



January 26, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Enact SB 339 (Wiener) HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Access

Dear Governor Newsom,

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) applauds the state of California for recognizing the importance of increasing access to health care, and **respectfully requests your signature on SB 339 (Wiener) to meaningfully build on California’s work to expand access to lifesaving HIV prevention.** Specifically, this bill works to expand access to HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) by leveraging the reach and clinical expertise of California pharmacists. Importantly, SB 339 also requires health insurers to cover HIV prevention care services, including testing, provided by a pharmacist. This provision is critical to helping ensure public access, affordability, and health equity.

HIV prevention medications, such as PrEP and PEP, are used to help prevent patients from contracting HIV. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection in high-risk people by up to 92% when taken consistently. Unfortunately, 75% of people who could benefit from PrEP are not currently accessing it. With nearly 90% of California’s population living within five miles of a pharmacy, measures like SB 339 will bridge current access and implementation gaps still observed by Californians – especially those who may opt not to, or who are unable to, go to a clinic or another healthcare setting – so that they can receive these potentially lifesaving drugs. According to a recent poll commissioned by NACDS and conducted by Morning Consult, 87% of Californians say it is easy to access pharmacies, ranking their accessibility the highest among healthcare destinations tested. Furthermore, 72% of Californians support pharmacists initiating medications to help prevent HIV.

NACDS strongly supports measures that allow for increased access to pharmacist-provided clinical care, to help fill access gaps and improve health and wellness across the nation. This includes improving access to preventive care, like HIV PrEP and PEP. Enacting SB 339 will help reduce existing access and implementation barriers to pharmacy-based HIV prevention care, and better equip pharmacists to meet the needs of their patients and communities across California. NACDS strongly urges you to sign SB 339 (Wiener).

Sincerely,

Steven C. Anderson, FASAE, CAE, IOM
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Association of Chain Drug Stores

cc: Senator Scott Wiener, Author

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NACDS represents traditional drug stores, supermarkets and mass merchants with pharmacies. Chains operate over 40,000 pharmacies, and NACDS' chain member companies include regional chains, with a minimum of four stores, and national companies. Chains employ nearly 3 million individuals, including 155,000 pharmacists. They fill over 3 billion prescriptions yearly, and help patients use medicines correctly and safely, while offering innovative services that improve patient health and healthcare affordability. NACDS members also include more than 900 supplier partners and over 70 international members representing 21 countries. Please visit NACDS.org.