



SB0828 HIV Prevention Drugs – Dispensing by Pharmacists and Insurance Requirements
Presented to the Hon. Paul Pinsky and
Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 2, 2021 2:00pm

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee to issue **a favorable report on SB0828 HIV Prevention Drugs – Dispensing by Pharmacists and Insurance Requirements**, sponsored by Senator Clarence Lam.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. As part of our efforts to protect reproductive freedom for all Marylanders, we work to ensure every individual has the right to decide if, when, and how to form their families, and to parent in good health, in safety, and with dignity. In doing so, we support increasing access to preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for pregnant and parenting people at risk of getting HIV.

PrEP is a preventive measure for individuals who are at constant risk of developing HIV based on their lifestyle or the identities they hold; when taken correctly, PrEP can be [99% effective](#) in reducing the risk of HIV transmission.¹ Gay and bisexual men, African Americans, Latinx individuals, injected drug users (IDUs), and transgender individuals are [disproportionally impacted by HIV](#) because of the ways in which systemic racism, stigma, and the social determinants of health have historically impacted the wellbeing of these populations.² Based on a number of factors, individuals from these groups may also lack access to comprehensive health insurance and/or may not have a healthcare provider that they trust and can easily access.

Allowing pharmacists to provide PrEP to an individual who may have recently been exposed to HIV is a novel public health approach to reduce transmission of the infection. For most people, pharmacies are more accessible than a doctor's office, and allowing pharmacists to dispense PrEP will ensure increased access to the medications for individuals at risk of HIV and without a medical home. This bill also ensures that pharmacists connect individuals who do not currently have a primary care provider to a medical home, which is a great strategy in improving access to comprehensive primary health care.

For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on SB0828**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ How effective is PrEP? CDC. Nov 2, 2020. Accessed at <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep/prep-effectiveness.html>

² High Impact HIV Prevention: CDC's Approach to Reducing HIV Infections in the United States. August 2011. Accessed at: https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/policies_NHPC_Booklet.pdf