

PROGRESS TOWARD VIRTUALLY ELIMINATING HIV TRANSMISSIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

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Issues:

Gay and bisexual men (GBM) continue to be over-represented in HIV diagnoses in New Zealand and until 2016 infections were continuing to rise.

Successful international demonstrations prompted New Zealand AIDS Foundation (NZAF) to develop a comprehensive behaviour-change strategy incorporating condoms, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), scaled-up testing and prompt treatment to achieve an 80% reduction in transmissions among GBM by 2025.

Description:

Interventions included:

- Advocacy resulting in public funding of PrEP and the removal of the CD4 threshold for accessing treatment
- Supporting a capable workforce by developing a national consensus statement on HIV prevention and delivering PrEP training through partnerships
- Improving access by developing PrEP service map, rapid testing drop-in clinics, outreach testing and HIV-self-testing.
- Launching a multi-channel behaviour change campaign, Ending HIV, to empower GBM with updated information and mobilise them to join a social movement to end new transmissions.

Lessons learned:

An interconnected approach to change has contributed to supportive policies and services, increased community knowledge and a reduction in HIV diagnoses. From 2016-2018:

- HIV diagnoses among GBM (infected in NZ) decreased by 39%
- GBM reporting HIV testing <12mths increased from 47% to 61%
- NZAF-provided HIV tests increased by 50%. 2000 HIV self-tests were distributed
- 1750 GBM accessed funded PrEP
- GBM reporting consistent condom-use declined. However, when excluding those using biomedical prevention, this was not statistically significant.
- 71% of GBM reported recall of the Ending HIV brand.

Next steps:

Ongoing challenges include resurgent STIs, inconsistent PrEP readiness in primary care and no recent behavioural surveillance.