

AN EXTRAORDINARY DECADE: THE RAPID EVOLUTION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF PREP ACCESS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

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This presentation will review the extraordinary progress made in the last decade to make pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) available to some at-risk populations in Australia and New Zealand, and the ongoing challenge to achieve equitable access for all in need. Access to PrEP was difficult in the immediate period following international trial results, and community ingenuity and activism supported by enterprising clinicians was necessary to provide access, through the personal importation of generic drugs. With a delay imposed by regulatory hurdles, and the slow process of obtaining a public subsidy for PrEP, demonstration projects were developed in the eastern states of Australia, which have subsequently been expanded to deliver PrEP to thousands of primarily gay and bisexual men at risk of HIV. These studies have been driven by state health departments, researchers and community organisations eager for PrEP to provide new prevention options and curtail local HIV epidemics. Progress in developing PrEP access across the region has, of course, been patchy, and there are jurisdictions with little or no formal access to PrEP, due to lack of political will, restricted resources and infrastructure. Marginalised communities may be at risk of being left behind as PrEP uptake increases. How to circumvent these constraints and develop more equitable access is increasingly a focus of the field.

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