



Colorado General Assembly
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
200 E Colfax Ave
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Good morning. My name is Emily Zadvorny and I am the Executive Director for the Colorado Pharmacists Society. I am also a practicing clinical pharmacist. (CPS) represents pharmacists as healthcare providers in all practice settings across the state. I am here today to voice CPSs strong support of HB 1061.

It is part of the CPS mission to advocate for and support professional activities that better take care of the patients we serve.

In Colorado, pharmacists are ready to help patients in increasingly meaningful ways, thereby providing another point of access in our increasingly complex healthcare system. We are also readily available and clinical educated and trained healthcare professionals and are often the only accessible HCP for miles in many communities. We already having existing close relationships with patients. Sometimes, simply put, our existing system can not meet the needs of patients. We can do more!

CPS has led the charge in the past to expand pharmacists ability to provide needed care to patients across Colorado, especially for public health issues. We have implemented statewide protocols that increase patient access to care for important public health issues such as smoking cessation and hormonal contraception. Through these already existing models, patients are treated by very clear cut and evidence based protocols, guided by nationally recognized guidelines and professional organizations. Protocols are further supported by very detailed and thorough screening, process, documentation and monitoring tools.

For PrEP and PEP , we know that despite effectiveness, they are underused therapies. They are supported by solid CDC guidelines and the USPTF has put out a call to greatly increase access to PreP. PrEP and PEP are preventative therapies, not requiring diagnosing or treating, so with appropriately trained pharmacists, they are extremely safe and extremely effective therapies with great potential benefit. Pharmacists are perfect for this role - as we specialize in appropriate use of medications, knowing how to ensure appropriateness, and tailoring to patient specific factors. We are the experts in monitoring medication therapies and helping with adherence (which is crucial for the success of PrEP and PEP). And of course, thorough counseling is our bread and butter.

Multiple others states have passed, or in the process of passing legislation that utilize pharmacists for this important public health issue. It is also imperative that pharmacists be compensated just as any HCP would be for providing this service, so we appreciate this essential aspect of the bill.

We greatly appreciate the sponsors and organizations who brought this important issue forth, and Pharmacists stand ready to help with this effort to end the spread of HIV in Colorado if we pass this law.

I am quite happy to answer specific questions on how protocols work and operate in Colorado, the training, and interdisciplinary communication, and details behind existing protocols; and how this might

look with PrEP and PEP protocols. Thank you, committee members for your time, and please vote yes on HB 1061.

SUPPORT House Bill 1061

Representatives Valdez A., & Herod; Senators Moreno & Priola
HIV INFECTION PREVENTION MEDICATIONS

Background

Being HIV positive is not the death sentence that it used to be as HIV infections are now preventable with a single daily pill. While more than 14,000 Coloradans are HIV positive, many more would benefit from expanded access to these life-saving drugs. Currently, PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) are the most widely available drugs on the market. PrEP is a daily medication taken to prevent the contraction of HIV. PEP is a medication taken within 72 hours of potential exposure to HIV to prevent infection. Finally, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) has determined that these medications will be considered a preventative treatment for all health benefit plans beginning in January 2021.

HB 1061 Provisions

- Allows a pharmacist to prescribe and dispense HIV prevention medications when certain conditions are met. Prescribing and dispensing must be in accordance with a statewide drug therapy protocol to be developed by the Board of Pharmacy, the Medical Board and the Board of Nursing.
- Requires CDPHE to implement and maintain a standing order of PEP for all Coloradans.
- Requires individual and group health plans to provide coverage for the medication without prior authorization or step therapy and an adequate dispensing fee to pharmacists.

Reasons to Support HB 1061

- *Increase access to HIV prevention medications:* expanding the type of provider that can safely prescribe and dispense these lifesaving drugs will increase access among patients.
- *Ensure coverage for patients:* requiring health plans to cover the costs of PrEP and PEP can provide financial peace of mind for individuals seeking prevention drugs.
- *Facilitate a collaborate process between pharmacists, physicians and nurses to maximize continuity of care:* requiring each of Colorado's professional Boards to weigh in on a statewide protocol ensures consistency and collaboration among all providers which ultimately benefits an individual patient's broader health care outcomes.

HB 1061 Supporters



COLORADO
PHARMACISTS
SOCIETY



Colorado Consumer
Health Initiative



COLORADO
PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

COLORADO
HEALTH
NETWORK
INC.



CRAIG

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DENVER HEALTH.
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FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY

For more information, please contact:

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May 26, 2020



Colorado General Assembly
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
200 E Colfax Ave
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

One Colorado is the state's leading advocacy organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Coloradans and their families. Our work over the past 10 years advancing policy measures to help close the gap between legal and lived equality for LGBTQ Coloradans has largely been informed by the data we have collected and published in 4 separate reports throughout the last decade. And our engagement and support of the HB20-1061 Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection Prevention Medications is directly related to the data we have gathered on the LGBTQ community's continued lack of access to quality health care and the devastating impact HIV has had on our community for decades.

More than 14,000 Coloradans are HIV positive and while HIV can affect anyone regardless of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, gender, or age certain groups are at a higher risk of exposure to the virus. Particularly, within the LGBTQ community, gay, bisexual men, men who have sex with men, and transgender women who have sex with men are considered "high-risk" individuals. And among racial and ethnic groups, African Americans and Latinos are also disproportionately affected by the virus.

In our most recent report, "Closing the Gap: The Turning Point for LGBTQ Health," it is clear that LGBTQ Coloradans still face barriers to accessing health care services across the state. 62% of survey respondents indicated that community fear, bias, or dislike of LGBTQ people is a barrier for them to seek care (this is in comparison to 68% in 2011). Additionally, 42% of respondents worry that their provider is not supportive of LGBTQ people (compared to 41% in 2011). Conversations around exposure to HIV are already deeply personal and can become even more difficult to approach when considering the fear of bias and the lack of supportive providers in many areas across the state.

This is why HB20-1061 is primarily focused on expanding access to the HIV prevention medications PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis). Pharmacists who are clinically educated and trained healthcare professionals are also particularly skilled in developing and maintaining close relationships with their patients. Pharmacist's unique training and accessibility make them the perfect healthcare professionals to deliver expanded access to these life-saving medications particularly in rural Colorado where they are often the only accessible healthcare professionals for communities.

The legislation also prohibits insurance companies from requiring patients to obtain prior authorization before being allowed to purchase the medications and prohibits insurers from requiring that a patient undergo step therapy. This is essential in ensuring that patients can receive the most appropriate treatment type and in the near future treatment form that is best suited for their individual medical needs without being forced to deal with additional requirements imposed by their insurance companies.

As a state we have an obligation to do everything we can to increase access to these life-saving medications to help ensure that all Coloradans, including LGBTQ Coloradans are protected from the devastating impact of HIV. We would like to ask the Committee for a favorable vote on HB20-1061.

Sincerely,

Michael Crews
Policy Director