



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
CENTRE for EXCELLENCE  
in HIV/AIDS

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July 3, 2012

Dear Doctor:

The BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS (BC-CfE) is posed to implement a second component of Treatment as Prevention (TasP). We will be implementing an 18-month Non-Occupational Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (NPEP) pilot project in Vancouver at select sites (see below), July 09, 2012.

Treatment as Prevention is a concept pioneered by the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS (BC-CfE). The aim is to engage HIV positive individuals earlier into treatment by expanding access to antiretroviral medications thereby significantly reducing the number of new HIV infections in B.C. You may already be aware of the Seek and Treat for Optimal Prevention of HIV/AIDS (STOP HIV/AIDS) pilot project, NPEP is a second component of Treatment as Prevention.

In British Columbia, for more than 15 years, the BC-CfE has provided a post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) program, which offers anti HIV medication for exposure to HIV in the occupational (e.g. healthcare, corrections) and sexual assault settings. However, there is no publicly funded program for high-risk HIV exposure from consensual sexual or injection drug use.

While there is no B.C. scientific data related to the occurrences of NPEP events, anecdotal information suggests there are individuals who seek medical intervention related to consensual sexual or injection drug use with the potential of a high risk HIV exposure. At present, these individuals have no publicly funded medical intervention recourse. Consensus guidelines from the US Department of Health and Human Services supporting PEP in the non-occupational setting (NPEP) were published in 2005. These guidelines acknowledge the scientific importance of NPEP in an HIV prevention portfolio. In addition, studies show that when antiretroviral therapy is offered in a timely manner after exposure (within 72 hours), the risk of acquiring HIV decreases by approximately 80%.

The BC-CfE NPEP pilot project in Vancouver is designed to deal specifically with high-risk exposure to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and is not applicable to other infections such as hepatitis. The aim is to provide prophylaxis for high-risk non-occupational exposure to HIV e.g. through sex or needle sharing. Pharmacare has agreed to support this pilot project with HIV antiretroviral medications. Again, this will be

for HIV high-risk situations, it is not the intent of this pilot project to prophylax all sexual or needle sharing events when there is no risk.

In partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), Provincial Health Service Authority (PHSA), Providence Health Care (PHC), Spectrum Health Clinic and under the leadership of the BC-CfE, the following sites have been identified to participate in the pilot:

VCH - Downtown Community Health Clinic (DCHC) and Health Initiative for Men (HIM)  
PHSA – BCCDC – Bute Street Clinic  
PHC – St Paul's Hospital Emergency Department and  
Spectrum Health Clinic (seeing only their clients)

The health care providers at these pilot sites will see NPEP clients, assess for NPEP eligibility and start treatment as determined appropriate (only physicians can prescribe NPEP). These individuals will then be followed throughout their treatment cycle.

Over the 18-month pilot, the BC-CfE will collect data related to NPEP, assess the impact on the health care system and with that information, at the completion of the pilot, develop recommendations for the Ministry of Health Pharmacare program.

Please keep in mind, this is not a provincial program, NPEP is a pilot project, only available at the sites identified above.

We are pleased to be leading this pilot, with the intent of further decreasing the occurrence of new HIV infections. And yes, we are making progress. B.C. is the only province in Canada demonstrating a consistent decline in new HIV infections. We have moved from having approximately 900 new cases of HIV per year in the mid 90's to 289 new cases in 2011.

Together, we can stop HIV/AIDS.

Should you have any questions related to the NPEP pilots please do not hesitate to e-mail [iday@cfenet.ubc.ca](mailto:iday@cfenet.ubc.ca).

Sincerely,



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