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February 22, 2024

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**Florida House of Representatives Unanimously Passes Rep. Gallop Franklin's Bill to Engage Pharmacists in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – The Florida House of Representatives today unanimously passed legislation ([CS/CS/HB 159](#)) sponsored by [Representative Gallop Franklin \(D-Tallahassee\)](#) to open the door for pharmacists to actively join Florida's fight against HIV/AIDS.

“Florida has among the highest HIV infection rates in the country. It's all-hands-on-deck in our state's fight against HIV/AIDS,” **Representative Franklin** said. “In Florida, HIV/AIDS has impacted far too many communities, destroyed too many lives, and broken the hearts of families. Enlisting pharmacists in this struggle is an incredible force multiplier that will reduce barriers and allow quick delivery of life-saving medication to people when they need it most.”

**Representative Franklin** noted, when taken within 72 hours of exposure, PEP therapy can significantly reduce the transmission of HIV.

The John W. Rhey Act, named in honor of [Representative Dana Trubuly's \(R-Fort Pierce\)](#) brother who died from AIDS, provides people exposed to HIV with emergency access to life-saving postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) therapy from a neighborhood pharmacist.

The legislation creates a partnership between pharmacists and physicians to allow a certified pharmacist to:

- Screen for HIV exposure;
- Order and dispense PEP medication to people exposed to HIV; and
- Advise people receiving PEP treatment to consult with their primary care physician.

According to the Florida Department of Health, in 2022 there were nearly 125,000 people living with the HIV in Florida. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, in 2021 Florida's HIV infection rate stood at 21.7 per 100,000 people, among the highest HIV infection rates in the country.

The Florida Senate Rules Committee next week is scheduled to consider the HIV-PEP companion bill ([CS/CS/SB 1320](#)). Sponsored by [Senator Alexis Calatayud](#), (**R-Miami**).

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