



The Network

MAY 2014

3

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What You Should Know About PrEP

“PrEP” stands for **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis**. The word “prophylaxis” means to *prevent* or control the spread of an infection or disease.

The goal of PrEP, a once-daily pill, is to prevent HIV infection if you are exposed to the virus.

This treatment is meant to be employed alongside other established risk-reduction measures, such as safer sex and regular HIV-testing. In fact, regular testing every 3 months is standard procedure for those individuals taking this medication.



In 2012, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the use of the drug Truvada as PrEP to reduce the risk of acquired HIV infection in adults who do not have HIV but are at high risk of becoming infected.

Studies have shown that PrEP provides a high level of protection against getting HIV for gay and bisexual men, heterosexual men and women, and injection drug users, *if the daily medication is taken consistently.*

* Only people who are HIV-

negative should use PrEP. An HIV test is required before starting PrEP and then every 3 months while taking it.

* PrEP is most effective when combined with other prevention efforts

like consistent condom use and safer injection practices, such as the use of syringe exchange programs like the one here in SLO (<http://www.slosep.net/>).

* PrEP involves taking daily medication consistently and frequent visits to a healthcare provider.

* PrEP medications can cause side effects like nausea in some people. These side effects can be treated and are not life threatening.

Another exciting development is that PrEP is now covered under Medi-Cal, meaning its availability should increase dramatically soon.

If you are interested in PrEP, or would like to know more, call us at 805-781-3660, or keep an eye on our Facebook page (Search: AIDS Support Network) for updates on where you can go to start PrEP!

News From Your Friendly Local Public Welfare Political Advocates

Did you know that the ASN & SLO Hep C Project (SLOHCP) have been your health welfare political advocates for over a decade?

For example, the SLOHCP was a founding member of a statewide advocacy group, the California Hepatitis Alliance (CalHEP), whose principal goal is to advocate for improved HCV policy, coordination, and

funding with a unified voice.

In recent news, the ASN's executive director, David Kilburn, assisted in creating ACR 138, a resolution recognize **May 19 as Viral Hepatitis Awareness Day.**

Senator William Monning and assembly member Katcho Achadjian have sponsored ACR 138 and are now calling on their colleagues to co-sponsor the

resolution with them. Thank you Senator Monning and Assembly Member Achadjian for spreading knowledge of this devastating disease our California state legislature.

Senator William Monning (left) and State Assembly Member Katcho Achadjian (right)



ACA News: What is a “Qualifying Event”?

Open 2014 open enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act is officially over. So what does that mean for you?

There are several “qualifying events” that will allow people to re-apply, adjust, or even apply for the first time to get

health insurance outside of the open enrollment period. These events include:

1. Getting married or being officially declared a domestic partnership.
2. Moving to CA from another state, or relocating within the state.
3. A change in your income or the number of people in your household.
4. New citizens or “newly lawfully present.”
5. A loss of health coverage.
6. American Indian or Alaskan Natives may enroll once a month.

7. Anyone who qualifies for Medi-Cal can apply throughout the year.

The next Open Enrollment Period for 2015 coverage is November 15, 2014 – February 15, 2015.

As always, our in-house Certified Enrollment Counselors are highly experienced, culturally competent, bilingual, and ready to help as you navigate Covered California.

If you have questions about a qualifying event, please call us at 805-781-3660.



May 19 is Viral Hepatitis Awareness Day in SL0!

“75% of the millions of Americans living HCV are unaware that they have this disease...”

Despite the fact that HCV causes more annual deaths than HIV, this chronic and devastating disease is only recently garnering the attention it requires. “

“Hepatitis” means inflammation of the liver and also refers to a group of viral infections that affect the liver.

Viral hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplantation.

An estimated 4.4 million Americans are living with chronic hepatitis; most do not know they are infected.

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV infection sometimes results in an acute illness, but most often becomes a chronic condition that can lead to cirrhosis of the liver and is a leading cause of liver cancer.

75% of the millions of Americans living HCV are unaware that they have this disease.

Despite the fact that HCV causes more annual deaths than HIV/AIDS, this chronic and devastating disease is only recently garnering the attention it requires.

Earlier this month, a renovated action plan to fight the hepatitis epidemic was released under the direction of the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Veterans Affairs.

Of the Action Plan’s major components, outreach, education, and testing are among the priority.

It is imperative that those individuals living with HCV become aware of their status, not only to reduce

transmission rates, but to make sure that they are connected care to treatments that could, potentially, lead to a cure.

Spread the word about this silent epidemic, and you could save a life!

If you or anyone you know would like to know more about Hep C or where you can get tested, call us at 805-543-HEP-C (4372).



Liver Health 101

By Alana Rodriguez

The liver has been called the filter of the body, but it does more than just that. The liver is a factory working hundreds of functions to keep your body in operation.

Some of the more well-known detoxifying functions include the production of bile used to break down and remove waste and clearing your blood of drugs and other poisons.

The liver also produces proteins for blood plasma, regulates blood clotting, as well as processes and stores iron.

If that's not enough to convince you that this organ deserves your attention,

consider a few of its other roles: production of the good cholesterol we need to carry fats through the body; conversion of glucose for energy; conversion of amino acids to form proteins; and it even helps us resist infection.

Weighing it at around three pounds, the liver is your largest internal organ; about the size of a football. It is located under your ribs, on the right side of your abdomen.

If you have ever had a doctor tap on your upper abdomen during a physical, they are feeling and listening to the density of your liver. Inflamed livers get

larger, but serious damage may cause the liver to become small and firm. A healthy liver lies in between. Other exams to test liver health include a hepatic functions panel. This is a blood test of enzyme levels that, in simple terms, indicates how well the liver is doing its job.

There are many things we can do to keep our livers healthy.

- * Try to eat a balanced diet loaded with lean proteins and vegetables.
- * Treat yourself to regular exercise.
- * Get enough restful sleep.
- * Manage stress by reducing stressors and practicing healthy coping skills.
- * Quit smoking.
- * Abstain from recreational drug use.
- * Limit alcohol.
- * Talk to your doctor about your prescriptions and supplements.
- * Get vaccinated for hepatitis A & B.
- * Get tested for hepatitis C.

“The liver is a factory working hundreds of functions to keep your body in operation.”

If you have any questions about liver health or how to apply these skills to your own life, contact the health counselors at the AIDS Support Network and SLO Hep C project.

Your support and the support of local community members and businesses are vital to our continuing ability to provide comprehensive services to our growing number of clients. There are many ways that you can make a generous donation!

- **Money:** ALL MONEY DONATED TO THE ASN IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE & REMAINS IN THIS COMMUNITY to help SLO County residents in their struggle with HIV/AIDS and/or Hep C.
- **Time:** One of the most important ways our community supports this agency is through the gift of time. Our Volunteer Program creates opportunities to directly assist clients and staff!
- **Food:** ASN's Food Panty is always in need of the basics. If you would like to hold a food drive, or donate food directly, we have a list of suggestions for you!

You will make a difference! Contact us, or visit ASN.org, for more details!

You Can
Make a
Difference!



The San Luis Obispo County AIDS Support Network remains the sole community-based, non-profit organization in this county that provides supportive services to residents living with HIV disease & AIDS, and their families and friends.

Mailing Address:
 P.O. Box 12158
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Physical Address:
 1320 Nipomo St.
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Phone: 805-781-3660
 800-491-9141
 Fax: 805-781-3664

The SLO Hep C Project is dedicated to meeting the needs of people living with hepatitis C and increasing public awareness through educational outreach in SLO County.

The agency strives to improve the quality of life and independence of its clients by providing support on an individual basis.

Lean more at ASN.org & SLOHepC.org

Upcoming Events & Opportunities!

We are proud to offer our community a wide variety of **volunteer opportunities**. You're sure to find one that's perfect for you!

Front Desk Volunteer:

Our front desk volunteers are the back bone of the office. They direct phone calls, greet incoming clients, help with distributing food from our pantry, and overall help to keep us sane! We love, LOVE, our front desk volunteers!

AIDS LifeCycle BBQ

June 4th
 Cuesta College Track
 Shift Times: 8-11a, 10:30-1p, and 12:30-3p

We'll be selling lunch during the lunch stop at Cuesta College for riders participating in the AIDS Lifecycle. We're looking for help serving lunch, selling lunches, and promoting the event, & encouraging riders! **Contact us for more details!**



Upcoming Events:

Drive-Thru BBQ Fundraiser!

May 7th, 2014
 Drive Thru Open: 3 pm - 7 pm
 First Baptist Church, SLO
 2075 Johnson Avenue
 San Luis Obispo, CA
 Tickets are \$20 for 1/2 a tri-tip & fixins & \$40 for a whole tri-tip & fixins.

Get Your Tickets Now at www.ASN.org!

Bike Breakfast

May 19th, 2014
 7 - 9 am
 ASN & SLOHCP
 1320 Nipomo St.
 San Luis Obispo, CA

We're hosting a breakfast for participants of Bike Month! Bike commuters stop by, grab a quick breakfast, and get some Hep C Awareness!

For more information, visit www.ASN.org