

# DUDE, WHERE'S MY PREP? IN CELEBRATING PREP ON THE PBS, WHO GETS A RAW DEAL?

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## Background/Purpose:

PAN is a grassroots, community-led, volunteer-run organisation providing education and support for people who use or are considering using PrEP. The listing of PrEP on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in Australia means access for the majority of PrEP users. However, the price of PrEP on the PBS creates barriers for people previously accessing free or reduced cost PrEP via clinical studies. Barriers included Medicare ineligibility and low income or financial instability.

People involved in soon ending trials, who have potentially undergone behavioural change are at higher risk for HIV acquisition if they are unable to access PrEP due to cost barriers.

## Approach:

To address issues of access to PrEP, PAN developed the Coupon Assistance Scheme, which provides access to free PrEP including shipping.

The scheme is sustained by the profits from each paid order of PrEP contributing to a fund, which covers the cost. Applications require verification of a valid Australian PrEP script. Approved applicants are provided with a code to enter upon checkout at a recommended PrEP pharmacy, utilising the Personal Importation Scheme.

## Outcomes/Impact:

The scheme has assisted hundreds of individuals accessing PrEP due to Medicare ineligibility, clinical study capacity or unavailability, and low income or financial instability. Positive feedback is received from those accessing the scheme.

There is potential burden on the scheme as Medicare ineligible individuals exit clinical studies, as they are unable to access PBS pricing. Burden is also placed upon the scheme as some PrEP users migrate away from importing to sourcing PrEP under the PBS – reducing the amount of coupons.

## Innovation and Significance:

The scheme is unique, and the first of its kind to operate anywhere globally and has been adopted by state AIDS councils, and mirrored by international groups. PAN's coupons often provide the sole route of access to PrEP to many.

## Disclosure of Interest Statement:

*PrEPaccessNOW Inc. is a unfunded not-for-profit organisation, and a founding member of the Victorian PrEP accord. Michael also works for the Victorian AIDS Council, and is a co-investigator on the PrEPX clinical study. No governmental or pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this project.*