

PrEP Community Congratulates Prepped Smart & Healthy on Million Dollar Milestone

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday 7 September 2020 - Thorne Harbour Health (formerly the Victorian AIDS Council) congratulates Prepped Smart and Healthy on contributing over \$1 million towards eliminating HIV in Australia by creating greater access to cost effective Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). PrEP, a daily pill, prevents the acquisition of HIV. In just over two years, Prepped Smart and Healthy has supported thousands of individuals to access PrEP by subsidising the cost.

“Prepped Smart & Healthy is doing remarkable work in supporting people to overcome financial barriers and take control of their health and wellbeing through the use of PrEP,” said Thorne Harbour Health CEO Simon Ruth.

“It is through the collective action of organisations like Prepped Smart and Healthy that we’re going to see the virtual elimination of HIV across Australia.”

The program aims to reduce the cost of medication down a third of the usual cost. For example, general patients with a Medicare card can expect to pay \$41 for a three-month supply as opposed to \$123. For Concession card holders the cost would be reduced from \$19.80 to just \$6.60. Last year, Thorne Harbour Health awarded Prepped Smart & Healthy’s founder, Joseph Tesoriero, the 2019 President’s Award after the newly-established charity distributed more than \$500,000 in subsidies after its first year. To date, it’s estimated that as many as 5,000 people have accessed PrEP through this program on multiple occasions.

Joseph Tesoriero is also the Proprietor of the HealthSmart Group of Pharmacies that Prepped Smart & Healthy has stemmed from.

“The purpose of Prepped Smart and Healthy is to make medications more affordable for those marginalised communities where the high cost may prevent access. By removing the barrier of financial burden, adherence is made easier and the risk of medication failure is lowered, enabling better health outcomes,” said Tesoriero.

The milestone in HIV prevention has been applauded by advocacy groups and community organisations that have worked to gain access to this biomedical tool for HIV prevention.

PrEP access advocacy group [PAN \(PrEP Access Now\)](#) expressed their gratitude by saying, “On behalf of the PAN committee, we extend our most sincere thanks to Joseph and the Prepped Smart and Healthy team for this astounding achievement. The Australian PrEP community fought long and hard for affordable access to HIV preventative medication to better take charge of their sexual health. To have such profound support has undoubtedly benefited so many. This news is especially poignant as we navigate a global crisis where we have never been so cognisant of our health and wellbeing”

Founders of the online community group [PrEP’D For Change](#) added, “PrEP’D For Change commends Prepped Smart & Healthy for their dedication to supporting communities at risk of HIV and improving affordable access to this gamechanging medication beyond the subsidy made possible by the Australian Government. The significant uptake of this charitable offer is testament to PrEP user’s ongoing commitment to protecting themselves and their communities.”

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