

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 187

BY SENATOR DUPLESSIS

A RESOLUTION

To recognize June 26, 2023, as National HIV Testing Awareness Day and to support the efforts of the federal government in ending the HIV epidemic in the state of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, in 2019, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched the "Ending the HIV Epidemic" (EHE) initiative with the goal of reducing new Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infections by 90% by 2030, through the four key pillars of the EHE initiative: diagnose, treat, prevent, and respond; and

WHEREAS, many people may experience health literacy barriers due to social determinants, and this lack of awareness may limit an individual's ability to recognize and advocate for necessary medical care including treatment that is best suited for their health needs, and engage in a shared decision-making approach with their providers; and

WHEREAS, disparities in diagnosis and health outcomes are driven by a broad range of factors such as access to reliable testing resources and treatments which can positively impact health outcomes by directing patients to appropriate care; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved multiple pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) medications that are extremely effective at preventing individuals from acquiring HIV, as studies have shown a correlation between increased PrEP uptake and decreases in new HIV diagnoses in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, inequities in access to PrEP across populations vulnerable to HIV have led to increasing disparities in HIV incidence, transmission, and viral suppression, with a lower percentage of African Americans and Hispanics actively taking PrEP or discussing PrEP with a healthcare provider; and

WHEREAS, to support EHE efforts to expand access to HIV prevention therapies, all health care providers should be educated on the value of PrEP, and should be available to provide PrEP when an individual is ready for it; and

WHEREAS, states should prioritize access to PrEP, including new innovative modalities and enforcing Affordable Care Act requirements that U. S. Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) A or B rated services should be available to beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, states should support the under and uninsured populations through support of state and federally funded PrEP programs.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize June 26, 2023, as National HIV Testing Awareness Day, and does hereby recognize the importance of open access to all FDA-approved HIV medications and HIV-related health care services and treatments, including the crucial importance of testing and PrEP, the "Ending the HIV Epidemic" initiative, and improving health outcomes, reducing health disparities, reducing transmission of HIV, and encouraging state policymakers to implement policies to do the same.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE