



Together We Can.

Breaking Barriers to PrEP Access

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Together We Can.



Disclosures: I have no relevant financial interest or relationships to disclose.



Objectives:

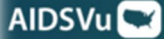
- Define PrEP
- Discuss barriers to PrEP access
- Discuss alternative methods Apex Community Care has engaged to reduce barriers to PrEP access and engagement

What is PrEP?

- “PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, is medicine people at risk for HIV take to prevent getting HIV from sex or injection drug use. PrEP can stop HIV from taking hold and spreading throughout your body.”
- Oral and injectable treatment options
- Effective!
 - ~99% risk reduction in those at risk through sexual contact
 - ~74% risk reduction in those at risk through IDU

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2025a)

Who Accesses PrEP?

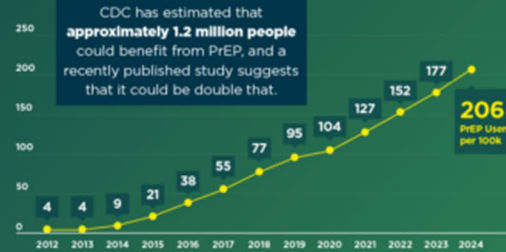


PrEP Use in 2024

PrEP use has **increased over time**, but it is still not reaching all people who can benefit from it. Studies have shown that **PrEP has helped to reduce the number of new HIV diagnoses in the U.S.**, however, there are many barriers to PrEP use in the U.S. that must be addressed to expand access to PrEP. These barriers include **low awareness** of PrEP among communities and healthcare providers, **limited accessibility** to PrEP providers, **access to affordable health insurance**, **stigma** and **discrimination**, and **social determinants of health**, like poverty and housing instability.

Overall Progress

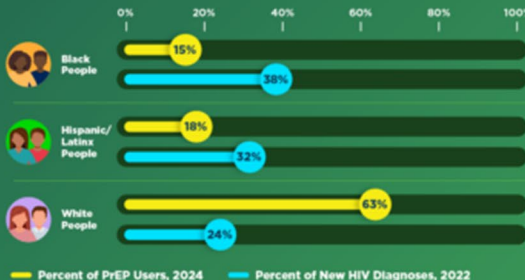
PrEP use has **increased drastically** since PrEP was first approved in 2012. Between 2023 and 2024 alone, the **rate of PrEP use rose by 17%**, to nearly **600,000 PrEP users**. However, this progress has not reached all communities equally.



PrEP Use Rates (per 100k), 2012-2024
Source: AIDSVu, CDC

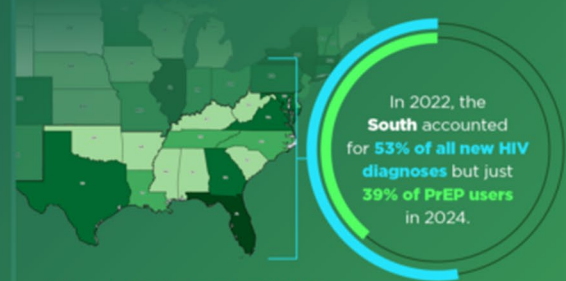
PrEP Use by Race/Ethnicity

In 2022, **Black people** made up **38% of new HIV diagnoses**, the **highest** of any racial group, but only 15% of PrEP users in 2024. Similarly, **Hispanic/Latino individuals** accounted for **32% of new HIV diagnoses** in 2022 but just **18% of PrEP users** in 2024, highlighting persistent disparities for these communities.

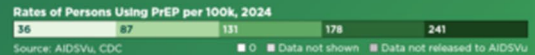


Source: AIDSVu, CDC

PrEP Use by Region

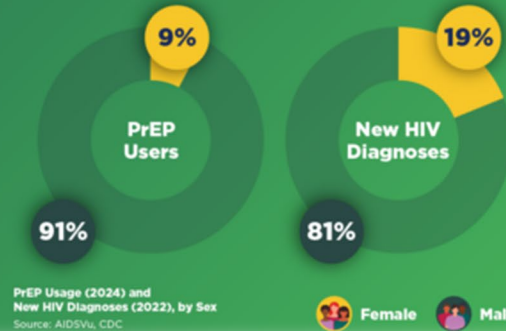


With only **12 people using PrEP for every new HIV diagnosis**, the region had the **highest unmet need** for PrEP in the country.



PrEP Use by Sex

Men accounted for **91% of all PrEP users**. Their PrEP use rate was **more than 10 times higher** than that of women, highlighting a significant gender gap in PrEP use.



PrEP Usage (2024) and New HIV Diagnoses (2022), by Sex
Source: AIDSVu, CDC

Barriers to PrEP



Personal

- Knowledge, fear, adherence

Social

- Partner perception, stigma, race/gender/region

Structural

- Scheduling, distance, provider knowledge/willingness, continuity of care, regional/cultural norms, cost/access

(Antonini et al., 2023)

Breaking Barriers: Interventions

Qcare+

- Online platform for PrEP access
 - PrEP prescribing
 - STI testing
 - DoxyPEP



Community Engagement Group

- Community member partnership to identify community needs, outreach strategies, develop creative engagement methods



Breaking Barriers: Qcare+

Year 1: 2024 (Jan-Dec)

- Month 1:
 - 27 enrolled patients
 - 10% engaged in care
 - New PrEP Rx: 6
- Month 12:
 - 144 enrolled patients
 - 37% engaged in care
 - New PrEP Rx: 9
 - Highest month: May/July 15 new Rx each
 - Total *new* PrEP Rx: 99

Year 2: 2025 (Jan-Sept)

- Month 1:
 - 120 enrolled patients
 - 34% engaged in care
- Month 9:
 - 189 enrolled patients
 - 52% engaged in care
 - Total *new* PrEP Rx: 71



Breaking Barriers: Community Engagement Group (CEG)

- *“The CEG was established to bring community voices directly into the work we do, and the results have been transformative. Through regular meetings and rotating membership, we’ve gained real-time insights that have led to direct improvements in our programs and outreach strategies. Since its inception last year our Community Engagement Group has evolved from a small circle of 2-4 participants into a vibrant and growing network, with over 20 individuals expected to attend our upcoming meeting. This growth reflects the increasing value and relevance of the CEG to both our internal teams and the community we serve.” – Edzon R.*
 - Expanded outreach locations
 - Increased community testing and tabling opportunities
 - Enhanced client engagement and communication
 - Anonymity and stigma reduction initiatives
 - Innovative community events
 - Substance use support and harm reduction

Citations:

- Antonini, M., Silva, I. E. D., Elias, H. C., Gerin, L., Oliveira, A. C., & Reis, R. K. (2023). Barriers to Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) use for HIV: an integrative review. *Revista brasileira de enfermagem*, 76(3), e20210963. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7167-2021-0963>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2025a). *Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)*. HIV.gov. Retrieved October 9, 2025, from <https://hiv.gov/hiv-basics/hiv-prevention/using-hiv-medication-to-reduce-risk/pre-exposure-prophylaxis>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2025b). *U.S. statistics*. HIV.gov. Retrieved October 9, 2025, from <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/statistics>



“And that is how change happens One
gesture One person One moment at a time”

-Libba Bray



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