



City and County of San Francisco  
Mark Farrell  
Mayor

## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

### **New Health Department HIV campaign to focus on PrEP Reaching African Americans with messages of support to increase uptake and improve access**

### **Getting to Zero focus on overcoming disparities in HIV**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAN FRANCISCO (February 8, 2018) – The Department of Public Health today announces a new campaign in the fight against HIV to accelerate progress on ending disparities impacting African American men. The effort is focused on increasing the use of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to prevent HIV infection. PrEP is a once-daily pill for people who are HIV negative that is more than 90 percent effective in stopping transmission of HIV. By improving awareness of PrEP with positive messages, the campaign intends to boost the number of African Americans using this powerful prevention tool.

Overall, San Francisco is making tremendous headway “Getting to Zero” in the fight against HIV. New diagnoses hit a record-low of 223 in 2016, down from a high of 2,332 at the peak of the epidemic in 1992. Among men, the annual rate of new HIV diagnoses for all racial and ethnic groups continues a 10-year drop. The progress is not equally distributed, however, and unless we achieve health equity among all groups, the city will not reach its goal of zero new infections, zero HIV deaths and zero stigma.

African American men continue to have the highest rate of new HIV infections, and increased awareness and use of PrEP can help bring that number down.

“African American men have the highest HIV diagnosis rate among all groups in San Francisco,” said Barbara Garcia, Director of Health. “While the rate is declining, we need to do a better job of reaching the African American community with tailored prevention messages and information. PrEP is a medication that prevents HIV and saves lives.”

A new campaign launching this week aims to help close the gap by engaging Black San Franciscans with supportive PrEP messages. Ads will appear on Muni busses, billboards and social media. The campaign features an [askaboutPrEP](#) website, as well as a hotline and text line. Later this spring, BART stations and direct mail will expand the campaign further.



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In San Francisco, PrEP is key to the effort to reach zero new HIV infections. In 2014, fewer than 10 percent of men who have sex with men who were eligible were receiving PrEP, and those numbers have increased significantly in all racial and ethnic groups. However, disparities persist in PrEP uptake and awareness.

“While there is still significant work to do to close the disparities gap, the Getting to Zero initiatives to expand PrEP education and outreach to more communities appear to be making a difference,” said Dr. Susan Buchbinder, Director of the Health Department’s Bridge HIV and a member of the Getting to Zero steering committee.

For African American men in San Francisco, the rate of new HIV diagnosis in 2016 was 96 cases per 100,000 population, down from 140 in 2015, but still worse than the rate for white men, of 39 cases per 100,000 in 2016.

“Some people have trouble finding a provider willing to talk openly and honestly about sex, HIV, and PrEP,” said Dr. Hyman Scott, a physician at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital’s Ward 86. “Stigma is still an important barrier to seeking sexual health services for many men. We want people to be able to talk with their providers about all aspects of their health, including their sexual health, and how PrEP can be part of the conversation.”

Known by the brand name Truvada®, the FDA approved its use for PrEP in 2012. PrEP is covered by Medi-Cal and most commercial insurance. Gilead, the manufacturer, offers patient assistance programs to help low-income people afford PrEP. It is offered at all clinics in the San Francisco Health Network, at San Francisco City Clinic, and by many other providers.

The new “PrEP Supports” campaign highlights real people and features many aspects of life that are worth preserving and protecting from HIV. The campaign is broader than previous efforts that focused exclusively on sex. The change is based on research by 510media, an Oakland-based brand development firm that conducted a series of listening exercises in the African American community.

“Addressing people’s whole lives – work, friends, family and aspirations – is more meaningful than narrower messages about sex or race, which can feel reductive and disrespectful,” said Nikole Trainor, a PrEP Health Educator for the Health Department.

The latest campaign is part of the Health Department’s citywide effort to expand PrEP access and services for communities including Latino, youth and transwomen, who also experience disparities.

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### **Learn more about PrEP**

<https://askaboutprep.org>

Find a provider at <https://www.pleaseprepme.org/>

Text “askprep” to 21333 for English or Spanish help

Instagram: @PrEPSupports

Facebook Page: PrEP Supports

Twitter: @PrEPSupports

Call the Citywide PrEP Navigation Line for assistance (415) 634-PrEP (7737)

### **About Getting to Zero**

San Francisco’s Getting to Zero Consortium, a multi-sector initiative involving community-based organizations, providers, researchers, health department and government officials, industry and activists, has been working since 2014 toward the goals of zero new HIV infections, zero HIV-associated deaths, and zero stigma and discrimination. [www.gettingtozerosf.org](http://www.gettingtozerosf.org)

### **About the San Francisco Health Network**

The San Francisco Health Network is a community of top-rated clinics, hospitals and programs operated by the Health Department. We connect San Franciscans to quality health care.

Every year we serve more than 100,000 people in our clinics and hospitals, such as Castro Mission, Chinatown, and Southeast health centers, Zuckerberg San Francisco General and Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center. We provide continuous care for people wherever they are – in clinics, hospitals, at home, in jail, in transitional housing or on the streets. As the city’s public health system we also provide emergency, trauma, mental health and substance use care to any San Franciscan who needs it.

The Health Network celebrates the city’s diversity, serving individuals and families of all backgrounds and identities, regardless of immigration status or lack of insurance. The Health Network is dedicated to empowering all San Franciscans, without exception, to live the healthiest lives possible. <http://www.sfhealthnetwork.org/>



BEBE SWEETBRIAR,  
SINGER, ACTIVIST,  
& MEDIA PERSONALITY

PrEP SUPPORTS  
**YOUR  
FREEDOM  
TO BE  
AMAZING.**

**Enjoy the freedom to be amazing.  
Ask your healthcare professional about PrEP.**

PrEP is a once daily pill that can prevent HIV transmission. PrEP is more than 90% effective at reducing the risk of getting HIV when taken as directed.

PrEP is safe and effective but doesn't protect against other STDs. Condoms provide additional protection against HIV and prevent STDs.

To Learn More Visit  
**[www.AskAboutPrEP.org](http://www.AskAboutPrEP.org)**  
**Text "AskPrEP" to 21333**

*San Francisco*  
Department of Public Health

LEE RICKIE, FASHION DESIGNER  
SHAWN PURCELL-DAVENPORT, MODEL

San Francisco  
Department of Public Health

# PrEP SUPPORTS THE CREATIVE

Enjoy the freedom to be creative.  
Ask your healthcare professional about PrEP.

PrEP is a once daily pill that can prevent HIV transmission. PrEP is more than 90% effective at reducing the risk of getting HIV when taken as directed. PrEP is safe and effective but doesn't protect against other STDs.

To Learn More About How PrEP Can Support You Visit  
[www.AskAboutPrEP.org](http://www.AskAboutPrEP.org) or Text "AskPrEP" to 21333



**San Francisco**  
Department of Public Health

**TERRANCE WILDER,**  
PROGRAM COORDINATOR  
FOR THE DREAM PROJECT

# PrEP SUPPORTS THE POWERFUL

**Enjoy the freedom to be powerful.  
Ask your healthcare professional about PrEP.**

PrEP is a once daily pill that can prevent HIV transmission. PrEP is more than 90% effective at reducing the risk of getting HIV when taken as directed. Ask your healthcare professional about how PrEP can support you. PrEP is safe and effective but doesn't protect against other STDs.

To Learn More About How PrEP Can Support You Visit  
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**PrEP SUPPORTS  
AMAZING FAMILIES,  
POWERFUL COMMUNITIES,  
BRILLIANT THINKERS,  
CREATIVE CULTIVATORS.  
PrEP SUPPORTS YOU.**

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