Implementing a Community-engaged Equity Approach to Identify Barriers and Facilitators to the PrEP Care Continuum in Long Beach, CA

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Background

• **Ending the HIV Epidemic Primary Pillar: Prevent**

• This study aims to address the HIV epidemic by improving consistent PrEP use along the care continuum (i.e., *initiation to effective adherence*) among Black and Latinx same-gender loving men, transgender women, and other gender-diverse persons in Long Beach, CA who are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS yet, according to the CDC, have low engagement in the HIV Prevention Continuum.

• Notwithstanding extensive scholarship on PrEP-related attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in various populations, there is a paucity of information about the systems, community contexts, and individual factors affecting consistent PrEP use by Black and Latinx individuals in places such as Long Beach.

• Our research team engaged in an equity-focused approach to identifying PrEP-related needs through partnerships with the community: the Long Beach Comprehensive HIV Planning Group’s PrEP and Trans Wellness Workgroups, which include individuals affected by HIV.

• This is a mixed methods, exploratory study that combines elements of the PRISM (Practical, Robust Implementation and Sustainability Model) and EPIS (Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, Sustainment) frameworks.
1) Among community members, what are the experiences and perceived barriers resulting in low engagement along the PrEP care continuum?

2) Among existing and potential PrEP providers, what are the gaps and feasibility of providing culturally tailored PrEP-related services?

3) How can barriers be addressed effectively?
Study Methods

• Conduct focus groups (n=~30 participants) with Black and Latinx same-gender loving men, transgender women, and other gender-diverse persons, and interviews (n=25) with PrEP providers (HIV prevention clinicians, PrEP navigators, pharmacists, other providers less familiar with PrEP) to explore barriers to and facilitators of PrEP engagement.

• To obtain, using survey methods, locally relevant estimates of the scope and magnitude of PrEP experiences, barriers and facilitators, and services (n=400).

• To disseminate and implement study results to increase PrEP care continuum engagement in ways that are contextualized for the Long Beach community.
Anticipated Study Outcomes

**IS Outcomes:** Acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility (for providers) of providing culturally-appropriate PrEP services.

1) Inform the Long Beach HIV Prevention Strategic Plan;
2) Develop a culturally-appropriate PrEP readiness and facilitation tool; and
3) Identify future intervention opportunities to increase PrEP care continuum engagement in ways that are meaningful for the Long Beach community.

**Potential outcomes for future research:** Service - equity in availability and quality, patient-centeredness, and effectiveness of PrEP services, and clinical/patient – satisfaction and increased engagement (function).
Progress to Date

- Community-engaged process to develop focus group and interview guides
- IRB submission
- Begin provider interviews in December 2022
- Focus groups to begin early 2023
Thank you!

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