

Monitoring HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis uptake in Australia.



PBS-subsidised HIV Pre-exposure Prophylaxis from April 2018 to June 2020

Issue #3 August 2020¹

HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) first became available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on April 1st 2018. In the first two years and three months after PBS listing, 37 707 individuals were dispensed PBS-subsidised PrEP². Based on quantity and date dispensed, it is estimated that 23 428 individuals were taking PrEP in the three months to June 30th 2020³. The difference in these two numbers includes people who may have temporarily discontinued PrEP, accessed PrEP from other sources including self-importation or consumed small quantities of PrEP through intermittent use, on-demand use or non-adherence. This number represents an estimated decline from the prior three months due to COVID-19 and lockdown.

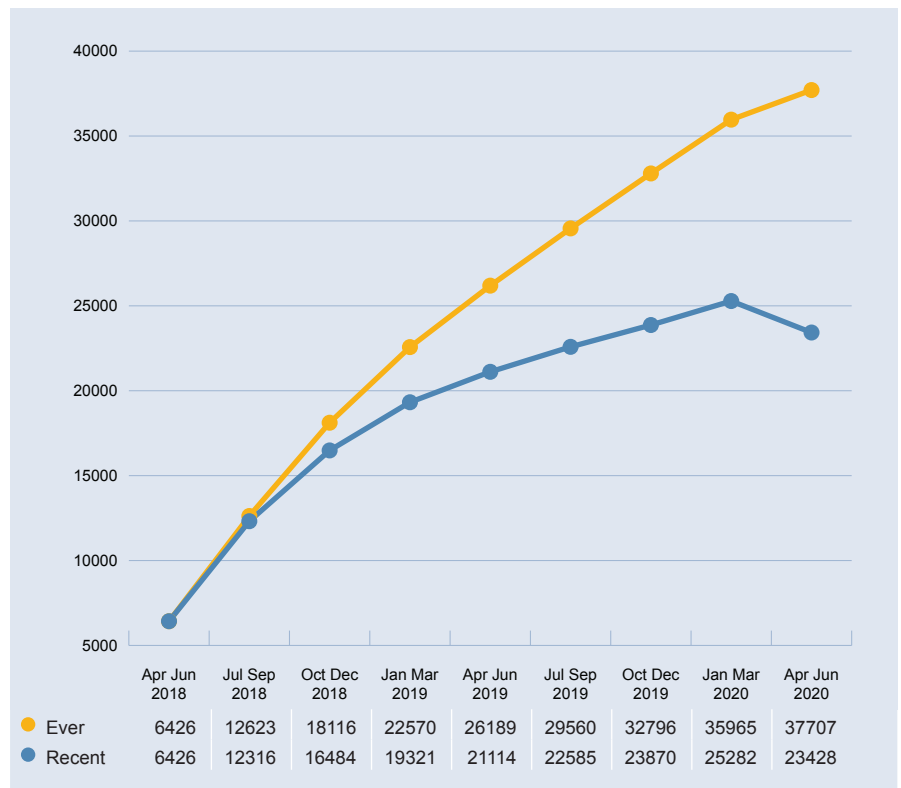


Figure 1: Total number of people who have ever received at least one dispensed PBS-subsidised PrEP prescription since April 1st 2018 compared to the estimated number who have used PBS-subsidised PrEP recently^{2,3}.



PrEP Initiation

In the first three months after PBS listing 6 426 individuals were dispensed PBS-subsidised PrEP for the first time. The number gradually declined to 3 169 individuals in the first three months of 2020². This includes those who initiated PrEP for the first time after PBS listing and those who transitioned from an implementation study⁴. In the three months to June 2020 the number initiating PrEP fell by 45.0% to 1 742 individuals.

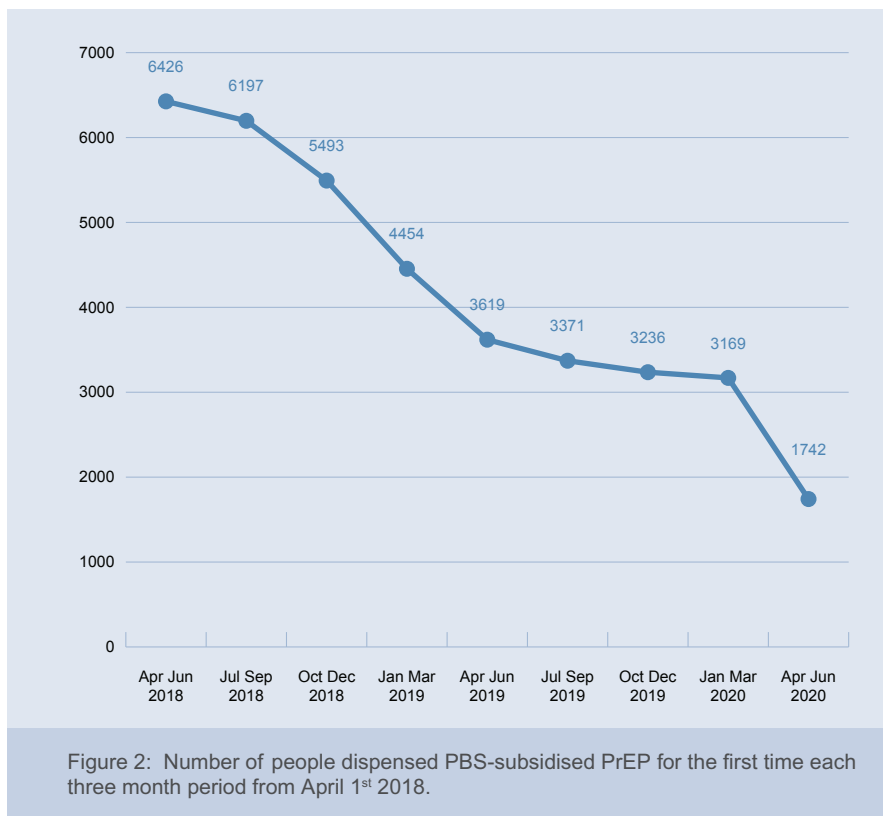


Figure 2: Number of people dispensed PBS-subsidised PrEP for the first time each three month period from April 1st 2018.

Gender and age distribution

Of the 37 707 individuals dispensed PBS-subsidised PrEP, 37 127 (98.5%) were recorded as male and 580 (1.5%) as female*. Of all individuals dispensed PBS-subsidised PrEP, 11 515 (30.5%) were aged 29 and under and 13 460 (35.7%) were aged 40 and over. The larger decline in initiation in older age groups may reflect a demographic difference between participants of implementation studies and those with first use after PBS listing. PrEP initiation in all age groups declined in the three months to June 2020.

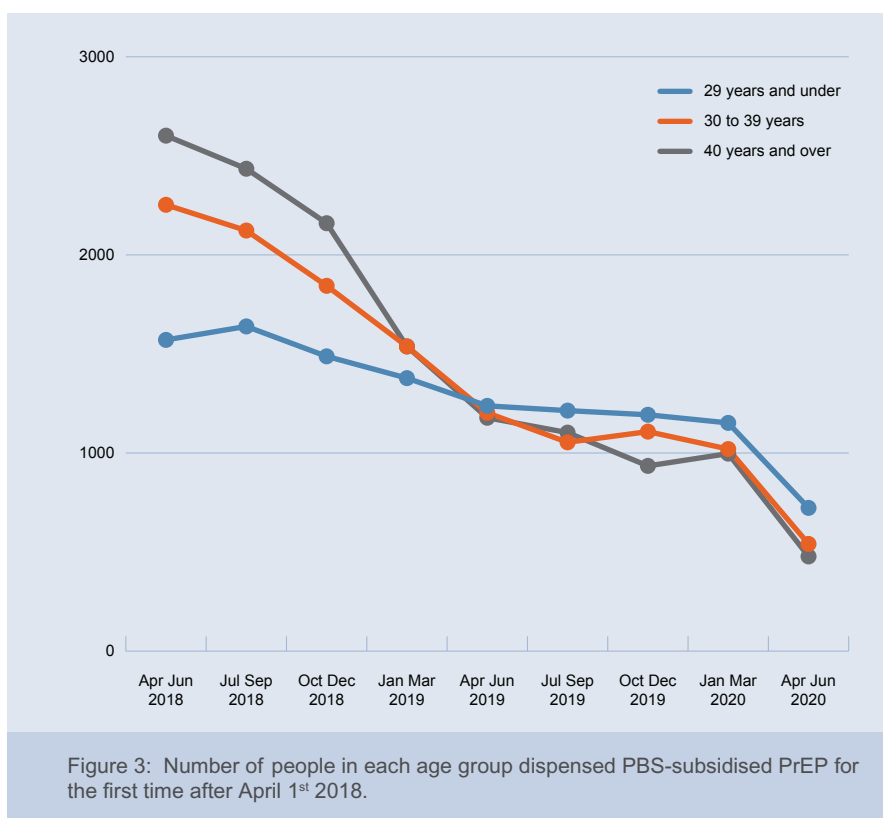


Figure 3: Number of people in each age group dispensed PBS-subsidised PrEP for the first time after April 1st 2018.

* PBS data records gender as male or female only. The relative proportion of each reported gender who are cisgender, transgender or gender diverse is not known. See note on data sources, page 4.



States and Territories

On March 31st 2018, 18 112 individuals were receiving PrEP through state implementation studies

NSW	9635
Vic	4285
QLD	2459
SA	657
WA	631
ACT	302
Tas	143

Rapid changes in initiation in the first year after PBS listing may represent differing rates of transition from state-based implementation studies⁴. PrEP initiation in all states and territories declined in the three months to June 2020.

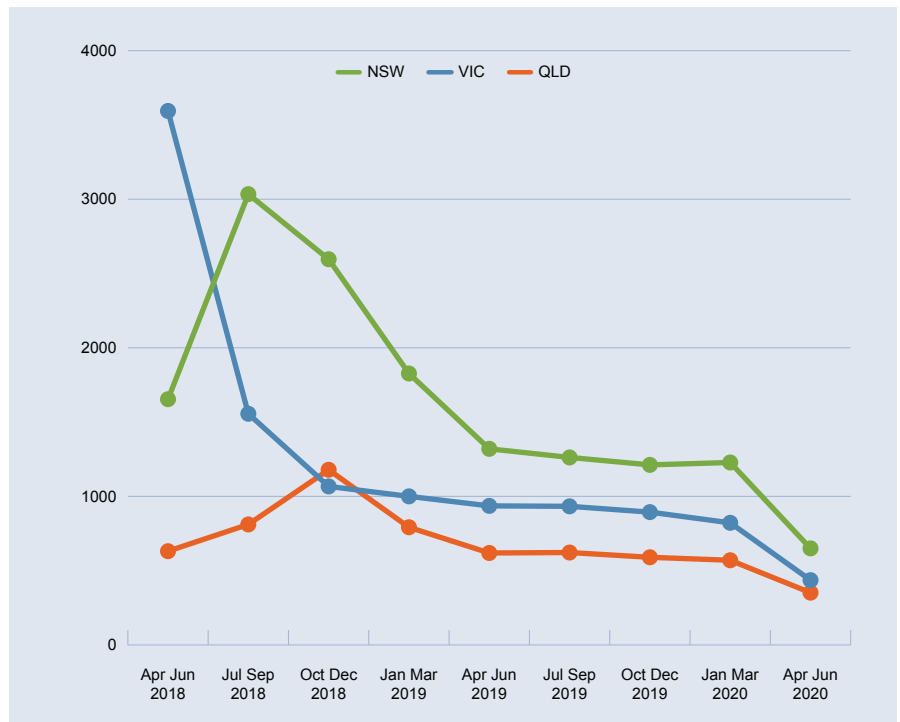


Figure 4: Number of people dispensed PBS-subsidised PrEP for the first time in Victoria, NSW and Queensland from April 1st 2018.

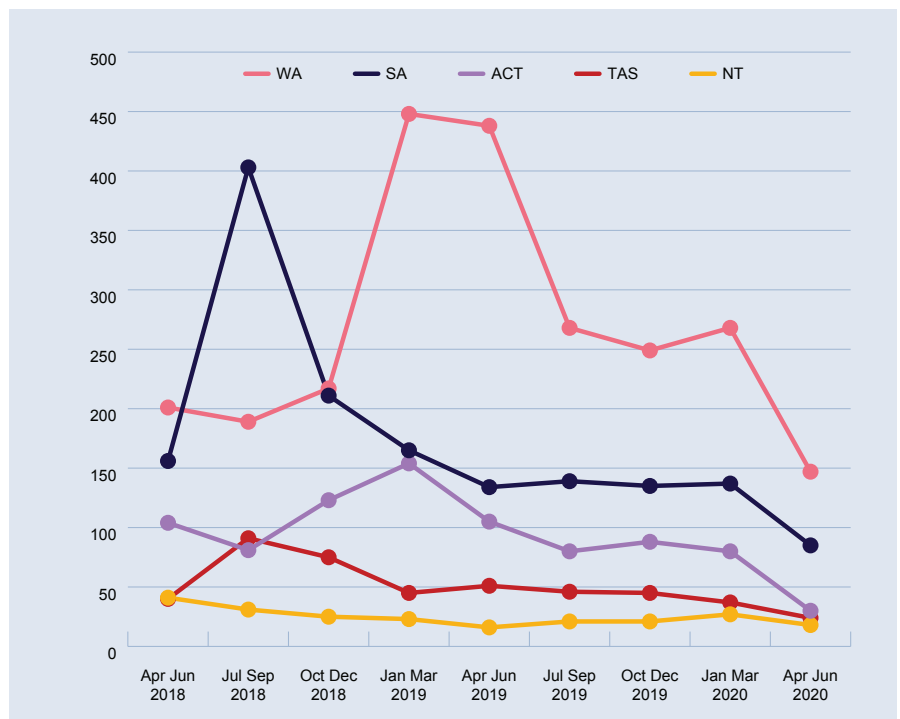


Figure 5: Number of people dispensed PBS-subsidised PrEP for the first time in other states and territories from April 1st 2018.



Notes on data and methodology

1. Suggested Citation:

The Kirby Institute, Monitoring HIV Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Uptake in Australia (Issue 3). The Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney, Sydney NSW, August 2020. For more information contact Dr Nicholas Medland (nmedland@kirby.unsw.edu.au) or Professor Rebecca Guy (rguy@kirby.unsw.edu.au)

2. Note on data sources in this newsletter:

This newsletter reports individuals who have been dispensed PBS-subsidised PrEP since PBS listing in April 1st 2018. The data are provided as linked de-identified data from the Australian Government for reporting and surveillance purposes. Data available includes gender (as reported through the PBS), state that the prescription was dispensed and age in years. Gender is reported as male or female only; it is not possible to determine what proportion of each reported gender are cisgender, transgender or gender diverse.

3. Note on estimation of recent usage:

From the date and quantity dispensed, days covered by PrEP are calculated as if one dose of PrEP was taken each day (Marcus et al 2016, van Epps et al 2018). Individuals with any days covered by PrEP in the most recent 90 days are defined as having recently used PrEP. This number does not include those individuals who would have run out of supplied PrEP (at daily dosing) before the most recent 90 days. It is not possible to distinguish between individuals who have temporarily or permanently discontinued PrEP, accessed PrEP from other sources including self-importation or consumed small quantities of PrEP through intermittent use, on-demand use or non-adherence.

4. Note on transition from PrEP implementation studies:

States and territories conducted separate PrEP implementation studies. Each study had a different plan to transition participants to PBS subsidised medication. Some studies continued to provide PrEP to participants after PBS listing and participants may have taken some months to exhaust their existing medication supply. It is not possible to determine from the PBS data included in this newsletter if individuals had previously been participants in PrEP implementation studies.

References:

Marcus JL, Hurley LB, Hare CB, Nguyen DP, Phengrasamy T, Silverberg MJ, et al. Preexposure Prophylaxis for HIV Prevention in a Large Integrated Health Care System: Adherence, Renal Safety, and Discontinuation. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*. 2016;73(5):540-6.

van Epps P, Maier M, Lund B, Howren MB, Beck B, Beste L, et al. Medication Adherence in a Nationwide Cohort of Veterans Initiating Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to Prevent HIV Infection. *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*. 2018;77(3):272-8.