

The Collaborative Role of the Pharmacist in the NYS HIV PEP Hotline Initiative

The NYS PEP Hotline covers New York State (NYS) excluding the five boroughs of New York City (NYC). Mount Sinai Medical Center's HIV Program provides the hotline services through a contract with NYS Department of Health.

The success of this service model relies on a network of medical providers and pharmacists to support Hotline callers once the post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) medication is prescribed. The pharmacist dispensing PEP will be the first health care provider that the caller interacts with in person, and as such, can be instrumental in supporting a caller's understanding of PEP medications, and the importance of adherence to the PEP regimen.

What does the caller experience when they call the Hotline following a possible exposure to HIV?

Hotline callers are assessed by Mount Sinai staff and, when appropriate, prescribed PEP. Callers will be screened for insurance coverage before a prescription is transmitted, then the prescriptions are called in or electronically transmitted to a local pharmacy to minimize the time between the initial call and the first dose of PEP. In most cases, Truvada and either Isentress HD or Tivicay, will be ordered. In some cases, Stribild may be prescribed.

What are the participating pharmacy's responsibilities?

Pharmacies are expected to stock a 28-day supply of the most commonly prescribed PEP medications; Truvada, Tivicay, Isentress HD, and Stribild. When necessary, the pharmacist should assist the patient with accessing financial assistance for the uninsured or under-insured. The patient information sheet "[NYS PEP Hotline: Patient Follow-Up Guide](#)" should be provided to the patient at the time of pick-up.

Covering the cost of PEP Medication:

For most insured customers, copay assistance is readily available for the listed medications. However, due to the emergent nature of PEP, few patients can be expected to have completed the co-pay enrollment process before arriving at the pharmacy. The pharmacist may need to assist the patient with completing the co-pay assistance enrollment/application at the time of pick-up.

- If a prior authorization issue arises, the pharmacist should first contact the insurer or the pharmacy benefit manager to alert them that the medication is required for emergency PEP.
- If the patient has no insurance and requires voucher approval for medications, Hotline program staff will work with the prescriber and caller to complete the required applications and transmit the necessary information to the pharmacy. Full bottle vouchers generally require prescriber signatures and more extensive information which isn't available to the "on-call" covering provider. Depending on time of call and time of exposure, this may have to wait until the next business day. Normal business hours are *Monday – Friday 8:30 A.M.-5:00 P.M.* At that time program staff can facilitate the voucher approval process and obtain signatures from providers.
- In cases where holidays and weekends may result in a greater than 72 hours delay, the Hotline prescriber will direct those callers to the local emergency department.
- If insurance issues are identified at the pharmacy, and there are no other options available, the pharmacist should refer the patient to the nearest emergency department for evaluation and treatment.

The NYSDOH has posted a document of PEP payment options which is available at: https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/pep/docs/npep_payment_options.pdf.

In addition to providing financial guidance, the Mount Sinai patient navigator will provide counseling on PEP and can assist with identifying a local medical provider for clinical follow-up. If the initial call occurs outside of regular office hours, the patient navigator will contact the caller the next business day to provide counseling, reinforce the need for a medical visit and assist the caller with scheduling the follow-up visit.