TuSalud

CDC Launches Its PrEP HIV Program by Granting Funds to Five Health Departments

Five grantees, all in the South, will receive about $2 million each in federal funding for PrEP programs to prevent HIV.

October 8, 2024 By Trent Straube

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced the five health departments that will receive federal funding to provide generic pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV as part of a pilot program, according to a joint press statement by four PrEP advocacy groups. Each will receive about $2 million.

The CDC had announced the PrEP grant opportunity in August, requesting that health departments of interested jurisdictions apply for the funding.

The five recipients of the CDC's debut PrEP program are the health departments of:

- Baltimore, Maryland
- Houston, Texas
- Florida
- Oklahoma
- South Carolina.

According to the original CDC request for applications, recipients had to be in jurisdictions already receiving funding for the Ending the HIV Epidemic in the United States initiative. That initiative targets counties, cities and other jurisdictions that experience a disproportionate number of new HIV cases and are thus prime recipients of PrEP efforts. As PrEP4All noted in August, the CDC initiative "marks the first time that jurisdictions will be able to purchase affordable, high-quality generic medications—priced at less than $20 per month—to create a commonsense public health approach to PrEP scale-up that avoids navigating complex, fragmented coverage options."

PrEP4All, @PrEPInBlkUS, @HIVMA, and @HIVpxresearch applaud @CDC_HIV for PrEP pilot launch.

Read our joint statement here: https://t.co/hPvVJr5edy

— PrEP4All (@PrEP4AllNow) October 4, 2024

Originally, the notification stated that a total of $7 million would be available for four recipients. By the deadline, a total of 17 health departments had applied. With demand so high, the CDC boosted its investment and added a fifth recipient, according to the press statement by AVAC, HIVMA, PrEP4All and PrEP in Black America.

“The fact that so many health departments took the time to apply for this funding with a short one-month submission window shows how badly jurisdictions need more funding for equitable PrEP access,” PrEP4All executive director Jeremiah Johnson said in the announcement. “Unfortunately, this pilot is a one-time funding opportunity that only scratches the surface of what is required to expand PrEP access and end HIV as an epidemic nationally. We urge members of Congress, the administration and other key policymakers to find additional funds to address this demonstrated need by broadening this pilot right away and fully funding a national PrEP program.”

“I think what is particularly exciting here is that the states and cities chosen have a real need for innovative approaches to PrEP access,” added John Meade, senior program manager for policy at AVAC and a cofounder of PrEP in Black America. “Four of the five locations have not expanded Medicaid, meaning that a program emphasizing simplified access for un- and underinsured individuals can make a real difference in the lives of people who don’t have the time to navigate broken and fragmented cost-coverage options that make PrEP access impossible for so many individuals.”

“It’s not lost on us that this announcement comes just as more and promising scientific developments in long-acting injectable forms of PrEP become available,” explained Danielle M. Campbell, science equity activist, researcher and cofounding organizer of PrEP in Black America. “We must acknowledge that in the U.S., there is a longstanding history of innovative preventive health interventions not reaching the communities who need them the most, in particular Black people. The establishment of this kind of PrEP infrastructure creates an opportunity for greater coordination of access to other essential disease prevention innovations, such as novel PrEP, doxyPEP [doxycycline as post-exposure prophylaxis] for the prevention of bacterial STIs [sexually transmitted infections] and mpox vaccination and treatment.”

To date, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved three forms of PrEP: Truvada and

Descovy are daily pills, and Apretude is a shot given every two months. Generic (and much cheaper) versions of Truvada are available. To learn more about PrEP, see the POZ Basics on HIV Prevention: Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).

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