

February 16, 2022

Health Care Licenses Committee
Hearing on House Bill 4430

Chair Mah, Vice-Chair Burke, Republican Spokesperson Frese, and members of the Health Care Licenses Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Dr. Maya Green, and I am the Chief Medical Officer of the Southside Clinical Services at Howard Brown Health. At Howard Brown, we serve over 5,000 patients living with HIV, and we provide comprehensive and affirming HIV screening and prevention services, including PrEP and PEP. **We are committed to ending the HIV epidemic and that is why we strongly support HB 4430, which would expand access to PrEP and PEP through pharmacies.**

Expanding access to PrEP and PEP and ending the HIV epidemic is a racial justice issue. We know that PrEP and PEP are highly effective prevention methods for reducing the risk of acquiring HIV, and yet there remain stark disparities in PrEP awareness, uptake, and adherence among Black and Latinx communities who are most disproportionately impacted by HIV. These communities in particular have fewer access points to primary care and can be justifiably apprehensive in accessing healthcare due to historic and pervasive racism within medical institutions. In order to make meaningful progress in ending the HIV epidemic, we need to focus on increasing access to PrEP and PEP in Black and Latinx communities specifically, and this bill would help us do that by providing safe and convenient options outside of the healthcare system for people to access PrEP and PEP.

There is precedent in Illinois for successful collaboration between providers and pharmacists to expand access to vital healthcare services. We've seen this with contraception and more recently with COVID-19 vaccinations, and we know that the process for receiving preventative care in the pharmacy has been safe and effective. Providing PrEP and PEP in a pharmacy setting would similarly expand access to care, and it would also help to raise awareness about and destigmatize these preventative health measures. For a lot of people, accessing PrEP in a CVS or Target might be more comfortable than making an appointment at Howard Brown or an STI clinic.

Ultimately, as a provider, I know the importance of expanding access to primary and preventative healthcare, including PrEP and PEP. I've worked with many patients who struggled with the structural and logistical barriers to making the correct follow-up appointments, enduring long wait times, or otherwise navigating the healthcare system to get PrEP. These structural barriers within the healthcare system are compounded especially for people in rural areas or underserved communities that lack access to

healthcare in general. This bill will be especially important for these patients by opening additional avenues to accessing necessary preventative healthcare. Additionally, we know that increasing access to primary care will not only help to prevent disease, but also save on healthcare spending.

For all of these reasons, I support HB 4430 and urge all the members of the Health Care Licenses Committee to vote in favor of the bill.

Sincerely,

Dr. Maya Green