

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 2, 2016

Public Health Launches PrEP Centers of Excellence to Help Stop the Spread of HIV in Los Angeles County

LOS ANGELES—The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is taking critical steps to expand access to biomedical prevention options for Los Angeles County residents at highest risk for HIV infection. On Tuesday, August 2, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved contracts to fund 14 Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Centers of Excellence in areas with the highest rates of HIV infection.

PrEP is a once-daily medication (Truvada®) taken by persons who do not have HIV but who are at substantial risk of getting it to prevent HIV infection. When taken daily, this HIV prevention method is up to 99% effective. Despite its effectiveness and growing popularity, there remains a need to increase PrEP use nationally and in Los Angeles County in order to make significant progress in the fight against HIV.

“LA County continues to experience the second largest HIV epidemic in the country,” said LA County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl. “No single prevention program will completely curtail the spread of HIV, but expanding the use of PrEP could significantly reduce new infections. I am very glad to see our efforts go beyond the County’s own Public Health clinics, to engage our community-based health providers who can effectively reach the populations at greatest risk, including those who lack insurance.”

Financial barriers to PrEP present a barrier to access; it is cost-prohibitive for uninsured persons and many individuals with insurance still face high co-payments and deductibles. The PrEP Centers of Excellence will provide medical services related to PrEP for uninsured and underinsured patients and offer health insurance navigation and enrollment for individuals eligible for Medi-Cal and Covered California. These clinics will also offer post-exposure prophylaxis, or PEP, and refer patients with substance abuse and mental health service needs to appropriate providers.

“Public Health is excited to fund our community partners to make PrEP more accessible to low-income and uninsured Los Angeles County residents,” said Jeffrey Gunzenhauser, MD, MPH, Interim Health Officer for Los Angeles County.

Public Health-funded PrEP Centers of Excellence will be provided by these community-based partners:

- AltaMed Health Services Corporation
- Anthony Mills, MD
- APLA Health and Wellness
- Children’s Hospital Los Angeles
- JWCH Institute
- LA LGBT Center

- St. John's Well Child and Family Center
- St. Mary's Medical Center
- Tarzana Treatment Centers

In addition, residents can also access PrEP services at the following Public Health clinics:

- Central Health Center
- Curtis Tucker Health Center
- Dr. Ruth Temple Health Center
- North Hollywood Health Center

For more information about PrEP, please visit Public Health's website at www.getprepla.com.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$900 million. To learn more about the LA County Department of Public Health and the work they do, visit PublicHealth.LACounty.gov, and follow Public Health on social media at twitter.com/LAPublicHealth, facebook.com/LAPublicHealth, and youtube.com/LAPublicHealth.

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*Los Angeles County Department of Public Health works to
protect health, prevent disease, and promote health and well-being.*