First Statewide PrEP and PEP Education Bill Signed Into Law

September 29, 2016

A PrEP and PEP education bill became the first statewide law of its kind when California Gov. Jerry Brown signed it earlier this week.

Titled AB 2640, the legislation requires that providers of HIV testing must tell their clients about pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP and PEP) during post-test counseling sessions. The bill was co-sponsored by the Los Angeles LGBT Center and APLA Health and introduced by Assemblyman Mike A. Gipson (D-Carson), according to a press release from the Center.

PrEP and PEP are biomedical prevention techniques that entail taking daily HIV meds to stop the virus from establishing an infection in case of an exposure. A survey in California last year found that only one in 10 gay and bisexual men had used PrEP and nearly 85 percent had never talked to their doctor about it, according to the press release.

“We are extremely pleased that Governor Brown has signed this bill into law,” APLA Health’s CEO Craig E. Thompson said in the release. “This is one of several proposals the governor has supported to increase information about and the availability of PrEP and PEP, and we thank him for his continued leadership on this issue. AB 2640 is a crucial step toward raising awareness about effective HIV prevention tools, reducing new infections, and ending the epidemic in California.”

“With the stroke of his pen, Governor Brown has played a significant and groundbreaking role in helping to fight HIV in the state that ranks second in the nation in cumulative AIDS cases,” added the LGBT Center’s medical director Robert Bolan, MD. “Those most at risk of HIV infection deserve to know about all the options to stay negative, including PrEP and PEP. By signing AB 2640, Governor Brown is helping to promote options that have the potential to change the course of the epidemic in California and significantly reduce the HIV infection rate here.”

To learn about successful HIV prevention campaigns in San Francisco and New York, read the POZ cover story “A Tale of Two Cities.”

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