

MEDIA RELEASE

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Long-acting HIV PrEP registration brings us another step closer to ending HIV for Australia, but access remains a barrier

Health Equity Matters has welcomed the registration of the long-acting PrEP option Lenacapavir by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration, with the drug having the potential to significantly bolster HIV prevention in Australia.

Lenacapavir is the second drug of its kind to be registered in Australia, but neither have been made available to the community yet.

Health Equity Matters has acknowledged that the registration of this tool to reduce transmission is an excellent development, but that making these long-acting options available and affordable to at-risk populations in Australia was paramount.

"It's critical that long-acting PrEP is subsidised via the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. These long-acting options remove barriers for so many people, but we need to ensure they are affordable. We currently have two options registered but neither is available yet," Health Equity Matters Acting CEO James Gray said.

"We would encourage the manufacturers and the Australian Government to keep affordability in mind during their negotiations to ensure widespread access across the country," he said.

Lenacapavir can be administered just twice a year as injections, giving people long term protection and an alternative to daily or on-demand medication currently available. A clinical trial involving more than 3,000 participants from different populations saw HIV infections decrease by 96 per cent, proving its benefit to diverse communities.

"Long-acting PrEP options may be better suited for people who find daily or on-demand PrEP difficult to tolerate, stigmatising or hard to access in their communities, including rural and remote areas," James Gray said.

“Injections can be more discreet, and are also potentially a better option for people who don’t have a regular routine, or travel a lot, which may create a barrier to maintaining the daily medication or having on-demand PrEP.”

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