

PrEP and Women: Join the Fight!

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Track: Our Vision

Title: PrEP and Women: Join the Fight!

Background: Almost a year ago, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced an ambitious plan to end the AIDS epidemic in New York State by 2020. With that plan, there lies notable promise in the arena of HIV prevention -- the end of an epidemic seems almost possible. This hope stems, in part, from a relatively new HIV prevention approach called pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a once-a-day pill to prevent HIV infection in persons who are HIV-negative. PrEP's full promise only can be realized if those who need it can get it. However, the topic of how women and, particularly, women of color, may benefit from PrEP has largely been absent from the national public health and media conversation about PrEP. This is particularly surprising, given that one of the most glaring problems remains in new HIV infections among women. In New York City, for example, women of color comprise over 90% of new female HIV diagnoses.

Objective: To provide: 1) A basic medical overview of PrEP, 2) An update on the PrEP-related recommendations put forth by the Governor's *Ending the Epidemic Task Force* and 3) Practical strategies to engage women and, particularly women of color, in advocacy to increase demand and access to PrEP.

Methods: Presentation style will be brief lectures, followed by a longer period dedicated to interactive questions, answers and facilitated discussion.

- **Dr. Oni Blackstock** will provide a PrEP 101 Overview (15 minutes, including 6-minute video from www.whatisprep.org)
- **Terri Wilder** will describe Governor Cuomo's *Bending the Curve* plan to end AIDS and specific PrEP recommendations (8 -10 minutes)
- **Kimberleigh Smith** will offer practical advocacy and education strategies and a call to action in order to increase demand and access to PrEP for Women (8-10 minutes)
- **Facilitated discussion, questions and answers** (25 minutes).

Results: At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to: (1) describe PrEP and how to access it (2) discuss the Governor's three- point plan to end the AIDS epidemic and PrEP recommendations that are part of the plan and (3) identify ways to advocate for PrEP in their community.

Conclusions: PrEP is a new tool that can help reduce new HIV infections in women of color. Educating women about PrEP, removing the barriers to access PrEP, and advocating for PrEP in NYC and NYS will ensure that all women can experience PrEP's potential benefits.