



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
CHAIN DRUG STORES

June 3, 2024

The Honorable Jeff Landry  
Office of the Governor  
State of Louisiana  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804  
*Submitted via email*

**Re: Enact HB 579 – Expanding Needed Access to HIV Prevention Medications**

Dear Governor Landry:

On behalf of our members operating in the State of Louisiana, the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) strongly urges you to sign HB 579 by Rep. Wayne McMahan as it will improve critical community access to HIV prevention services. NACDS applauds the Louisiana legislature, with guidance from the Department of Health, for recognizing the need for better access and working to expand options for at-risk patients to receive timely, convenient, and lifesaving care at their local neighborhood pharmacies.

Louisiana has one of the highest rates of HIV in the United States. The Louisiana Department of Health reports that there are more than 23,000 people living with HIV in the state as of March 2024, with 875 new diagnoses in 2023 alone.<sup>1</sup> Pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP and PEP) are highly effective at preventing HIV. When taken consistently, PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection by 99% according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).<sup>2</sup> Importantly, pharmacists offer accessibility, trust, and clinical expertise in a destigmatizing environment to promote better health, including for HIV prevention, across communities. Further, research proves pharmacist-led HIV prevention services are safe, effective, and beneficial to public health.<sup>3,4,5</sup>

Residents of Louisiana support the role of pharmacists in HIV prevention. In fact, a recent poll commissioned by NACDS and conducted by Morning Consult indicates that 68% of Louisianians support pharmacists administering simple HIV tests at pharmacies; 63% of Louisianians support pharmacists prescribing HIV preventive medications to those who may not have been exposed to HIV (pre-exposure prophylaxis or PrEP); and 62% of Louisianians support pharmacists prescribing HIV preventive medications to those who have possibly been exposed (post-exposure prophylaxis or PEP).<sup>6</sup>

Passage of this bill will be a significant step forward in improving the lives of Louisianians, especially for people who are unable or prefer not to go to a clinic or another healthcare setting for HIV prevention services. We appreciate your leadership and attention to this critical public health issue and we strongly urge you to sign this bill into law to help modernize Louisiana's healthcare system for the public's benefit. If you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance, please contact NACDS' Mary Staples at [mstaples@nacds.org](mailto:mstaples@nacds.org), or 817-442-1155.

Sincerely,

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

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NACDS represents traditional drug stores, supermarkets and mass merchants with pharmacies. Chains operate over 40,000 pharmacies, and NACDS' 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](https://www.nacds.org).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/HIVSTD/2024-reports/First-Quarter-2024-HIV-and-Syphilis-Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/stophivtogether/hiv-prevention/prep.html>

<sup>3</sup> Ryan K, Lewis J, Sanchez D, Anderson B, Mercier RC. 1293. The Next Step in PrEP: Evaluating Outcomes of a Pharmacist-Run HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Clinic. *Open Forum Infect Dis*. 2018 Nov 26;5(Suppl 1):S395. doi: 10.1093/ofid/ofy210.1126. PMID: PMC6252683.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30401342/>

<sup>4</sup> Tung EL, Thomas A, Implementation of a community pharmacy-based pre-exposure prophylaxis service: a novel model for pre-exposure prophylaxis care. Nov 2018. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30401342>

<sup>5</sup> Pharmacist-Led, Same-Day, HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Initiation Program to Increase PrEP Uptake and Decrease Time to PrEP Initiation. *AIDS Patient Care STDS*. 2020;34(1):1-6. doi:10.1089/apc.2019.0235 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6983741/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nacds.org/pdfs/Opinion-Research/NACDS-OpinionResearch-Louisiana.pdf>