

# Barriers to health insurance coverage and intention to continue Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) reported by men who have sex with men (MSM) in a PrEP demonstration project

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## Background

- Real world PrEP implementation raises concerns of access, cost, medication adherence, and identifying barriers for individuals who would otherwise qualify for PrEP

## Objective

- To describe health insurance coverage by demographic and socioeconomic characteristics in participants
- To describe health insurance coverage, informedness, and intent to continue PrEP by health barriers, health literacy, risk behaviors, depression score, and substance use

## Methods

- CCTG 595 is a controlled, un-blinded, two-arm, randomized (1:1) clinical demonstration project to assess the efficacy of a text-message based intervention on the improvement of retention and adherence to PrEP in 400 high-risk, HIV-negative MSM and transwomen
- Health insurance information, in the context of PrEP, was collected between November 2014 and February 2015 to coincide with open enrollment for Covered California
- Participants were asked if they had health coverage, they had a primary care provider (PCP), their insurance plan covered PrEP, and they intended to continue PrEP after completing the study
- Participants completed CASI-based questionnaires regarding their risk behaviors and possible health barriers
- Barriers were grouped into domains a-priori based on source of barrier: personal, logistical, or provider.
- Fisher's exact test was used to analyze frequency distributions in health insurance coverage and reported barriers.

**Table 1: Health insurance coverage**

	Insured	p-value
<b>Race</b>		
White	159 (79.9%)	0.913
Black	37 (77.1%)	
Other	23 (79.1%)	
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Latino	64 (82.1%)	0.513
Not Latino	154 (77.8%)	
<b>Income</b>		
< \$1000/month	16 (69.6%)	0.164
≥ \$1000/month	179 (82.1%)	
<b>Education</b>		
High school or less	14 (73.7%)	0.644
College	158 (78.6%)	
Post-graduate	48 (82.8%)	
<b>Barriers</b>		
Personal	No 79.0%	0.839
	Yes 81.8%	
Logistical	No 86.7%	0.001
	Yes 70.7%	
Provider	No 79.1%	0.839
	Yes 81.4%	

**Table 2: Reported logistical barriers to intention to continue PrEP**

	Intend to continue	p-value
<b>Logistical Barriers</b>		
None	119 (85.6%)	0.016
Any	80 (72.7%)	
No transportation		
No	191 (79.6%)	0.692
Yes	8 (88.9%)	
Takes too much time		
No	178 (81.7%)	0.092
Yes	21 (67.7%)	
Cost		
No	133 (82.6%)	0.19
Yes	66 (75.0%)	
Worries about immigration status		
No	198 (79.8%)	>0.99
Yes	1 (100%)	

**Table 3: Other reported barriers**

	Intend to continue
<b>Personal Barriers</b>	
None	168 (81.2%)
Any	31 (73.8%)
Don't know how to access	9 (100%)
Other health problems are interfering	0 (0%)
Forget	11 (73.3%)
Other things take priority	7 (7%)
Doesn't believe it will improve health	4 (57.2%)
Worries others will pass judgment	2 (66.7%)
Prefers alternative treatment (prevention strategies)	6 (50%)
<b>Provider Barriers</b>	
None	168 (80.8%)
Any	31 (75.6%)
Previous bad clinic experience	3 (50%)
Doesn't trust "the system"	5 (62.5%)
Clinic too busy	24 (77.4%)

## Results

### Baseline Characteristics

- N=281 participants
- Average time on study was 36 weeks
- Mean age was 35 years old (IQR, 28-40)
- 72% self-identified as White, 17% Black, 28% Latino, and 1% transgender

### Health Insurance Coverage:

- 79% reported having health insurance coverage
- Participants reporting any logistical health care barrier were significantly less likely to have health insurance than those that did not report any barriers (71% vs 87%, p=0.001)
- No statistically significant differences in age, race, ethnicity, education, income, risk behavior, and depression score between participants with and without health insurance coverage
- Logistical barriers include cost of medications, lack of transportation to facility, length of visit, and worry over immigration status

### Intent to continue PrEP:

- 80% (206/256) of participants intend to continue PrEP after study ends
- Latinos trended towards higher intention to continue PrEP than non-Latinos (89% vs 78%, p=0.07).
- Those reporting logistical barriers had lower intention to continue PrEP (73% vs 86%, p=0.016)
- Most frequently cited barriers were cost (35%), time (12%), and unable to schedule appointment (12%)
- No significant differences in demographics, risk behavior, substance use, and depression score between subjects that intended to continue PrEP vs do not intend to continue after study completion

## Conclusions

- Most participants had health insurance coverage and intended to continue PrEP after study completion**
- Although cost was reported to be a barrier to continuing PrEP, time efficient provider visits, ease of access, and streamlined service delivery are all important in implementation of PrEP in a real world setting.**



### Acknowledgments

This work was supported by award EI-11-SD-005 from the California HIV/ AIDS Research Program and award IN-US-276-D036 from Gilead Sciences, Inc. Study drug was provided by Gilead Sciences, Inc. The funders had no role in study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript and the award