

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 6540
AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF HIV**

By Dr. Sheela Shenoï
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Yale University School of Medicine
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To the distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

I respectfully submit the following testimony in support of H.B. 6540, *An Act Concerning the Prevention of HIV*. I am a physician from Yale University School of Medicine, specializing in Infectious Diseases. I have spent the majority of my career treating patients with HIV and determining strategies to improve clinical outcomes of those with HIV. The scientific and public health literature reflect that we cannot control the HIV epidemic with improving diagnostic and treatment initiatives – we must pay attention to prevention. Teenagers and adolescents are at the highest risk of HIV in the US.

I believe the proposed bill is critical because I constantly see patients, young people with their whole lives in front of them, laden with a chronic medical condition with tremendous stigma which prevents them from living their everyday lives. These are young people who could have benefitted from access to HIV prevention tools such as pre-exposure prophylaxis.

Right now, while youth can get treatment for HIV independently, they cannot access PrEP without parental consent. The reality is that young people often do not discuss with their parents the behaviors that put them at risk. This should not be a barrier to accessing tools to prevent a lifelong medical condition with such devastating implications on people's lives. *An Act Concerning the Prevention of HIV* would implement a targeted provision to address this harmful gap by adding language to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 19a-592.

I take care of young men and women who did not have access to prevention. It is time to give young people the opportunity to have access to care.

I strongly support H.B. 6540 and I strongly urge you to vote favorably for this important bill. No young person should have to wait until after contracting HIV to access care. Your support will protect the health and safety of Connecticut's children. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Sheela Shenoï
Yale University School of Medicine
Sheela.shenoï@yale.edu