California Bill Aims to End the HIV, Hep C and STI Epidemics

Senator Scott Wiener's legislation would set statewide policy and goals. For now, it doesn't seek funding.

January 17, 2020 By Trent Straube

A new bill introduced in California aims to create a comprehensive plan to end the state's epidemics of HIV, hepatitis C and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), according to The Bay Area Reporter.

State Senator Scott Wiener (D–San Francisco) introduced the legislation, SB 859, with input from the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. The bill hopes to integrate multi-agency efforts and lay out and eventually fund a unified plan to battle the related epidemics.

I'm introducing legislation, #SB859, to make CA the first state to create & fund a comprehensive plan to end #HIV, Hep C, & STI infections.

Communities of color are especially impacted.

We know how to end these epidemics. We just need the political will. https://t.co/EHHQchI8NY

— Scott Wiener (@Scott_Wiener) January 16, 2020

For example, the bill requires the chief of the State Office of AIDS and the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to set goals and recommend policy and submit annual progress reports from 2021 to 2030, the newspaper reports.

Advocates have asked Governor Gavin Newsom to endorse a statewide policy for tackling the epidemics—more than 100 groups signed a statement last March making that request—but so far Newsom has not responded. Nor has he named a permanent leader for the AIDS office.

Meanwhile, a coalition of groups has requested $50 million to fund efforts to end the epidemics—$15 million for HIV, $15 million for hep C and $20 million for STIs. During the previous budgeting cycle, the group requested $60 million in statewide funding but received $15 million in total (HIV, hep C and STIs each got $5 million).

> Exciting to see that @NYGovCuomo and @HealthNYGov's #ETE initiative served as inspiration for @Scott_Wiener's bill to #EndtheEpidemic in California. To explore how we track NY's progress, visit https://t.co/WI5WUu63wK https://t.co/xZVVuUZ1uk
>
> — Ending the Epidemic (@ETEDashboardNY) January 16, 2020

Although last year San Francisco saw the lowest number of new HIV cases ever, the same is not true throughout the state. For more data on STIs and the other epidemics in California, see the Bay Area Reporter article.

Other states, cities and nations have launched efforts to end HIV. For an overview, read "Plans to End the HIV Epidemic at Home and Abroad."

In related California news, see "New Law Allows Californians to Get PrEP and PEP Without a Prescription" and "New HIV Cases in San Francisco Dip Below 200."

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