

What to Know About Minors' Access to PrEP – HIV Prevention in Connecticut

New law allows minors to receive prophylaxis for HIV without parental consent

What is PrEP?

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is a daily oral medication for the prevention of HIV infection.

The medication Truvada (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate and emtricitabine) is intended for HIV negative persons at high risk of infection through sex or injection drug use. When taken consistently, Truvada reduces the risk of HIV infection through sex by 92 to 99 percent. Truvada was FDA approved as PrEP for adults in 2012. In 2018, the FDA extended the indication of Truvada as PrEP for at-risk adolescents. In June 2019, the United States Preventive Services Task Force recommended clinicians offer PrEP to persons who are at high risk of HIV acquisition.

Why is PrEP access for adolescents important?

In 2017, one in five new HIV diagnoses in the U.S. was among youth ages 13 to 24. The majority of these are among gay and bisexual males. In Connecticut, the highest rate of new HIV diagnoses was among 20-29 year olds, many of whom were likely infected during adolescence. Young people who become HIV infected are less likely to be diagnosed, linked to care, and achieve viral suppression on antiretroviral medications.

What does Connecticut's new law, Public Act 19-109: An Act Concerning the Prevention of HIV, say?

P.A. 19-109 is an addition to the existing language of Conn. Gen. Stat. §19a-592. Previously, the statute allowed minors to receive testing and treatment for HIV without parental consent. The updated statute adds "prophylaxis" to the available treatment regimen, allowing Connecticut physicians and APRNs to prescribe PrEP to minors without parental consent.

What must happen before prescribing PrEP to a minor without parental consent?

Under the new law, if the provider determines that notification to the parent or guardian of the minor would result in a denial of consent for PrEP, or that the minor would not seek, pursue or continue PrEP, and the minor requests the parent or guardian not be notified, the provider may prescribe PrEP without parental consent.

What are a provider's obligations to prescribe PrEP without notifying the parent or guardian?

To prescribe PrEP without the parent or guardian's consent, the provider must document the reasons for the determination to provide PrEP without parental consent, signed by the minor, in the minor's clinical record. Prescribing PrEP is confidential and cannot be divulged without the minor's consent, including sending a bill to any person other than the minor.

Does health insurance cover PrEP for minors?

Usually, yes, but please note the difference between access to coverage and the ability to maintain confidentiality by utilizing health insurance coverage without parental consent. Many health insurance companies cover PrEP, but coverage varies based on the type of plan. Connecticut's HUSKY/Medicaid program covers PrEP for adults and adolescents, and minors insured under HUSKY/Medicaid would be eligible for coverage.

Note: the statute mandates that minors are personally liable for the costs and expenses of treatment, therefore any adolescent without HUSKY/Medicaid coverage will be liable for the costs, even if that minor is insured through a parent's commercial insurance coverage.* Make sure you understand the minor's coverage before prescribing.

How is Mandated Reporting relevant when prescribing PrEP to a minor?

If the minor is twelve or younger, the provider must report sexual activity to the Department of Children and Families, as would be the case when diagnosing a sexually transmitted disease in a patient twelve or younger.

What are some key points for clinicians to know when prescribing PrEP?

- Truvada for PrEP is only FDA approved for individuals who weigh at least 77 pounds.
- Truvada is safe and effective for HIV prevention but is not active against other sexually transmitted infections. It is recommended that PrEP be used in combination with other prevention tools, including condoms.
- Individuals must have a negative HIV test immediately prior to initiating Truvada for PrEP and at least every 3 months while on PrEP.
- The efficacy of PrEP depends on adherence to Truvada. Clinicians should counsel and support patients to take Truvada as prescribed.
- If an individual acquires HIV infection while on PrEP, it is imperative to switch from Truvada to a full antiretroviral regimen to avoid development of drug resistance.

PrEP is an opportunity to empower youth and engage them in other medical and behavioral health services.

*The reasons behind this disparity in available coverage are complex, but note that minors who seek and obtain parental consent for PrEP will be covered under their parent/guardian's commercial insurance plan. Adults eighteen and over may access their parent/guardian's commercial coverage but due to the nature of how "explanations of benefits" are distributed, or a policy holder's right to access their plan's deductible status, there is no guarantee that confidentiality will be maintained when using commercial coverage.



This flyer includes information regarding the statutory change enacted by the Connecticut legislature that broadens access for PrEP to minors. It is not intended to provide clinical information for medical professionals.