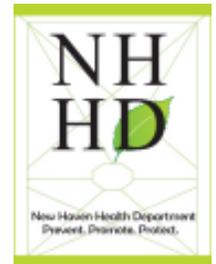


TONI N. HARP
MAYOR

CITY OF NEW HAVEN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

54 Meadow Street – 9th Floor • New Haven • Connecticut 06519
Phone 203-946-6999 • Fax 203-946-7234



BYRON KENNEDY, MD, PhD, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

Testimony in Support of House Bill 6540 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF HIV PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE 25 FEBRUARY 2019

To the distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 6540, *An Act Concerning the Prevention of HIV*. My name is Byron Kennedy and I am the Health Director for the City of New Haven Health Department. As Director, I am responsible for ensuring the health and safety of nearly 130,000 residents. I am also a physician Board Certified in Preventive Medicine, with clinical experience in providing care to both children and adults, including those with sexually transmitted infections.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that minors have access to preventive and prophylactic interventions to reduce their risk from potential HIV exposures. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), among those who are HIV positive and aged 13 to 24, only half know that they are infected. For the other half of young people who do not know their status, they may transmit HIV infection to their sexual partners unknowingly. These data highlight opportunities for prevention, including increased awareness of HIV risk as well as offering appropriate screening tests for youth.

Additionally, last year, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved daily oral antiretroviral preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP) with Truvada for adolescents and adults who weigh at least 35 kilograms (77 pounds). Indeed, PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV transmission by 92% and is also recommended by the CDC. However, for youth, multiple barriers may reduce access to prevention and management services, including concerns about confidentiality such as the sharing of information about services sought/received with parents or guardians (e.g., through the consent process, Explanation of Benefits).

In summary, I strongly support HB 6540 because it will protect the health and safety of Connecticut's youth by reducing their risk to HIV. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Byron Kennedy, MD, PhD, MPH
Director of Health
City of New Haven