



February 10, 2025

Dr. Samuel Burgess
Director, STD, HIV, and Hepatitis Program
Bureau of Infectious Disease
Louisiana Department of Health
1450 Poydras St., Suite 2136
New Orleans, LA 70112

Via email: samuel.burgess@la.gov

Re: Support Proposed Rule Enhancing Public Access to HIV Prevention Services via Pharmacies

Dear Dr. Burgess,

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) is writing to the Louisiana Department of Health in support of the proposed rules to implement HB579 which enables pharmacists to offer HIV prevention services – from providing HIV testing to dispensing and administering HIV pre-exposure and post-exposure prophylaxis medications. Louisiana has one of the highest rates of HIV in the United States, with reports of more than 23,000 people living with HIV as of March 2024 and 875 new diagnoses in 2023 alone.¹ Pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP and PEP) are highly effective at preventing HIV, but need to be more readily available within communities. Pharmacists provide accessibility, trust, and clinical expertise in a destigmatizing environment to promote better health, including for HIV prevention. Research has also proven that pharmacist-led HIV prevention services are safe, effective, and beneficial to the public.^{2,3,4}

Further, Louisiana residents support the role of pharmacists in HIV prevention. 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). Importantly, 69% also support pharmacists being adequately paid for testing and initiating treatment.⁵

NACDS applauds the successful passage of HB579 and strongly urges the Louisiana Department of Health to follow suit in finalizing the proposed rules to secure broader access to essential care and improve the lives of Louisianians. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact NACDS' Mary Staples, Director, State Government Affairs at MStaples@NACDS.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven C. Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

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

###

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

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

² 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/>

³ 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>

⁴ 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/>

⁵ <https://www.nacds.org/pdfs/Opinion-Research/NACDS-OpinionResearch-Louisiana.pdf>