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PrEP and PEP
February 5, 2026

What are PrEP and PEP?

HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a highly effective, evidence-based HIV prevention medication. When taken consistently, it reduces the risk of HIV acquisition from sex by approximately 99% and meaningfully lowers risk associated with injection drug use as well. Despite its proven effectiveness, PrEP remains significantly underutilized in Vermont, and recent federal actions threaten access to this critical HIV prevention tool.

HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) may be prescribed to those who, in the last 72 hours, may have been exposed to HIV during sex, were sexually assaulted, may have had an occupational exposure, or shared needles with someone else.

Why State Action Is Urgent:

Access to HIV prevention medications, including PrEP and PEP, is a proven public health strategy that also delivers significant cost savings. Preventing one HIV infection can save the healthcare system approximately $554,000 in lifetime medical expenses.

In June 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Kennedy v. Braidwood* gave the Secretary of Health and Human Services authority to reject preventive care recommendations, putting future PrEP coverage at risk.

Federal guidance currently prohibits prior authorization for PrEP, but these protections can be reversed by a new administration. Vermont cannot rely on unstable federal policy to protect access to lifesaving HIV prevention. Barriers such as cost sharing, prior authorization, and limited prescribing access continue to delay or prevent care for people at risk of HIV.

Role of pharmacists:

We support allowing pharmacists to prescribe and administer PrEP and PEP, which many states allow. Bolstering pharmacists' role would rapidly accelerate access. Pharmacists are well-positioned to provide timely interventions, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

As federal policy governing access to lifesaving HIV prevention has remained unstable, Vermont must establish its own legislative authority to ensure that access to PrEP and PEP is as broad, reliable, and barrier-free as possible.