PrEP Referrals for Highest-Risk Groups Need Major Boost

A CDC-run study analyzed a program in which health departments screened for PrEP eligibility and wrote referrals.

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A recent analysis of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) program to help improve pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) uptake among people of color and transgender individuals indicated that health departments need to step up their game when it comes to referring Black men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people to physicians for a PrEP prescription, Medscape reports.

The CDC’s Jarvis Carter, PhD, presented findings from the analysis of the agency’s Project PrIDE endeavor at the recent virtual U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS 2020.

The agency ran the project through 12 health departments across the country with the intent of gathering data on PrEP use while improving access to the HIV prevention pill in underserved communities.

Between 2015 and 2019, health departments in the program screened nearly 70,000 people to determine whether they were good PrEP candidates. Seventy-five percent of this group received a referral to a health care provider for a prescription.

Of those screened, 78% of heterosexuals, 75% of MSM and 68% of trans people received a referral. Broken down by race, 85% of Latinos, 70% of African Americans and 72% of whites who were screened received a referral.

One quarter of those screened for PrEP—11,356 people—received a prescription. Thirty-five percent of MSM and 7% of heterosexuals who were referred received a prescription.

Thirty-two percent of the trans people who were referred to a physician for PrEP attended such an appointment. Most who did received a prescription; 57% of this group was Black or Latino.

To read the Medscape article, click here (free registration with the site is required).