



Prevention: PrEP for Youth

More can be done to boost access to PrEP.

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Young adults in the United States are taking pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) at a rate eight times higher than a decade ago, but more can be done to boost access. University of Michigan Medical School researchers used national pharmacy data on 1.45 million PrEP prescriptions dispensed to more than 240,000 people ages 18 to 25 between 2016 and 2023. About 87% of the recipients were young men, reflecting the lower use of PrEP among women. The quarterly PrEP dispensing rate rose sharply from 26.4 prescriptions per 100,000 people in this age group in 2016 to 100.7 per 100,000 in 2018, followed by a more gradual increase to 208.4 per 100,000 in 2023. The study found that some young people use PrEP inconsistently or have trouble attending regular appointments and undergoing the monitoring required to continue the medication. A related study showed that states with the highest PrEP coverage saw a 38% decline in new HIV diagnoses over the past decade, but experts fear that cuts to federal HIV prevention funding could limit access to this prevention tool.

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