

Abstract

A Multi-Team Approach to Advocate for Legislation Promoting HIV Prevention Among Maryland Minors

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 1.1 million people in the US are living with HIV with more than 15% of these yet to be diagnosed. More than 1 in 5 of all new HIV diagnoses are young people between the ages of 13 and 24.

The CDC recommends that providers screen individuals between the ages of 13-64 for HIV at least once as a part of routine healthcare. For individuals who are at risk, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) (Truvada) is available and when taken correctly, is 95% effective in preventing HIV infection. This antiretroviral therapy was approved for use in adults in 2012 and in teens aged 13-17 in 2018. Maryland Minor Consent Laws state that persons under the age of 18 have the same capacity as adults to consent to treatment for or to receive advice about sexually transmitted infections. Although this law enables minors to give consent for testing and treatment for HIV/STI, it does not enable minors to give consent to prevent HIV by initiating PrEP therapy.

Public health nurses from a Maryland local health department joined efforts with some public health professionals from Morgan State University and the University of Maryland School of Nursing to initiate a legal review of this gap by Maryland's Attorney General. We will report on the results of legislative efforts in Maryland to address this gap and enable minors to give consent to prevent HIV. Minor Consent Laws may impact PrEP programs in other states.

Advocacy for health and health education Chronic disease management and prevention Epidemiology Ethics, professional and legal requirements Provision of health care to the public Public health or related laws, regulations, standards, or guidelines

