Black LGBT Folks Talk HIV Prevention in "Stay PrEP'd Up" [VIDEO]

The Milwaukee campaign aims to reduce HIV rates among people of color.

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Thanks to the "Stay PrEP'd Up" campaign, more people in Milwaukee will become familiar with the daily tablet Truvada as PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, which greatly lowers the chances of getting HIV. The recently launched campaign arrives via the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin and is tailored to people of color, who accounted for 83% of new HIV diagnoses in Milwaukee in 2017.

The campaign's ultimate goal is to reduce rates of new HIV diagnoses, which, according to the Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service (MNNS), have "stagnated in recent years."

AIDS Resource Center president and chief executive officer Mike Gifford attributes this stagnation to a failure to take advantage of PrEP, which he describes as "the fast lane to the end of the AIDS epidemic."

Scientists estimate that when taken daily, PrEP reduces the risk of contracting HIV by 99% or more among men who have sex with men and 90% or more among women. (The risk reduction for women may very well be greater than 90%, but the available research is insufficient to refine the estimate.)

So why aren't more people taking it?

Katherine Quinn, an assistant professor at the Medical College of Wisconsin's Center for AIDS Intervention Research, tells the newspaper that the stigma surrounding the topic of HIV and AIDS has played a significant role.

"The narrative we have around PrEP is that it's only for people who are irresponsible or who are having high-risk sex," she said. "We need to shift that to be an empowering way that people can protect themselves from HIV."

Kenneth Wade, one of the campaign's brand ambassadors, agrees. He told MNNS that he has heard of people not wanting to take PrEP for fear of judgment.

Through his collaboration with the AIDS Resource Center, he’s trying to change that.

“It’s really just about being safe and protected,” he said of the push for PrEP.

Visit StayPrEPdUp.com to learn more about PrEP, download posters, infographics and brochures, and watch videos like the one at the top of the article and the one directly below.

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