Five New Laws in N.Y. Help Support HIV, PrEP and LGBTQ Issues

Plus: N.Y.C. restores $5.3 million in funding for HIV services, including the popular Undetectables program.

July 12, 2024 By Trent Straube

Happy Pride, indeed! Last month's celebration of the LGBTQ community ended in New York with more than rainbow flags and a march down Fifth Avenue. Governor Kathy Hochul signed a legislative package of five bills that support queer New Yorkers and people living with and at risk for HIV and AIDS. Several of the new laws help ensure access to HIV meds, whether taken as treatment or as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for prevention.

In related news, New York City's proposed 2025 budget restored $5.3 million in funds for HIV programs that had been on the chopping block. The last-minute move saves numerous services across the city, including the popular Undetectables program, which promotes treatment adherence for people living with HIV.

> We've come a long way since the darkest days of the AIDS epidemic, but there's more work to do to ensure equal access to medication to prevent and treat HIV. The bills I signed this week will save lives.
>
> Posted by Governor Kathy Hochul on Monday, July 1, 2024

Joined by state representatives and senators who support LGBTQ issues, Governor Hochul signed the state laws during a Pride ceremony at the LGBT Community Center in Manhattan. A press release by the governor's office describes the five new laws:

- Legislation S.7809/A.8475 improves HIV-related testing requirements and timely diagnosis of HIV.

- Legislation S.8144C/A.8834B prohibits discrimination against individuals prescribed PrEP for HIV prevention.

- Legislation S.1001A/A.1619A prohibits insurers from restricting or delaying access to prescription drugs to treat or prevent HIV or AIDS.

- Legislation S.9842/A.10461 clarifies that insurers cannot impose co-payments for PrEP or PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) to prevent HIV and AIDS infection.

- Legislation S.7974A/A.8970A renames the Christopher Street–Sheridan Square No. l line subway stop Christopher Street–Stonewall National Monument Station.

You can watch her statements in support of LGBTQ equality at a related event at the Stonewall National Monument Visitors Center in the video below and on YouTube.

“New York is the birthplace of the LGBTQ+ rights movement and has always been a leader in advancing equality and justice for all Americans,” Governor Hochul said in the press statement. “As elected officials in other states are using their powers to take those rights away, I am proud to sign legislation to uplift LGBTQ+ history and address inequities experienced by people living with HIV/AIDS, further ensuring our State is a safe and affirming place for everyone.”

GMHC, the nation’s oldest AIDS service organization, praised the legislation. “PrEP is one of the pillars of New York’s plan to end the HIV epidemic because it eliminates the risk of contracting HIV from sexual intercourse when taken as prescribed,” said Jason Cianciotto, GMHC’s vice president of public policy and external affairs, in a press statement. “That makes it critical to outlaw PrEP discrimination by insurers and the stigma it fuels. We thank the bill’s cosponsors and Governor Hochul for signing it into law so quickly.”

In a separate statement, GMHC also lauded the city’s restoration of funding to HIV programs via the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. In addition to continuing the Undetectables program, the funds will secure the HIV Prevention and Literacy: Older Adults program serving New Yorkers over 50.

“As a former staff member of GMHC and someone whose health care advocacy was formed during the heights of the HIV and AIDS movement, where I witnessed the death of friends and neighbors, restoring HIV and AIDS funding to the city budget was a major priority for me,” said New York City Council member Lynn Schulman, chair of the health committee. “In addition, I was proud to fight for the baselining of these funds to make them more permanent so we can continue to advance to a world without AIDS.”

The Undetectables HIV program launched at Housing Works in 2014 before expanding to several other health agencies, including Callen-Lorde. In September 2015, it was featured on the cover of POZ. Click “Suppression Superheroes” to learn more.

In 2022, Callen-Lorde signed a three-year contract with the city to adopt the Undetectables program. It currently has 70 enrollees, Gothamist reports, but the program would have been cut

short had the budget cuts gone through.

“It’s a very successful program,” Kimberleigh Smith, Callen-Lorde’s senior director of public policy and advocacy, told Gothamist. “We want to keep growing it.”

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/five-new-laws-ny-help-support-hiv-prep-lgbtq-issues