

Tammy Kremer ([00:00](#)):

Here's the message of PrEP Supports, a community-engaged campaign on PrEP and HIV prevention with communities of color and particularly Black communities in San Francisco. PrEP Supports amazing families, powerful communities, brilliant thinkers, creative cultivators. PrEP Supports you.

Welcome to coming together for sexual health, where we talk about enhancing sexual healthcare.

Dr Ina Park ([00:28](#)):

For most of us having sex is easier than talking about it.

Dr Rosalyn Plotzker ([00:32](#)):

This is not related necessarily to the people who have the infection, it's related to the healthcare system in which they exist.

Duran Rutledge ([00:42](#)):

What can I do? What can I learn that impacts change for the people that are in my sphere of influence?

Dr Rosalyn Plotzker ([00:51](#)):

This is so, so, so preventable.

Tammy Kremer ([00:54](#)):

These conversations are brought to you by the California Prevention Training Center at the university of California, San Francisco. It's time. Let's come together for sexual health.

My name is Tammy Kremer, and today we'll be reflecting on PrEP Supports with Terrance Wilder and Nikole trainer who are both intimately involved in the campaign. Just a reminder, all views expressed are those of the person speaking and not of the CAPTC or their employer.

Welcome Terrance and Nikole. So glad that you're here today to talk about PrEP Supports. And I'll go ahead and introduce you both. So Terrance you're from Oakland, California. You're an equity training coordinator at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, where you've been for five years. You play basketball, you enjoy comedy and you participated in PrEP Supports in a very visible way in the photo shoots. You were on a billboard and a video. So looking forward to hearing what that was like for you.

Terrance Wilder ([01:51](#)):

Oh, wow. Yes, I did all of those things. Those are facts. It's great to be here.

Tammy Kremer ([01:56](#)):

And Nikole, you work right at the San Francisco Department of Public Health where you're the Zero program coordinator and the contract manager. And you also teach at San Jose State University and the School of Public Health, been with SFDPH for about 13 years. And you are the multi-site coordinator for the first US PrEP demonstration project, as well as you helped spearhead the PrEP Supports campaign. So welcome, Nikole.

Nikole Trainor ([02:24](#)):

Thank you. Thank you so much for having me. It's a pleasure to be here.

Tammy Kremer ([02:27](#)):

So whoever would like to start first and just share your involvement in PrEP Supports.

Nikole Trainor ([02:33](#)):

Great. I'll go ahead and start. So a lot of the work that we do in the community health and promotion branch that's under DPH it's implementation of sexual health programs. So my expertise is around HIV, STI and Hep C testing prevention and treatment programs. For a long period of time data has indicated that there's just been disparities that still exist within the Black and Latinx community. And especially when PrEP rolled out on the scene, there was still a low uptake and low awareness and knowledge within this community. So part of the task with PrEP Support is creating a campaign that visually represented the community in a way that they can embrace it. We didn't do a lot of campaigns that had positive imagery of Black and Latin folks. And so this was a great opportunity to engage the community in just different ways. This campaign was part of the Getting to Zero initiatives.

Tammy Kremer ([03:39](#)):

Can you explain what the Getting to Zero initiative was or is?

Nikole Trainor ([03:42](#)):

So the Getting to Zero initiative, it's really focused on getting to zero new HIV infections, zero HIV deaths and zero HIV stigma. It's actually a global initiative. And so jurisdictions across the country receive funding from the centers of disease control to focus on these initiatives and PrEP is one of the pillars. And so when you have rapid testing available, so everyone knows their HIV status, for those folks who test positive, all those folks are into care and people who are negative have access to PrEP. And so when you have successfully implemented those things across the board, you have low-barrier access to these services, you can potentially prevent new HIV affections across the board.

Tammy Kremer ([04:33](#)):

Thanks for that explanation. And Terrance, what was your role in PrEP Supports?

Terrance Wilder ([04:39](#)):

I'll give you the backstory. I worked for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, but before I became a [inaudible 00:04:45] equity coordinator, I was hired as the DREAAM project program coordinator. And DREAAM is the acronym and stands for Determined to Respect and Encourage African American Men. And we were awarded a big PrEP grant to do events and do what we can to promote PrEP to men of color. Definitely black men, specifically gay black men and their allies, 18 to 30. And men that have sex with men, which we call MSM. So I was doing events and I used to always invite Nikole to the events because Nikole was over the PrEP Program of San Francisco Department of Public Health, which is our funders. So sometime down the line, I just remember her saying "AT\*, I want you to take my spot on this PrEP panel."

And I was like, "Wow, why me?" She was like, "Because I've been to your events and you just had a strong presence, you have a strong voice. And I really felt like the community needs to hear you instead of me. I've said on panels, I've talked about PrEP a lot, but I really feel like they need to hear it from a man, from a man with a strong voice of color." So I'm like, "You sure? Because this sound a big

deal." And she was like, "No. Yeah, I'm so sure." And I went to the PrEP panel and I gave a speech about me being HIV-positive. I don't really disclose a lot unless I feel like there's a high need and it can change the dynamics of a conversation or something. And I felt like this was the perfect opportunity to do so because it was about PrEP.

And I just told my story. And I think the most powerful part of my story was I became HIV-positive when I was turning 21 years old and I'm now 33. And back in that time, I was going to a gay youth center. I had a good time. It was the SMAAC Youth Center in Oakland. It's no longer an organization, but it will always be remembered as somewhere for us to go and express ourselves. But they really didn't have a lot of programming around PrEP. They talked about HIV a lot. So I said on that panel, like "If I would've seen somebody that looked like me, some type of campaign, some type of poster, some type of imagery that looked like me that was correlated with PrEP, then I would've took it. I would've signed up immediately because I knew what type of sexual acts I was doing. And I knew that HIV was out there, but I was young and temptation usually had got the best of me back then. And yeah, I would've signed up for PrEP back when I turned 21 years old."

Tammy Kremer ([07:12](#)):

Wow. And that's a really a personal place to come from in this work. And thank you for sharing that about your self Terrance and-

Terrance Wilder ([07:18](#)):

Oh, no problem.

Tammy Kremer ([07:20](#)):

[inaudible 00:07:20] come from.

Nikole Trainor ([07:20](#)):

Absolutely.

Tammy Kremer ([07:21](#)):

If we want to back up for a second, I realize... Let's just define what PrEP is. Would either of you like to take that?

Nikole Trainor ([07:27](#)):

Absolutely. So how we present PrEP to the larger community is it's a daily pill to prevent HIV. And that can be mind-boggling to some people. It's a biomedical intervention that was FDA-approved in June of 2012. And so it's also known as pre-exposure prophylaxis. So what it is that you take this medication prior to you being exposed to HIV. And what it does is it blocks the HIV virus from duplicating itself. So if you come into contact or you have a sexual interaction with someone who either knows they have HIV or unknowingly, they have HIV, and fluids are exchanged and so forth, by that individual taking PrEP on a daily basis, it builds up protection in them and it will prevent HIV acquisition for that individual. So simply it also works like birth control. I like to compare it to the birth control pill.

Tammy Kremer ([08:21](#)):

And it's also exciting that now there's that new FDA approval for the injectable version of PrEP.

Nikole Trainor ([08:28](#)):

Yes, yes. So that is coming down the pipeline soon, we are trying to put protocols in place, figuring out how folks will gain access. Our biggest concern is we want to ensure that people who do not have medical insurance have access to this medication. When PrEP first rolled out on the scene, it was only accessible to individuals who had health insurance. And even then when they had health insurance, it was high copayment because insurance companies viewed this individual as high-risk. Now, we have generic form of that, so now the pill is less than a dollar per pill. Well, prior to this, the whole bottle could cost you \$2,500 and above. It was expensive to access. So I'm excited about the injectable PrEP. I think it'd be definitely beneficial for people who are experiencing homelessness. People who have a relationship with drugs or substance use, and they're not able to take a pill every day.

And also I think this is a new opportunity for us to expand awareness to different populations who this may be beneficial to. I also want to point out, in addition to PrEP, we have something called PEP. And a lot of folks don't know about PEP and that's post-exposure prophylaxis. And essentially if you have a sexual encounter with someone who you don't know their status and the condom breaks and so forth, within 72 hours, you can go to a pharmacist or you can go to the emergency room or for the most part go to a clinic or your physician and let them know the situation. And they'll give you a 28-day supply of PrEP and it blocks you from HIV acquisition. So a lot of folks don't know that PEP is available to them.

Terrance Wilder ([10:16](#)):

Yeah. And usually when folks are getting that counseling, when they're taking PEP, they are getting counseling by taking PrEP after that cycle of taking PEP. So they can continue that protection from HIV. So all of this usually happens in the HIV counseling. I used to be a HIV test counselor in Oakland. And a lot of people are getting on PrEP and taking PEP as they are in counseling rooms explaining their sexual history.

Tammy Kremer ([10:43](#)):

That's a great overview of those two options, the PrEP and PEP. I knew about PrEP long before I knew about PEP. And I was so happy when I learned about it so that I could share that with people.

So let's get back into PrEP Supports, take me back. Were we... I think it was in 2017, the campaign got started and it was unveiled in early 2018?

Nikole Trainor ([11:07](#)):

Yes. It was launched in 2018.

Terrance Wilder ([11:10](#)):

Wow. Four years.

Tammy Kremer ([11:13](#)):

So what was going on then that created the need for this campaign?

Nikole Trainor ([11:18](#)):

Partly was the data. A lot of our epi data, it was clear indication that PrEP was just not being utilized by a lot of communities of color. And also another catalyst that pushed this campaign forward was prior to PrEP Supports, we rolled out a campaign called Our Sexual Revolution. I'm not sure if you saw that

campaign all over San Francisco. It was huge. That was our first PrEP campaign. It got a lot of great feedback. From there we participated in a lot of community engagement, pride parades. The focus of that campaign really centered around the Castro\*. So it did a great job in targeting and prioritizing specifically white gay men. And so we had a huge influx increase of awareness and knowledge and PrEP uptake among that particular population.

The feedback that we did get from communities of color was that the Black folks and Latinx folks felt over-sexualized in the campaign and you have to reach communities of color differently. Really the mothers, the aunties, the cousin, the woman in Black community are the gatekeepers of even black gay men. And also in the Latinx community, you have to reach them very differently. And so it's not that our sexual revolution wasn't successful. It did what it was supposed to do for a specific community. So we wanted to do that same thing with Latinx and Black folks. And so hence PrEP Supports started the development process.

Terrance Wilder ([13:00](#)):

And it's very important to build trust with any community, definitely the Black community and other communities of color because of the mistrust that's always been around. It's just been a lot of maltreatment over the history of time. People need to see people that looks like them. They need to see it working for people who looks like them. And I think that that's where the PrEP Supports campaign definitely stood out and was a great thing because it invited that, it invited people to reach out to people who look like them. The black family, like Nikole said, the aunties. We did the Black Joy Parade a lot where we was able to give out free hoodies. Everybody said "How much those costs? We were like, "Oh, they're free." And they just couldn't believe it. And that right there was building trust in that conversation of giving a free incentive. And it allowed us to speak about what PrEP was because a lot of people didn't know.

So now we have this moment where we can push our education while giving out a free incentive that they can wear. And then that's how word spreads within a community. So that trust is now being built because the gatekeepers are now educated on how PrEP works and why it's important for folks that's having sex, definitely unprotected sex to think about taking it.

Tammy Kremer ([14:19](#)):

That is such a helpful way to look at where PrEP Supports comes in and seeing how one community was met with the prior campaign and others weren't and then finding a way to really reach the other communities. I'd love to hear about your process with PrEP Supports of how you build out this campaign.

Nikole Trainor ([14:40](#)):

Yes, of course. So we definitely took lessons learned from Our Sexual Revolution and we used that as guidance, but PrEP Support in itself was created for and by the community. That is a key component. Typically what happens with campaigns is you have experts on the inside. They do a lot of internal research and they have data on how they think or what they think they know about certain groups of people who identify as a certain ethnic group or a certain race. And then they come up with these imagery and then you sit in a focus group and you say, tell me which one looks best. But what we do know is that someone's decision on what they think they like in a campaign changes when you just simply change the color of the room. But what we did with PrEP Supports is before we did the creative design process, we did a really in-depth ethnography process.

And ethnography is a process of gaining a deeper cultural insight and unveiling some cultural phenomenon. And we get that from the community. In phase one, we did this digital ethnography to extract some culturally relevant data from community experts. It was HIV test counselors, or individuals who are working in HIV and STI treatment and care across the country. So there's this tool that you can use that you can put these parameters around conversations online. So people are always having conversations online about sexual health. And we hone in on sexual health experts and we pull down all of that qualitative data. And then we used that qualitative data to create themes, to create these discussion guides to facilitate organic conversations in face-to-face interviews. So that was one method that we used.

The other method is we hired researchers that actually went out in the community and they just simply observed how folks interacted with each other. They walked around their neighborhoods, they were observing conversations and observing interactions, how people commute within the neighborhood and just communicate with each other. So that was all part of phase one, just gathering all this data. And then within phase two, these discussion guides were created to facilitate these face-to-face in-depth interviews. And they did these interviews with stakeholders inside of DPH. And they also did them with folks from the priority population.

And so once they did those in-depth interviews, phase three, we held this collaborative workshop and we brought people in from the community and we also brought in stakeholders. We brought in a personal chef. And so in the background, you had this just great-smelling food that was being made with a lot of love. And then they set up this really comfortable environment where people from the community can sit down and the facilitator, the researcher took us all through a series of activities that focused on our own internal exploration. So when we see images... Like Terrance is mentioning, as you move through this world and you see images of ourselves, how do you want to feel? How do you currently feel about some images that you see when you look at people who look like you? How do you feel that your people are currently being represented? But at the core, when you see this campaign, what feelings do you want?

Tammy Kremer ([18:19](#)):

Yeah. So much intention in all of the different phases of how to create and nurture that community voice coming through so that the needs can really be met. Can you share what is 510media and what was their role in the campaign?

Nikole Trainor ([18:33](#)):

Yeah. So 510media is a marketing agency. It is black-owned and 90% of its staff are either Black or Latinx. And one of the unique things about 510media is that they use this ethnography research method. And it's something that is typically not used in marketing companies, because it's time-consuming. Prior to us even developing the creative design process, we took six months. We did six months of research, of new research. Even though they had a lot of internal data, this was new research specific to how folks will view and interact with PrEP and PrEP messaging. So what's unique about 510 is the ethnography approach. And I am so appreciative of them because this is the first time that DPH has ever led an in-depth process like this when developing a campaign.

So part of 510 strategy is that when people saw PrEP Supports, they wanted them to feel inspired, they wanted them to feel proud of who they are as they just moved through the world, they wanted them to feel comfortable in their sexuality and their gender identity. They wanted them to just feel comfortable in their own personal lived experiences and also how they see intimacy. So that was

our initial process. And from all of that, then the creative design piece happened. So it's truly a campaign that has a strong, strong community voice embedded in it.

Terrance Wilder ([20:19](#)):

I mean, me being introduced to them, I immediately took to them because they just made everything so, so comfortable just embracing me for who I was authentically. I didn't have to be nobody else. I didn't have to put on a quote-unquote "Show" to be a part of this campaign. So it just goes back to that PrEP conversation and that panel, when I said, "I wish I seen somebody that look like me." And then here I am me being my complete self in the campaign. And I'm so glad and so honored to be able to have work with them through Nikole, through DPH. And it's just to show how connections are made when good people of color, Black folks come together to make something so positive happen for the community. The magic in that, it gets me at a loss of word at times.

Nikole Trainor ([21:05](#)):

Yeah. 510 is very unique in that way. And building relationships with the models and capturing images that truly are their lived experience. For some of the group photos, all those people knew each other, they had a relationship with each other. So it didn't feel unnatural because they know how to make images come to life. They are all about when you see something, we want you to have an emotional reaction to it, whether it's good or bad, but then that emotional reaction is going to lead to you doing the call to action.

Tammy Kremer ([21:47](#)):

As you're describing your experience, Terrance, I'm just thinking about the power of getting to both be seen and also then help other people feel seen by seeing themselves reflected in you, how powerful that could be to be supported in that way, to express yourself and to have that celebrated. I'd love it if you could tell the story about the day that you found out you were on the billboard.

Terrance Wilder ([22:12](#)):

Oh, yes. That day. Typical day. I did my commute. I was living in Oakland at the time and I... I love to get dressed when I go to the office. So I'm feeling myself. That's just who I am. But when I get to the office, people are just looking at me weird. And I was like, "What's going on?" And when I get to my computer, one of the first emails was from, I think our chief officer and she congratulated me and blasted out to our whole agency and was like, "Our very own is on a billboard. Congratulations. It's such a great job." And I was just sitting there and it was a picture. Somebody literally took a picture of the billboard and sent it through an email before I got there. I literally looked at the computer for like 20 minutes straight in complete silence.

And people was just coming by giving me a hug and congratulating me. I couldn't believe it. It was breathtaking. And I just appreciated it so much. And I wasn't the only one that made it on a billboard, but that was the first one I did see. So when I was able to see other billboards, I was so excited that it was other people part of the campaign that was able to experience the feeling that I experienced because that's what I pride in. I pride in community. And it really wasn't about us. It was about PrEP. So just to know that we were able to do something on that magnitude was really great. And I was definitely excited when all the other pictures started to pop up as I was venturing through San Francisco.

Tammy Kremer ([23:40](#)):

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I can imagine how exciting that must have been. And to give our listeners a visual, the image of you on the billboard was taken on a basketball court chosen because you are a basketball player. What slogan from the campaign was on the billboard?

Terrance Wilder ([23:53](#)):

I just looked it up really quick. The [inaudible 00:23:55].

Tammy Kremer ([23:55](#)):

Yeah. Can you read it to us?

Terrance Wilder ([23:58](#)):

Yeah. The billboard [inaudible 00:23:58] is PrEP supports the powerful and then PrEP support the brilliant. So those was the two.

Tammy Kremer ([24:03](#)):

And can you describe the hoodie that you're wearing?

Terrance Wilder ([24:07](#)):

This one is the powerful one. And with the hoodies, it just says the word but on the back, I forget what it say. Nikole knows.

Nikole Trainor ([24:15](#)):

On the back, it says PrEP supports the amazing, the brilliant, the powerful and the creative. And so when people just as Terrance wears that sweater and moves through this world, you see it and you see this black man in it. You just feel joy.

Tammy Kremer ([24:30](#)):

Yeah. I looked it up in terms of the full slogan and PrEP supports amazing families, powerful communities, brilliant thinkers, creative cultivators. PrEP supports you.

Terrance Wilder ([24:44](#)):

That's what it is.

Tammy Kremer ([24:46](#)):

And that's a powerful reflection of the impact of the campaign and the choice of those words being so relevant.

Nikole Trainor ([24:51](#)):

Yeah. And those are not our words. All of those words came from the themes from us doing the ethnography. Those words came from the emotions and feelings that people were yearning that they want to experience, but they didn't. And those words came from the community. 510, the creative piece put them together so beautifully.

Terrance Wilder ([25:13](#)):



Yes.

Nikole Trainor ([25:14](#)):

Yeah.

Tammy Kremer ([25:16](#)):

Do any of the slogans or the messages stand out to the two of you personally? Do any of them like hit you the hardest?

Nikole Trainor ([25:25](#)):

All of it is encompassing. They all don't stand alone. That whole slogan just embraces the ideal of, we want the community to know that we care about their whole lives. We care about their freedom to be amazing, to be creative and be powerful. And folks can choose, they can embrace all of those amazing terms. They can embrace it or they can embrace it individually. So there's no one that resonates different from me. I mean, as a black woman walking through this world, we tend to be in a state of constant oppression. And the part of this slogan is to uplift people from that state.

Tammy Kremer ([26:20](#)):

I'd love to talk about the clip that we hear your voice, Nikole, come in and telling a story. And then Terrance, we see your face helping illustrate that story.

Nikole Trainor ([26:33](#)):

I had a young black woman come to me. I was carrying my PrEP bag and it says, "Ask about PrEP." So she says, "What is that?" So I broke it down to her telling, "Oh, PrEP is a daily pill that prevents HIV." She... It struck her. She paused for a moment. She bowed her head down and I could see that her eyes was getting a little teary. She says, "Had I known about this last year I could have saved my son's life."

Terrance Wilder ([27:06](#)):

I get this. This what I'm feeling on the inside every time I hear that, because that particular story I'm pretty sure resonated with my mother. And I know when she seen it, she probably had mixed emotions. She was so excited that I was a part of it, but I know my mom, I'm the youngest and I'm a mom's boy. And I know that it just resonated with her a lot because I know she would've told me, she would've advocated for me to get on PrEP because she knew that I was growing up and I was experiencing different things. Definitely been around the gay community at a young age and partying and having sex as a teenager. So I know it probably has struck her in many different ways, but more than anything, she shared it on her social media with everybody. And she was just so excited that I was a part of this movement. So I can help another parent talk to their kids about PrEP. And my mom has become an advocate. She don't know all the specifics of it, but she know who to direct people to.

Nikole Trainor ([28:10](#)):

Yeah. So just some background about this commercial is it was not slated in a creative design process. What's unique about the narrative piece is I didn't go into a recording studio and record this pre-scripted. It happened when we did a lady's night event with a group of women called Just BE. They are three black women who have an entrepreneurship business group. And what they do is they provide resources to other black women to start their own business. I collaborated with them. And part of this

Just BE group, we wanted to do a ladies' night event that bridge the gap between black CIS woman and black trans woman. We wanted to put these women in one space because what they shared is entrepreneurship. At least we come together with this common centered love. So during that event, the story that I told is a true story.

A young black woman came to me and saw that we were having this event. And she came up and just asked what PrEP was. And when I explained to her what PrEP was, she just broke down. She broke down crying. And those were her words. The words that you heard on the video is... She said that. "Had I known about this I could have prevented my son from getting HIV." Her son was just diagnosed less than six months prior. I happened to be telling that story to someone and the mics were on. So they caught that audio during editing and [Nama 00:30:06], which is the owner of 510, heard it. And he got inspired and he wanted to create some imagery around it. And that's how the commercial was developed.

Tammy Kremer ([30:18](#)):

What had a fulfilling moment that you were able to touch that woman, and then you were able to share that story, which I'm sure then touched others and the kind of domino effect of having the space to share these stories in a supportive environment that really touches me too.

I would love to spend some time talking about the impact of the campaign. Some of the lessons learned. The way that you thought about evaluating the success of the campaign. However you'd like to take that.

Nikole Trainor ([30:56](#)):

What we learned from the evaluation is that campaign did exactly what it was supposed to do. PrEP awareness and PrEP knowledge has definitely increased. So PrEP from 2012, even since the launch of the campaign in 2018, PrEP has now become common knowledge, even for people who don't think that PrEP is conducive to their lifestyle. If you ask somebody what's PrEP, they're like, "Oh, it's that pill. That pill that you take for HIV." They may not explain it in the medical terms, but they know exactly what it's intended for. We did great in that aspect of the campaign, what we still see are disparities regarding uptake. But me personally, I don't know if that is a failure of the campaign. Uptake is a choice. Someone deciding whether or not they want to take PrEP is a personal decision. If PrEP uptake for Black and Latinx are not equal to their white counterparts, I don't necessarily think that is a failure because we're dealing with two different groups who have different historical experiences with the medical system.

So uptake may take a little longer for Black and Latinx folks. However, for the Latinx community uptake has definitely tripled since the campaign. Levels for the Black community is a slow uptick, but not where we see that will have an impact on HIV disparities. We do want to get PrEP uptake to a point where we see the shift in disparity. Another group that we were focused on is trans woman. So again, we still need to do a lot of work in the trans community and the trans community needs their own specific campaign. You can't necessarily talk to them through campaigns that are reaching different populations because they have their own language, their own culture. They face different barriers.

So you have to communicate and engage with a different intent with the transgender community. However, I will say that we did meet our Getting to Zero goals. And one of that was we wanted to by 2020, 90% of people in San Francisco know about PrEP, whether they use it or not. That was one of our markers. So I must say that we did do that well. We had some really great reactions from the Black community regarding PrEP Supports. Once they saw that I got emails left and right about how proud they were of the imagery of the messaging. We then partnered with Institutional de la Raza,

which they created a campaign called Viva PrEP. And I don't know if you saw Viva PrEP but Viva PrEP looks very similar to PrEP Supports.

And what they did was.... We gave them some extra funds and they did the same messaging. Only thing they changed was some of the imagery, used some cultural icons, some traditional clothing. And they also included slogans from music or verses from music that resonated with the Latinx community. But when people saw PrEP Supports and Viva PrEP they thought it was the same campaign. We were speaking to monolingual Spanish communities. So there were some great collaborations that came out of this campaign. However, I struggled the whole way. I was proud at some moments, but there are some moments that just broke my heart. And some of those moments were when I would get emails from community members that they weren't a part of the priority population, but they would not only email me, but they emailed our communications director, Department of Public Health director. Why there's so many Black people in the campaign? Why there's so many Black and brown people in the campaign? I don't know how to respond to that.

I also got an email about specifically Terrance's photo on the billboard. And it was the basketball image with Terrance. They knew Terrance's name because Terrance is out in the community, he's on the ground. He doing the work. And that's who you want to put in the forefront. They stated it further perpetuated black male basketball stereotype. And the reality is you see a lot of starting five on the warriors and so forth, they're black men, but basketball doesn't have to be a negative narrative. The other pieces... Terrance, in that basketball was his true lived experience. He played in the least organized league across the country. So him holding and being in that picture is not a stereotype, but those are the messages that I received.

When I sent out mailers to the community... Mailers are just general mailers that you send, like you get coupons in the mail. Community members would call us about why am I getting this HIV info in the mail? A woman, this one story. I want to share this. I was on the phone with her. And she was upset because she said her husband thought she was cheating because they got this mailer in the mail. She took this up the chain and I said, "Well, just like any other mail you get, if it's not for you, you get coupons, say, well, you throw it in the garbage."

But the most disappointing part for me was how we responded to this one reaction. One person send this email up the chain. I get an email and mailers immediately have to stop. I was very disappointed in the decision that leadership made. And it's not the first time it's happened. So that is the disappointing reality that I have with working in a system that makes decisions from a political lens. And we don't move in a way where we are doing something right for the community. We're not doing anything wrong, but yet something so important gets shut down because someone is in their feelings about it. And this is why we're not going to be able to get to zero or eliminate HIV health disparities.

Tammy Kremer ([38:09](#)):

Well, I want to take a moment with this kind of structure closing in on this beautiful campaign and it's too blaring to not just state\* a campaign that really is focused on reaching people of color, reaching the Black community, then being held back because of one person's feedback. It is heartbreaking.

Nikole Trainor ([38:27](#)):

It is. I do want to also add to the outcome, Tammy. It's the stigma. Stigma was a huge pillar within this campaign. When PrEP first rolled out, there was a huge amount of stigma, particularly in the Black community. There have been times when I was at health fairs and I would be promoting PrEP and they would be like, "You are a trader. The government's putting this pill out and it's going to give us HIV."

They're trying to eradicate Black people. And this is the way they're doing it." It was not well received at all.

People were being called Truvada whores in the media. People were afraid of showing their partner the PrEP pill medication because Truvada is the same medication that is used in regimens for individuals who are HIV-positive. They take one pill to ensure that they're virally suppressed. And so when you and this go V\*. So when you have someone who is virally suppressed, it's a great thing because they're less than 1% chance, almost zero, of transmitting. And then you're pairing that with someone who is on PrEP. Essentially we can eradicate HIV. This is huge biomedical intervention, but yet people are like, "Oh no, the government's going to give us HIV. People are going to think that I'm out here just having sex with anyone because I'm on PrEP." But PrEP has opened up so many doors. I had to reevaluate my dating life or who I may decide to be with.

I will now consider being with someone who's HIV-positive because you can have children with someone who's HIV-positive. There's no risk of transmission. It just opens up so many doors of connecting with people on a more intimate level that you would not have even considered prior. Those are the conversations I was trying to have. But now, because people are so aware of what PrEP is and they have the basic fundamental knowledge. Now PrEP doesn't have this stigma behind it. We're now concerned more about not people seeing the bottle, but more of people just not forgetting to take their pill daily, or people who just have other barriers like they don't have a stable home or people who are in domestic violence relationships where their medication is being controlled by their partner. So then you have injectable PrEP. So now PrEP is not stigmatized anymore. And it's now being widely available to all communities and all folks who... All ethnic groups and individuals who identify as male, female, non-binary and trans. So I am very proud that the campaign has contributed to decreasing stigma around PrEP.

Terrance Wilder ([41:29](#)):

And to get a little bit more personal as... I always get personal when I feel like it can make a difference. This opened up doors, even in my mind, because being HIV-positive for over 10 years. When I became positive, I feel like I only should date gay men. Because I feel like they the only population that will understand. So hearing Nikole say that now, it still gives me that hope on the inside that other genders will understand what I'm going through or what I've been through. And I'm okay with it. I love people. So it's just me thinking that other people may not be okay with it or is they going to be okay with it? And that disclosure part that's really hard. But having this PrEP component to even give people education around that, if they do choose to date me, they do choose to have sex with me, I don't feel like now I have to confine myself and put myself in a box because I've always liked beautiful people, not just one specific gender my whole life.

And in this point, I don't date men anymore. And I have this PrEP system to lean on to offer protection to people. Even though I am undetectable and I've been undetectable for many years and I've had partners that's gotten on PrEP, that's gotten with me, which makes me feel awesome. Even though we're no longer together, I'm still happy for them. I'm still happy that they have this level of protection while they're out dating other people. It really opened up this new, different horizon because I'm sure, I'm almost certain, I'm not the only identified male that feels this way. That has experienced dating all type of people, trans folks, straight folks, women, men, I'm not the only one. And hopefully it continue to reduce the stigma around people dating HIV-positive person and not just looking at them like an HIV-positive person, actually being able to just look at them as a person. A person first.

Nikole Trainor ([43:19](#)):

I had a girlfriend who she called me and said, "Hey, Nikole, I'm dating a guy who's HIV-positive." And I remember you told me something about some pill and I was like, "Yeah, you need to get on PrEP." So just by that friend coming to me and exploring her options with a HIV-positive man, I mean that is just an awesome breakthrough. And that brings me pure joy.

Terrance Wilder ([43:43](#)):

That's really exciting. I mean, thanks for even sharing this story because I don't get to hear this. I only get to hear this when I come around my girl, Nikole, because a lot of women don't talk about this. It really brings some stigma around guys like myself to even go out and explore and date. So yeah, this is actually pretty great. I'm glad that this is happening in real time because it's already serving a purpose right here as we're talking.

Tammy Kremer ([44:11](#)):

Yeah. I'm listening to both of you just bringing in all these different perspectives. I think when I was preparing for our conversation about PrEP Supports, my mind was primarily on people that are not HIV-positive, who are trying to prevent HIV infection, but really thinking about how PrEP affects the entire community, whether they have been exposed or not been exposed to HIV. How it can just humanize people across the board and allow us to build authentic relationship without needing to have this concern anymore. What an amazing resource we have access to.

Terrance Wilder ([44:46](#)):

It's on a line of burying all these myths. When you drink after somebody or you kiss somebody or these social things that you will do that has no risk of transmission. It's just trucking along with some even further information around how to protect yourself. And what's true and what's not. So people don't have to be scared to sit, have a conversation and get to know somebody who's HIV-positive and may want to date them, may want to explore different options like Nikole said, have kids with them. This information was not out there all the time about definitely having kids, that made me feel great years back when I first found that out. And I found that out listening to a PrEP panel. I was an audience at that point and I was able to talk to a mother that had just gave birth to her child and her husband was HIV-positive. And she said she wasn't even taking PrEP.

It was a different spin on the panel because it was a lot of PrEP folks on the panel, but she was like the one that chose not to take it and was the advocate of being with somebody that was undetectable. And she said she was fine. Her baby's fine. There is couples out there that's not taken PrEP that has an HIV-positive undetectable partner and able to have kids. It's great. And it's a real thing.

Nikole Trainor ([46:05](#)):

Yeah. And so for the listeners as well, if your mind is spinning about how that happens is many people don't know that the HIV virus is not in a male sperm, it's in the semen and it's also for women as well. The virus is not in the eggs that they're born with, but when a woman is HIV-positive, she also takes antiviral medication and it creates a barrier that blocks the virus from penetrating the placenta into the baby. So many people are confused about, well, isn't the sperm infected? No, it's not. It's the semen, not the sperm.

Tammy Kremer ([46:47](#)):

Thank you for clarifying that because I was also confused.

Terrance Wilder ([46:51](#)):

Listen, I'm sitting here, I've been in the game for, what? Almost 10 years now. I didn't really look at it that way. I [inaudible 00:46:57] explain many other ways, but you live and you learn and you pick up on these new things every day through these conversations. And that's why having these conversations is so important. This, I swear I can count on this girl all the time to really enlighten me on stuff that I don't know.

Nikole Trainor ([47:14](#)):

That's how it was explained to me. So I'm just passing on information.

Tammy Kremer ([47:14](#)):

Passing it on.

Terrance Wilder ([47:21](#)):

Well received.

Tammy Kremer ([47:29](#)):

So pivoting back to PrEP Supports. I'm wondering what, from your experience in that campaign, continues to impact the way you approach your work now.

Terrance Wilder ([47:43](#)):

So the way I approach my work, I don't think too much has changed, but I have this campaign to lean on. So when I have new coworkers that may have not known about the campaign, I was able to show them the commercial, show them some images of this swag and educate them on PrEP. So I'm able to kind of pass that knowledge down. So we all on the same accordance in this work and pushing out the same message to people because that's very important, when you're hearing mixed messages, a person can get confused and it can make them reel back and be like, "I don't want nothing to do with it." So I do my best to give my knowledge. And I know that I can count on these conversations to keep myself updated with information because as we know information change, so it's something that will never leave my advocacy. I will always approach every situation with truth and speaking the truth about these things so stigma can continue to lessen.

Nikole Trainor ([48:38](#)):

That definitely resonates with me as well, Terrance. So the things that I take away from the campaign and that I hold with me as I continue to do my work in HIV, STI and Hep C prevention is the community engagement piece. When you show up in spaces with good, clear intent, you're not there just taking away information. And you're also showing up where, again, you care about their whole lives and you understand that your calls may not be a priority for them right now, but then how do you acknowledge and address their priorities while also inserting maybe your messaging on your call to action. That is a key thing I take away from this campaign, because what we tend to do is not acknowledge or not address some of the priorities in people's life and then were like, "No. PrEP, PrEP, PrEP. I don't care if you're sleeping on a park bench, PrEP, PrEP, PrEP." You understand?

I did not only learn that lesson from PrEP, but it resurfaced for me when PrEP rolled out from a woman's reproductive health study. And part of it, the goal was to get these women to return their vaginal swabs in the mail. And I kept calling this young lady, "Hey, I need your swab. Come on, come on.

You're going to get that \$25." And she put me in my place. In that moment I had to come-to-Jesus moment as what we call it sometime. And she said to me, "Nikole, I understand that me returning these swabs are important to you and important to research. However, I'm sleeping right now in a park with my four kids on a bench. And you want me to return a for you for \$25?"

I could not respond. I broke. My heart broke in pieces. I went to the park bench where she was at and with my own money, put her in a hotel for four days. I could not fix her issue but at least I could alleviate it for a little bit. And she was grateful that for four days she didn't have to worry about food or shelter. And guess what she did, she completed her swab and gave it back to me. So with that experience and with PrEP Supports is in, when we understand the barriers that people are facing, as they move through the ecosystem and we cannot fix it, we may not be able to fix it, but we can at least alleviate it and funding needs to be allocated for those circumstances.

Terrance Wilder ([51:52](#)):

And I definitely... That was powerful, Nikole, first off. And in that same vein... Even in the personal level, this is something that I will always look back on. You cannot take this for me and Nikole and all of the other folks that was involved in this because it's just too much richness in it. It's a richness that will never go anywhere, that I'm forever thankful for.

Tammy Kremer ([52:10](#)):

I so appreciate you both sharing the personal side of this work. It really touches me and I'm sure we'll touch our listeners and thinking about people who are working across the country, trying to reach different types of communities, doing their best every day to show up and get the word out. I know this will be inspiration for them to think about how to engage with the community and how to work in a way that provides meaning along every step of the way, which it sounds like this campaign really accomplished building community, creating connection from the beginning to the end. And that shines through in the way that you're speaking about it and in the images themselves.

Terrance Wilder ([52:55](#)):

And Tammy, if I can say one more thing, I remember we were at the Black Joy Parade and it ain't just PrEP. PrEP is very important, but to me, I looked at something completely different that folks are not getting away of condom usage because when we were giving out our hoodies, we had condoms and things too. So they were definitely taking the condoms and even parents was taking condoms and they were telling Nikole like, "Oh, these ain't for me, but I'm going to give them to my nephews. And I'm going to give them to..." We like "Not our business," but we was just glad that they were taking the condoms.

And condoms is still prevalent in the community and still worth using because again, these are multiple layers of protection for many diseases with PrEP being specifically for HIV. But a combination of both is always helpful because you can still get other sexually transmitted diseases if you're just taking PrEP. So we promote that as well, too, that condom use is still important because you still get chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes. A lot of things are still out there that PrEP does not fight.

Tammy Kremer ([53:57](#)):

Well, as we come to a close here, I want to ask one final question, which has to do with your vision for what's next. So the podcast is called Coming Together for Sexual Health. So I want to ask you, what's one thing that you would like to create by Coming Together for Sexual Health.

Nikole Trainor ([54:19](#)):

One thing that I would like to create across the board is stronger organizational and community collaborations, sharing of each other's information, programs, shared visions and shared goals across public health departments. Specifically here in the bay area there's such a disconnect and we are working towards the same goal, but we're working in our silos. So I would like strong organizational collaboration.

Terrance Wilder ([54:55](#)):

I definitely second that. I'm definitely a collaborative person and I always try to get creative during the events that I hosted. But at the top of my wishlist of collaboration, I really wish that the clubs would be more involved in pushing out the messages. There's a lot of people having fun at the clubs and that's a platform. You get famous people coming to perform. What's so hard about asking them to push out a message about sexual health? The conversation needs to be had in social places where people are having fun, like clubs and bars and concerts and festivals outside of Pride, just to continue to make it more comfortable. I think that it will be groundbreaking and stop being so political about it, just really change the narrative of the political view of sexual health and the religious view of sexual health as well.

Tammy Kremer ([55:48](#)):

It affects all of us regardless of our beliefs, our background. Well, thank you both so much once again, for not only coming on to chat with me, but sharing so freely of your experiences. I just appreciate it so much. And I look forward to sharing this all with our listeners.

Nikole Trainor ([56:07](#)):

Thank you so much, Tammy, for having me.

Tammy Kremer ([56:07](#)):

You're welcome.

Terrance Wilder ([56:09](#)):

Yes, thanks for having me as well. This was great.

Tammy Kremer ([56:16](#)):

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