



September 15, 2022

Dear Colleague:

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is pleased to announce our 3rd annual SC PrEP Awareness Week, **Sept. 26- Sept. 30**. This is a statewide campaign to increase HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) awareness, access, and uptake in South Carolina.

We are inviting medical providers, pharmacists, nurses, social workers, health educators, and college students to participate in the daily webinars hosted by the South Carolina HIV/AIDS Clinical Training Center, which is a partner of the Southeast AIDS Training and Education Center (SE AETC), to learn more about PrEP. Participants will have the opportunity to earn up to **7 FREE** continuing medical, nursing, social work, or pharmacy education credits.

Amid a global pandemic, HIV remains a significant health concern, especially in the Southern states, which account for more than nearly 50 percent of new HIV infections. Nine years after the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) approval of PrEP, PrEP services remain underutilized in Southern states. The Southern states combine to make up a crucial target region for increasing HIV prevention and PrEP uptake due to the region having a greater PrEP-to-need ratio. The PrEP-to-need ratio is calculated by comparing newly diagnosed HIV infections with current PrEP prescriptions.

Increasing awareness and providers' knowledge about PrEP will support the rise in PrEP uptake across the state. This year's activities and testing events will focus on primary care providers and university health centers across South Carolina. Studies have shown that colleges and universities often don't prescribe PrEP or offer PrEP referrals, because they are unfamiliar with PrEP. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2019 individuals aged 18 to 22 accounted for 21 percent of all new HIV diagnoses. Increasing PrEP awareness on college campuses throughout the state will help us work together with the community to end the HIV epidemic.

Please visit the following webpages for more information about PrEP week and PrEP resources:

- [PrEP Awareness Week](#)
- [PrEP Awareness Week Brochure](#)
- [PrEP Provider Toolkit](#)
- scdhec.gov/PrEP

If you have any questions or concerns, please email us at PrEPMeSC@dhec.sc.gov.

Sincerely,

Linda Bell, MD
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S.C. Dept. of Health & Environmental Control