



Arkansas Pharmacists Can Prescribe PrEP and PEP to Prevent HIV

A new law will allow Arkansas pharmacists to prescribe HIV prevention meds, Naloxone, nicotine replacement therapies and more.

March 30, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

Arkansas pharmacists will be able to prescribe pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis, or [PrEP](#) and [PEP](#), to prevent HIV, thanks to a new law signed by Republican Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders, [reports ABC affiliate KAIT8.com](#).

Sponsored by [Representative Aaron Pilkington](#) (R-Ark.), [Act 314](#) will allow pharmacists to prescribe PrEP and PEP just as physicians do. The law will help the Arkansas Department of Health achieve its [five-year goal](#) of ending the HIV epidemic in the state, defined as decreasing new HIV cases by 75% by 2025.

“Under a statewide protocol, a pharmacist may initiate therapy and administer or dispense, or both, drugs that include Naloxone, nicotine replacement therapy products, oral contraceptives, HIV preexposure prophylaxis, and HIV postexposure prophylaxis,” according to the [law](#).

In 2020, there were 6,058 people living with HIV in Arkansas and 242 new HIV diagnoses, according to [AIDSVu.org](#), which offers interactive maps and infographics based on U.S. HIV data, including PrEP use and HIV diagnoses.

Arkansas-based pharmacist Dylan Dulaney told [KAIT8.com](#) that while these are “exciting times” for pharmacists, implementation will take some time.

Before the new policy can be implemented, pharmacies and medical boards must create a protocol for distribution at pharmacies. It may take up to a year for pharmacists to receive guidelines and become certified to prescribe the medication, according to Dulaney.

“It’s about working together as a medical team,” Dulaney told the ABC affiliate. “And expanding access and expanding care [to] Arkansans.”

As one of seven states with a high risk for rural HIV transmission, Arkansas was selected to receive federal aid via the national initiative “Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America.” Launched in 2019 by President Donald Trump, the 10-year plan aims to lower new HIV rates by 75% by 2025

and by 90% by 2030. This would amount to fewer than 3,000 HIV cases a year. “Reducing new infections to this level,” according to the initiative, “would essentially mean that HIV transmissions would be rare and meet the definition of ending the epidemic.”

The strategy for reaching these benchmarks involves investing federal funding and resources in programs such as Rapid Start and PrEP in 57 key jurisdictions that together account for 50% of new HIV cases. These include the 48 counties nationwide plus Washington, DC; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and seven rural states with high HIV burdens (Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma and South Carolina).

To read more about access to PrEP in the United States, click [#PrEP](#). You’ll find headlines such as “[Hopeful HIV and Hepatitis News in Biden’s Proposed 2024 Budget](#),” “[Walgreens Offers Free Same-Day Delivery of HIV Meds](#)” and “[California Bill Allows Pharmacists to Provide More PrEP to Prevent HIV](#).”