Trans-forming PrEP in Vietnam: Rethinking service delivery to enhance access among transgender women

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Evolution of key population community-led HIV and health care

From 2014 – an evolution of key population (KP) community-led HIV/health care.

Role? Defining, co-creating and leading campaigns, online-to-offline reach efforts, direct HIV service delivery, and implementing and monitoring continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts.

KP-led health services: first one stop shop clinic model in 2016 offering integrated HIV, STI, viral hepatitis, TB, and mental health services

Reach Test PrEP ART

Assessing needs Design Implementation CQI

12 KP clinics and counting
Transgender women risk perception, PrEP awareness and uptake

18% HIV and syphilis prevalence measured among transgender women in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC)*

61% Self-assessed as being at high risk for HIV**

69% Of transgender women said they had heard of PrEP while 7.6% had ever used PrEP***

3.4 Transgender women enrolled on PrEP on average each month in the first 18 months of PrEP roll out (March 2017 - September 2018)

Description – Offering gender-affirming PrEP

Transgender women leaders, key population-clinic staff and the USAID/PATH Healthy Markets team co-formulated and advanced three key actions:

**Online and offline engagement:** Directly addressing hormone-PrEP drug interaction concerns through online content, engagement with TGW peer PrEP experts (online and in-person), and small events that enabled Q&A with TGW peer PrEP experts and health workers.

**Training and coaching:** Tangerine Clinic/Academy-led training of PrEP clinic staff and community providers in transgender competent care.

**New services:**
- Offering routine hormone level testing and use counseling at PrEP clinics.
- Referral to gender-affirming surgery specialists.
- Substance use & mental health assessment and support.
- Ongoing HIV services (testing, PrEP/nPEP, ART, STI).
Strengthening a TGW-led CBOs and TGW-friendly clinic ecosystem through co-creation and technical collaboration

5 private clinics (3 in HCMC and 2 in Hanoi)
- 4 clinics are key population owned and led
- 1 clinic in KP-friendly private clinic in Hanoi
- Transgender women lay health workers employed by clinics and provide dedicated counseling and support to clients

4 transgender-led CBOs
- offer hormone counseling, HIV testing, PrEP screening, and link to clinical services
Increasing information on PrEP and hormone use

I was afraid that PrEP might have side effects and I wouldn’t stay beautiful
Free hormone testing promotion @ the 5 participating clinics
Lessons learned
PrEP uptake before and after integration of gender affirming services

Change in PrEP uptake among TGW at GLink, Galant, My Home & Bien Viet

Offered: 1) Information on PrEP and hormone use online and in small events; 2) hormone testing and counseling made available at KP clinics

Tangerine clinic trains PrEP clinics and TGW CSOs in trans-competent care in Hanoi and HCMC

COVID-19 lock-down (April & May)
Month 3 PrEP refills among transgender women have improved.
Conclusions & next steps

• To ensure PrEP is acceptable and accessible to transgender populations in Vietnam, services that aim to reach them need to offer trans-competent care and address underlying concerns among transgender populations about PrEP use.

• It is also essential that transgender populations be engaged as service providers and leaders at PrEP clinics to ensure that the care offered resonates with their needs; and that transgender owned and led clinics are established in Vietnam.

• The results presented today are being used to inform the development of national guidelines in Vietnam on HIV service delivery among transgender populations which will be essential to guide further expansion of gender-affirming care.
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