



Friday 9th February 2018

PAN WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT OF PrEP TO BE LISTED ON THE PBS

MEDIA RELEASE

Today, Friday 9th February, 2018 it was announced that the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) would recommend for medications used as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). PAN has long asserted that PrEP has been a missing essential tool in the effort to prevent HIV. Once PrEP is listed and available in the coming months, we will have unprecedented in Australia access to an amazing HIV prevention tool. Federal Health Minister Mr Greg Hunt previously stated “...my commitment is if [PBAC] does recommend PrEP we will list it and list it quickly”.

“PAN welcomes the PBAC recommendation to list PrEP medications on the PBS.” Said Warwick Emanuel co-founder of PAN [PrEPAccessNOW] *“We now encourage Minister Hunt and the Federal Government to come good on that commitment and to, without delay, ensure that affordable PrEP is available to all in Australia who need access.”*

PAN understands PrEP to be listed on the PBS in the remaining first half of this year, meaning regardless of location – all people with Medicare will have good access to PrEP. The timing of this announcement could not be more crucial with some State and Territory based trials coming to an end in the next few months. For those accessing PrEP through various clinical studies, there will be a period of transition for PrEP users – ultimately resulting in the best access to PrEP Australia has ever seen.

Michael Whelan, Vice-Chairperson of PAN said, *“Our state-based clinical studies of PrEP have provided invaluable interim access to PrEP, as well as providing key behavioural data in those jurisdictions. While those studies remain essential for their duration, only now that we are on the dawn of equal access to PrEP can we really kick into high gear”*

Those States and Territories without clinical studies have been left behind in the mobilisation of PrEP in their communities. This is no longer the case.

“We’re not done yet. We still have people at risk for HIV across Australia, who remain unaware of PrEP or who have until now been unable to access it. This decision has opened the door for so many people, and now we have only to walk through it. It is a very exciting time.” – Jeff Montgomery, Chairperson PAN

PAN acknowledges, and continues to support all people regardless of Medicare eligibility to find affordable PrEP – no matter their circumstances.

“We hit a few roadblocks along the way, having had PrEP previously denied – and then further delayed by the PBAC deferral last year. We now have all the tools we need with the mainstays of testing and condoms joining PrEP and U=U (Undetectable = Untransmissible)- the evidence-based confirmation that that and HIV-positive person on effective treatment who reaches an undetectable viral load has a negligible to non-existent chance of transmitting the virus.” – Chris Dimeglio, PAN Secretary

“While preventing HIV incredibly well, PrEP has a secondary function of being an effective tool through which we can continue to dismantle HIV related stigma and discrimination. Essentially, it allows HIV-negative and HIV-positive people to play the same ball game.” Mr. Whelan said.

PAN reaffirms its commitment to support all people wanting access to PrEP, regardless of Medicare eligibility through its PrEP assistance coupon scheme which ensures everyone can obtain PrEP. As such, personal importation of PrEP remains a vital access route.

For more information on PrEP, www.pan.org.au

See our fact sheet on the PBAC recommendation at www.pan.org.au/pbs

For comment on U=U or PrEP from the perspective of an HIV-positive person contact [Nic Holas at The Institute of Many](#).