The AIDS Institute commends the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) for issuing its final “A” grade for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for the prevention of HIV. This decision will widen the availability of PrEP, a once-daily medication that prevents the transmission of HIV, by solidifying the message to clinicians that PrEP should be offered to those at risk of HIV. It also means that most private insurance plans must cover the drug and do so without patient cost-sharing.

“PrEP is an invaluable tool in the fight to end the HIV epidemic, and this decision comes as the nation is opening a new front in the war on HIV. Making PrEP available without cost-sharing eliminates a major barrier to this landmark HIV prevention tool,” commented Michael Ruppal, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. “At a time when out-of-pocket costs are rising for patients as they seek access to medications, this recommendation is a win both for patients and public health.”

“While we know that access to PrEP involves much more than merely access to a daily pill, and PrEP uptake is lagging among many communities who need it, this positive recommendation from the USPSTF will provide a boost for the Administration’s plan to reduce new HIV infections by 90 percent in the United States by 2030,” explained Carl Schmid, Deputy Executive Director of The AIDS Institute.

The AIDS Institute will now work to ensure private insurance plans will be incorporating this new recommendation into their policies without unnecessary roadblocks, such as prior authorizations, that would impede access.
Medicaid beneficiaries in states that have expanded Medicaid will also gain access to PrEP without charge, while people in traditional Medicaid states will gain free access if their state has decided to cover all USPSTF preventive services. To date, at least 13 states have done so. Medicare will be required to cover PrEP, but in order for beneficiaries to receive it without cost-sharing, a coverage determination will still have to be conducted, something that The AIDS Institute is committed to pursuing.

The Task Force also reconfirmed its “A” grades for HIV screening for everyone between the ages of 15 and 65, those who are at risk above and below those ages, along with pregnant women.

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The AIDS Institute is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes action for social change through public policy, research, advocacy and education.

For more information and to become involved, visit www.TheAIDSInstitute.org or write to us at Info@theaidsinstitute.org, and follow The AIDS Institute on Twitter @AIDSAdvocacy and Facebook at www.facebook.com/The-AIDS-Institute.