

To the Minister for Healthcare and Sport

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Subject: advice *Preventive use of HIV medication*

Dear Minister,

On 11 October 2016, the then Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport asked the Health Council of the Netherlands for advice on Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for the prevention of HIV in the Netherlands. The direct reason was the admission, by the European Medicines Agency, of Truvada® for application as PrEP in Europe. A Committee set up for this purpose prepared the requested advice. During the meetings, the Committee heard representatives of stakeholder groups; the permanent Committee on Ethics and Law from the Health Council was also consulted. I hereby present the advice, after review by the Standing Committees on Public Health and Health Care. The advice is published on our website www.gezondheidsraad.nl, together with a short video to inform the general public.

The Committee recommends that PrEP be provided to the group with the highest risk of HIV: men who have sex with men (MSM) with high-risk behaviour. Based on completed and ongoing scientific research, PrEP appears to be effective in preventing HIV if drug adherence is high. PrEP is safe, with a very low risk of potentially serious (but reversible) side effects. At the current price, PrEP is expected to be cost-effective if used in a high-risk group that takes the drug correctly. PrEP offers the target group an opportunity to take responsibility for their own health.

In the Committee's opinion, providing PrEP requires careful medical supervision. This recommendation is urgent, as the recent fall in price could mean that people start taking PrEP without proper guidance. In addition, the Committee recommends that the effect on the HIV incidence and any adverse side effects, such as the occurrence of STIs and resistance, be monitored over the next five years.

I support the Committee's conclusions and recommendations.

Best regards,
(signed)

prof. dr. W.A. van Gool,
President