

San Diego HIV
Community Consortium

What You Need to Know

from CROI 2026

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· SDHIVC Science Update · March 7, 2026

TOPICS COVERED



New HIV Medications
Better HIV Prevention

(DrED)



Heart Health & HIV



Women Living with HIV



Mental Health & Meth



STIs Are Surging



The Funding Crisis



Hope for the Future

CROI 2026 — What Was This Conference?

CROI is the world's top HIV science conference, held in Denver, February 2026. Here's what matters most for our San Diego community.



New Long-Acting HIV Medications

Weekly pills, monthly pills, and shots every few months may soon replace the daily pill for many people with HIV.



Better HIV Prevention (PrEP)

A twice-yearly injection prevented HIV in 100% of women tested — the most effective prevention result ever recorded.



Cure Research Advances

Researchers documented real HIV remissions for the first time. A functional cure is now closer than ever.



Women Living with HIV

Major focus on bone health, heart risk, pregnancy safety, and new PrEP options specifically designed for women.



Heart Health & HIV

People with HIV have up to 2x the heart disease risk. Statins and GLP-1 drugs are now changing outcomes.



Global Crisis & Funding Cuts

PEPFAR cuts threatened millions on HIV treatment. CROI called this the gravest threat since the early epidemic.

New HIV Medications — Simpler Than Ever

HIV treatment is transforming. The goal: fewer doses, less often — from daily to weekly to monthly to a shot every few months.

Daily



Weekly



Monthly

1

Quarterly



Every 4-6 Mo



Weekly Pills — BIC/LEN & ISL/LEN

One pill once a week. ARTISTRY trials showed bicitegravir/lenacapavir matched the best daily treatments. Merck/Gilead's ISL/LEN once-weekly also proved equally effective. Phase 3 enrollment complete.

Monthly Oral Pill — MK-8527

One pill once a month. Works within one hour of the first dose — with a 7-day forgiveness window if you miss a dose. Phase 3 trials (EXPrESSIVE 10 & 11) now underway. No injection needed.

Shots Every 4–6 Months — Coming

ViiV's VH184 and VH499 are in early trials targeting 4–6 month dosing — the next step beyond today's quarterly CAB/RPV shots. Could be standard of care by 2030.

HIV Prevention — Better Options Than Ever

100
%

Lenacapavir (twice-yearly injection) prevented HIV in 100% of cisgender women in the PURPOSE trial — the most effective HIV prevention result ever recorded.



Twice-Yearly Injection (Lenacapavir)

Two shots a year could protect you from HIV. The trial was stopped early because results were so strong they could offer it to everyone. A game-changer for people who struggle with a daily pill.



Once-Monthly Oral PrEP — MK-8527

One pill once a month. Now in large Phase 3 trials. Works within an hour of the first dose — with a 7-day safety window if you miss a dose. No injection needed.



PrEP Options for Everyone

The twice-yearly injection works for men who have sex with men and transgender women too. Scientists are testing a once-yearly injectable PrEP. More choices, better fit for your life.

Not on PrEP? Ask your HIV provider or primary care doctor — new options may be right for you.

Women Living with HIV — What CROI 2026 Revealed

More than half of all people with HIV worldwide are women — yet underrepresented in research. CROI 2026 had a major focus on changing that.

Prevention Made for Women

The twice-yearly lenacapavir injection prevented HIV in 100% of cisgender women tested — a game-changer for women who face barriers to remembering a daily pill.

Bone Health After Menopause

Women with HIV face higher rates of osteoporosis and fractures after menopause. HIV + menopause together multiply this risk. Ask your doctor about a DXA bone density scan.

Heart Health: A Double Risk

HIV and menopause together multiply cardiovascular risk. Women with HIV develop heart disease earlier than HIV-negative women. Statins and lifestyle changes help — ask your doctor.

Pregnancy & HIV — Safe Options

Injectable HIV treatment (CAB/RPV) is confirmed safe in pregnancy. Dolutegravir — the most common HIV pill — now has 5+ years of reassuring safety data for pregnant women and their babies.

Heart Health & HIV — What the Science Says

People with HIV have 1.5–2× the heart disease risk — even when the virus is undetectable. Here's what you can do about it.

Why HIV Affects the Heart

Even with an undetectable viral load, HIV causes low-level inflammation that silently damages blood vessels. People with HIV often develop heart disease 10+ years earlier than others.

GLP-1 Medications (Ozempic / Wegovy)

New CROI data: these weight-loss medications also reduce inflammation in people with HIV — independent of weight loss. Ask your doctor if you have weight or heart risk concerns.

What You Can Do — Starting Today

- ✓ Ask about statin therapy — cuts heart attack risk ~40%
- ✓ Ask if GLP-1 medications could help your heart
- ✓ Exercise daily — even a 30-minute walk counts
- ✓ Control blood pressure, cholesterol & quit smoking
- ✓ Review your HIV medications for cardiovascular safety
- ✓ Know your numbers: cholesterol, BP, blood sugar

Mental Health, Meth & HIV — What You Need to Know

People with HIV are 2–4× more likely to experience depression and anxiety. In San Diego, meth use is surging and directly affecting HIV care. You are not alone — there is help.

Depression Is Not Just 'Feeling Down'

Depression in people with HIV predicts worse outcomes — missed medications, higher viral loads, more hospitalizations. If your mood is affecting daily life, please tell your doctor.

Your History Is Part of Your Health

Past trauma and addiction leave lasting changes in the brain — even after recovery. Share your full history with your care team. You won't be judged — it helps them give you better care.

Meth & HIV: A Dangerous Mix

Meth use is strongly linked to missed HIV medications, higher viral loads, and increased transmission risk. Long-acting injectable treatment can help people who struggle with daily pills.

Integrated Care Works — Ask for It

Programs combining mental health + HIV care + substance use support in one place show dramatically better outcomes. Ask your HIV provider about integrated care options in San Diego.

STIs Are Surging — Important Updates for Our Community

+155%

Rise in syphilis since 2015

+696%

Congenital syphilis rise since 2015

29%

Of new syphilis cases are in women

~50%

Syphilis risk reduction with DoxyPEP

Syphilis Is No Longer Just 'an MSM Issue'

Women now make up 29% of new syphilis cases. Syphilis can pass to babies during pregnancy with devastating effects. Ask for a syphilis test at every HIV visit — don't assume it's being done.

DoxyPEP — What Is It?

DoxyPEP is a single antibiotic pill taken within 72 hours of sex that cuts your risk of syphilis and chlamydia by about half. Ask your HIV provider whether it's right for you.

What You Can Do

Ask for syphilis, gonorrhea & chlamydia testing at every HIV visit • Ask about DoxyPEP if you're at higher risk • Get tested now if you've had unprotected sex recently

The Funding Crisis — HIV Science Under Threat

CROI 2026's opening address called this the most challenging year for HIV since the early epidemic. Here's what happened — and why it matters to San Diego.

26M

Lives saved by
PEPFAR since 2003

21M

People on HIV treatment
via PEPFAR in Africa

\$1.9B

Proposed cut to
PEPFAR budget

47%

US clinics reporting
service disruptions

What Happened?

USAID was dissolved and PEPFAR stop-work orders halted HIV treatment overnight in sub-Saharan Africa. NIH lost 18% of its workforce. Research grants were cancelled. Scientists at CROI called this an emergency.

Why It Matters Here in San Diego

San Diego clinics are among the 47% reporting service disruptions nationally. Funding cuts slow the research pipeline that brings new treatments to our community. Your voice and advocacy matter.

San Diego HIV
Community Consortium

Hope for the Future

The science is clear.
A better world is coming.

Thank you, Dr. C · SDHIVC · March 7, 2026

WHAT'S COMING NEXT



Once-Yearly PrEP

Phase 3 trial now underway for a once-yearly injection. The most durable HIV prevention tool ever if successful.



HIV Cure Research

Real HIV remissions documented — people who no longer need medication after early treatment + immune therapy.



Shots Every 4–6 Months

Quarterly injectable HIV treatment could be standard of care by 2030 — only 3 clinic visits per year.



Whole-Person Care

Mental health, yoga, mindfulness, nutrition, and community are the future of HIV care. Already SDHIVC's model.



Global Equity

Generic HIV medications now reach 100+ countries. Advocates are fighting to ensure these tools reach everyone.



Ending Transmission

With sustained will and community leadership, a generation free of new HIV infections is achievable. You are part of that future.