



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
of BRITISH COLUMBIA



Sonia Furstenu MLA  
Cowichan Valley

November 7, 2017

Dear Minister Dix,

British Columbia has historically been a leader in the fight against HIV. We are home to world leading research and outreach. British Columbians have access to testing, treatment, support and counselling, and referrals that help support people living with HIV. Our province is home to an incredible network of compassionate and caring people.

However the virus continues to disproportionately impact our communities. In particular, gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men make up more than 50% of infections in British Columbia, a number which has not changed over the last decade. More than 250 British Columbians contract HIV each year, costing the healthcare system millions in treatment costs.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is an HIV prevention drug that has been proven to prevent HIV in both clinical trials and real-world settings, and has been approved by Health Canada. PrEP, which is taken in the form of a once-a-day pill, is provided at no cost in many places around the world and is publicly covered in Quebec. When taken consistently, PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection in people who are at high risk by up to 92%. However, in British Columbia, Pharmacare still does not cover PrEP for HIV prevention. PrEP is currently available by prescription, but costs between \$500 and \$1,000 per month, and is only accepted by some extended health plans. The BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS has recommended PrEP coverage in British Columbia.

During the last election John Horgan, when interviewed by Xtra, pledged that if elected to government he would extend coverage to PrEP in British Columbia. This is an important tool in prevention and harm reduction for people at risk of contracting HIV.

I am requesting you please look into the status of this application for approval of PrEP to ensure that there are no unnecessary delays in the process of this application.

Thank you,

Sonia Furstenu  
MLA for Cowichan Valley

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