

October 3, 2017

Hon. John Horgan
Premier, British Columbia

Hon. Adrian Dix
Minister of Health, British Columbia

Spencer Chandra-Herbert
MLA for Vancouver West End

Re: Funding Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

Honourable Members,

On behalf of the Pacific AIDS Network (PAN), I am pleased to add our support to the request for PrEP to be immediately funded by the government in BC, as advocated for by the Community Based Research Centre (CBRC) and numerous co-signers.

By way of background, PAN is a pro-active member-based coalition that provides a network to the abilities and efforts of its almost 50 member organizations to respond to HIV, hepatitis C and related issues in British Columbia. We facilitate communication and the sharing of best practices, and we provide professional/workforce development and leadership training to our members and people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs) from throughout BC. PAN acts as a voice for the community-based response to the HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C epidemics. We also provide face-to-face networking opportunities, opportunities for mutual support; education and skills development; promote community-based research (CBR); and undertake collective action to influence public perceptions and policies affecting persons living with HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C and those most “at risk.”

We have been working in partnership with all the signatories for more than a decade, and believe their expansive work in research, education and client services to be highly effective, impacting many lives. CRBC is a recognized leader regarding gay men’s health provincially and nationally and we applaud them for taking on this important advocacy initiative.

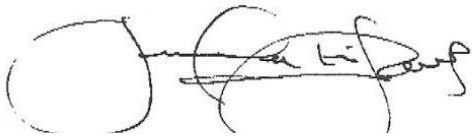
British Columbia has led the world in providing access to HIV treatment and there is so much to be proud of in terms of the work that has been done in this province by government, health authorities, and the BC-CfE and community partners – across the continuum – to combat HIV transmission. However, deeply concerning is the reality that presently more than half of new infections occur in the gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM) population. Diagnoses within young gbMSM aged 20-24 doubled from 2012 to 2014, and within ethnic minority gbMSM now representing over a third of all cases.

The use of emtricitabine/tenofovir (TDF-FTC) for PrEP has been proven to prevent HIV in both clinical trials and real-world settings, and was approved by Health Canada for this purpose. PrEP is provided at no cost in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York City, and it is publicly covered in Quebec. However, in British Columbia, Pharmacare still does not cover TDF-FTC for HIV prevention. Without public access, the most vulnerable individuals will not have access to this effective prevention tool. Given this government's commitment to harm reduction, we are asking you to direct BC Pharmacare to immediately offer full coverage for TDF-FTC for HIV prevention.

We share Premier Horgan's desire (publicly stated January 24th 2017) that BC will cover PrEP as a medical service, bringing cost savings and protecting the most vulnerable, and that our province will continue to lead Canada and the world in HIV elimination.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Evin Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

Jennifer Evin Jones
Executive Director

CC. Jody Jollimore, Managing Director, CBRC