 600 young gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (YMSM) and examines current levels of PrEP awareness and use, likelihood of use, as well as barriers to PrEP access.

PrEP uses a well-established antiretroviral medication, Truvada, to block HIV infection in HIV-negative individuals. PrEP is a highly effective HIV prevention tool that could dramatically reduce new HIV infections among YMSM. The results of the study, however, indicate that less than 10% of YMSM in California have used PrEP and blacks and Latinos are significantly less likely to be aware of PrEP than their white counterparts. Black and Latino YMSM are among the groups at highest risk for HIV in California and across the United States.

“PrEP has the potential to help end the HIV epidemic in California and yet too few of those most at risk for HIV—especially young gay and bisexual men of color—are accessing it,” Dr. George Lemp, director of CHRP, said. “The California HIV/AIDS Research Program is pleased to have supported this important study about PrEP uptake in California.”

The report's key findings include:

- **PrEP awareness is lower among black, Latino, and younger YMSM.** Nearly three-quarters (73%) of participants in the study were aware of PrEP. However, PrEP

awareness was significantly lower among blacks and Latinos compared to whites. PrEP awareness was also significantly lower among the youngest men in the study, ages 18–21, in comparison to their older counterparts.

- **PrEP use is low, especially among Latino and younger YMSM.** About 1 in 10 participants reported using PrEP (9.6%), but PrEP use was significantly lower among Latinos compared to whites. PrEP use was also significantly lower among YMSM ages 18–21 compared to the older men in the study.
- **YMSM are interested in taking PrEP.** The majority (55.9%) of YMSM in the study said they were highly likely to use PrEP if it were available to them, and they demonstrated favorable attitudes toward PrEP.
- **YMSM don't know where or how to access PrEP.** Over half of participants indicated not knowing where to go to get a PrEP prescription (59.3%) or how to find a doctor who could give them a PrEP prescription (56.4%), with blacks and Latinos being significantly more likely to indicate lack of knowledge in comparison to whites.
- **YMSM have concerns about PrEP's safety, efficacy, and cost.** The majority of participants said they were concerned about side effects from taking PrEP (63.4%) and that PrEP is only partially effective (58.4%). Over half (58.9%) of participants felt they would not be able to afford PrEP.

“These results clearly show that young gay and bisexual men are interested in taking PrEP if they know about it and can easily access it,” APLA Health Chief Executive Officer Craig E. Thompson said. “We must eliminate social and structural barriers to this highly effective HIV prevention tool. APLA Health is proud to take a leadership role in making sure that everyone who wants or needs PrEP is able to benefit from it.”

The report's key recommendations include:

1. Targeted education campaigns and strategies are needed to increase PrEP awareness and uptake, especially among black and Latino, low-income, and non-gay-identified YMSM.
2. PrEP access points must be available throughout the state, particularly in communities of color, and provider directories should be widely publicized.
3. PrEP navigation services tailored to the needs of YMSM of color are essential, and must include screening for and enrollment in health coverage.
4. PrEP education must provide clear and consistent information on side effects and efficacy.
5. California should use public funds to help pay for PrEP, including PrEP-related clinical ancillary services.

The full report is available [here](#).

The policy brief is available [here](#).

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About APLA Health

APLA Health's mission is to achieve health care equity and promote well-being for the LGBT and other underserved communities and people living with and affected by HIV. We are a nonprofit, federally qualified health center serving more than 14,000 people annually. We provide 20 different services from 15 locations throughout Los Angeles County, including: medical, dental, and behavioral health care; PrEP counseling and management; health education and HIV prevention; and STD screening and treatment. For people living with HIV, we offer housing support; benefits counseling; home health care; and the Vance North Necessities of Life Program food pantries; among several other critically needed services. Additionally, we are leaders in advocating for policy and legislation that positively impacts the LGBT and HIV communities, provide capacity-building assistance to health departments across the country, and conduct community-based research on issues affecting the communities we serve. For more information, please visit us at aplahealth.org.