Promoting PrEP

Manhunt searches for the right pitch.

February 21, 2013 By Trent Straube

Last summer, the FDA approved HIV med Truvada as a pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, in which negative folks take the daily pill to lower their risk. But Truvada maker Gilead Sciences is not advertising it as PrEP.

So Manhunt, the popular gay hookup site, took the initiative. Working with the Gladstone Institute's Robert Grant, MD, and the Fenway Institute, it crafted an email blast to promote PrEP awareness to over 2.5 million Manhunt members on World AIDS Day. The self-funded promo included links to downloadable fact sheets and research, a PrEP video, a Manhunt Cares PrEP page and Positive Frontiers' "My Life on PrEP" series. The campaign tagline read: "HIV Prevention Pill for Negative Men (and Women Too): A choice when condoms are in the way or not enough?"

The initial reaction was "very positive," says David Novak, MSW, managing director of the OLB Research Institute at Manhunt Cares. But some gay press, he says, suggested that Manhunt advocated ditching condoms, promoted bad science and received funding to promote Truvada.

"None of these statements are true," Manhunt Cares clarified in an update to its email blast. It also changed the PrEP campaign tagline—the source of much criticism—to read: "HIV Prevention Pill for Negative Men: Another choice for staying HIV free?" Let's hope these words don't get in the way of an important message.

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