

National Coalition Announces Initiative to Help Community Pharmacies Expand HIV Prevention Services

Rx for Change aims to increase PrEP access. It launches with a pilot in Georgia and Louisiana, two states with high rates of new HIV case.

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Public health leaders from Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health, [AIDS United](#), the [Black Public Health Academy](#), and the [National Pharmaceutical Association](#) announced Wednesday a new initiative to help community pharmacies expand HIV prevention services in communities disproportionately impacted by HIV.

Rx for Change is a community-centered and led strategy that will engage pharmacies and community-based organizations, through a comprehensive training and partnership model, to increase access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and other HIV prevention services. The initiative will begin with a pilot in Georgia and Louisiana, two states experiencing high rates of new HIV diagnoses.

The launch of Rx for Change coincides with Georgia Senate Bill 195 [being signed into law](#) on May 5. The new law authorizes pharmacists in Georgia to prescribe HIV prevention medications such as PrEP and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). It also helps expand the role of pharmacists as frontline health care providers and increases access to prevention services in communities with limited health care infrastructure. By allowing pharmacists to prescribe PrEP, it provides a new pathway for individuals to access HIV prevention services quickly, conveniently, and confidentially. Louisiana enacted a similar law in 2024.

[Research shows](#) community pharmacies are uniquely positioned to expand HIV prevention services because they offer a convenient and cost-effective way to connect individuals to prevention services, particularly in communities where access to traditional health care settings is limited.

[Natalie Crawford, PhD](#), associate professor at Rollins, says expanding pharmacy-based HIV prevention services could increase PrEP access points by as much as 80-fold in the southeastern U.S. since nearly 90% of Americans live within five miles of a pharmacy.

Rx for Change will help close persistent gaps in HIV prevention by integrating HIV testing and

prevention services into routine pharmacy care, providing enhanced workforce training, and strengthening partnerships between pharmacies and community-based organizations.

“Legislative health policies are only meaningful when they translate into improved outcomes for the communities they are designed to serve. Community-based organizations are uniquely positioned to partner with pharmacies as trusted voices in expanding access, strengthening service delivery, and helping lead the way to end new HIV diagnoses,” says [Leisha McKinley-Beach](#), founder of the Black Public Health Academy.

Rx for Change—which is supported in part by the [Elton John AIDS Foundation](#) and [Merck](#)—will provide participating pharmacies specialized training to integrate HIV testing, PrEP initiation, and prevention education into routine pharmacy services. Community-based organizations will receive training focused on community-led outreach, education, and referral strategies to increase awareness of PrEP and its availability at pharmacies.

“Pharmacists are medication experts that have been instrumental in managing patients being treated for HIV/AIDS and decreasing the spread of the virus since it was officially recognized almost 45 years ago,” says [Tamara McCants, PharmD](#), president of National Pharmaceutical Association. “This collaborative initiative strengthens the efforts of pharmacy personnel to deliver enhanced HIV prevention services in historically underserved communities of the South.”

Community pharmacies and organizations interested in participating in the Rx for Change initiative should email: RxforChange@emory.edu.

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