

Computer Program Offers Instant PEP Advice for ER Workers in NY

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Beginning September 9, emergency room doctors throughout New York state will have access to instant HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) guidelines thanks to a computer application developed by doctors at St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan, [The New York Times](#) reports. The widget, which is financed by the AIDS Institute, will be available in 200 New York emergency departments and will be distributed elsewhere over time.

According to the article, the widget makes it clear that the first dose of antiretroviral medication should be administered as soon as possible to patients who think they may have been exposed to HIV through sex, drug use or accidental contact with blood, giving these patients high-priority emergency status. If administered within 72 hours of exposure, PEP—which keeps HIV localized and prevents the virus from multiplying in the body—can reduce the risk of infection by 80 percent.

The widget, which St. Vincent's doctors call a “one-stop shopping” approach to PEP, helps users determine whether a patient is a candidate for treatment, provides information about the 28-day antiretroviral regimen and includes links to consent forms in 22 languages, including Creole, Laotian and Yoruba.

“There's a gap in knowledge in the health care sector about these topics,” said Tony Urbina, MD, medical director of HIV/AIDS education at St. Vincent's. “You'd be surprised at how many patients come to us and say, ‘I went to an emergency room, and the doctor didn't know what I was talking about, and I didn't get the drugs.’”