

Capacity for Innovation: First HIV Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Services in Democratic Republic of the Congo

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HIV in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

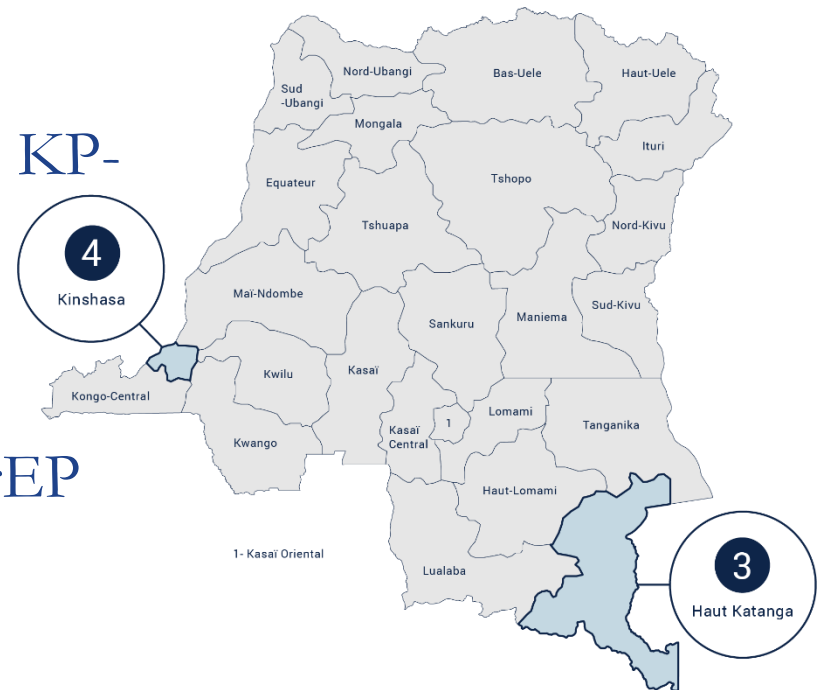
- National HIV prevalence adults (>15 years): 0.7%
- Disproportionately higher HIV prevalence among “key populations” (KP)
 - Female sex workers: 6.9%¹
 - Men who have sex with men: 17.9%¹
- KP have lower healthcare coverage and report poor quality of and sub-optimal care
 - Due to stigma, discrimination, and legal and policy barriers

Pre-exposure Prophylaxis for HIV Prevention

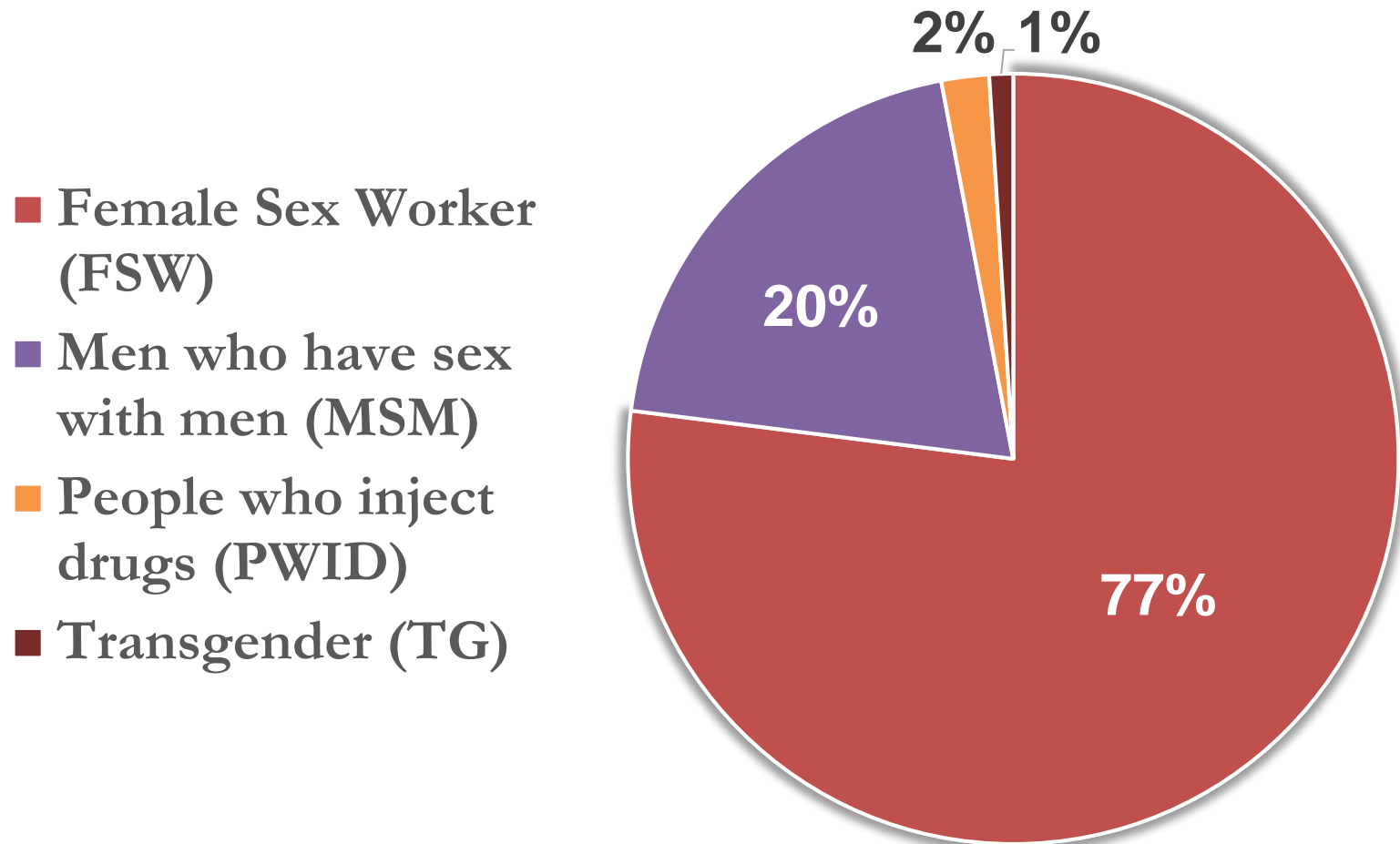
- **Pre-exposure prophylaxis = PrEP**
- Antiretroviral drugs to prevent HIV
- Clinical trials have demonstrated PrEP efficacy
 - Daily PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by more than 90%
- Effective protection for people at high risk
- High early loss to follow-up in PrEP rollout

PrEP Project in DRC

- ICAP at Columbia University, DRC's Ministry of Health, and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) evaluated the feasibility and acceptability of PrEP
- First PrEP services in DRC were implemented in February 2018 at 7 KP-friendly health facilities
 - 4 in Kinshasa
 - 3 in Haut Katanga
- A target of initiating 350 KP on PrEP
 - Sample size for the feasibility

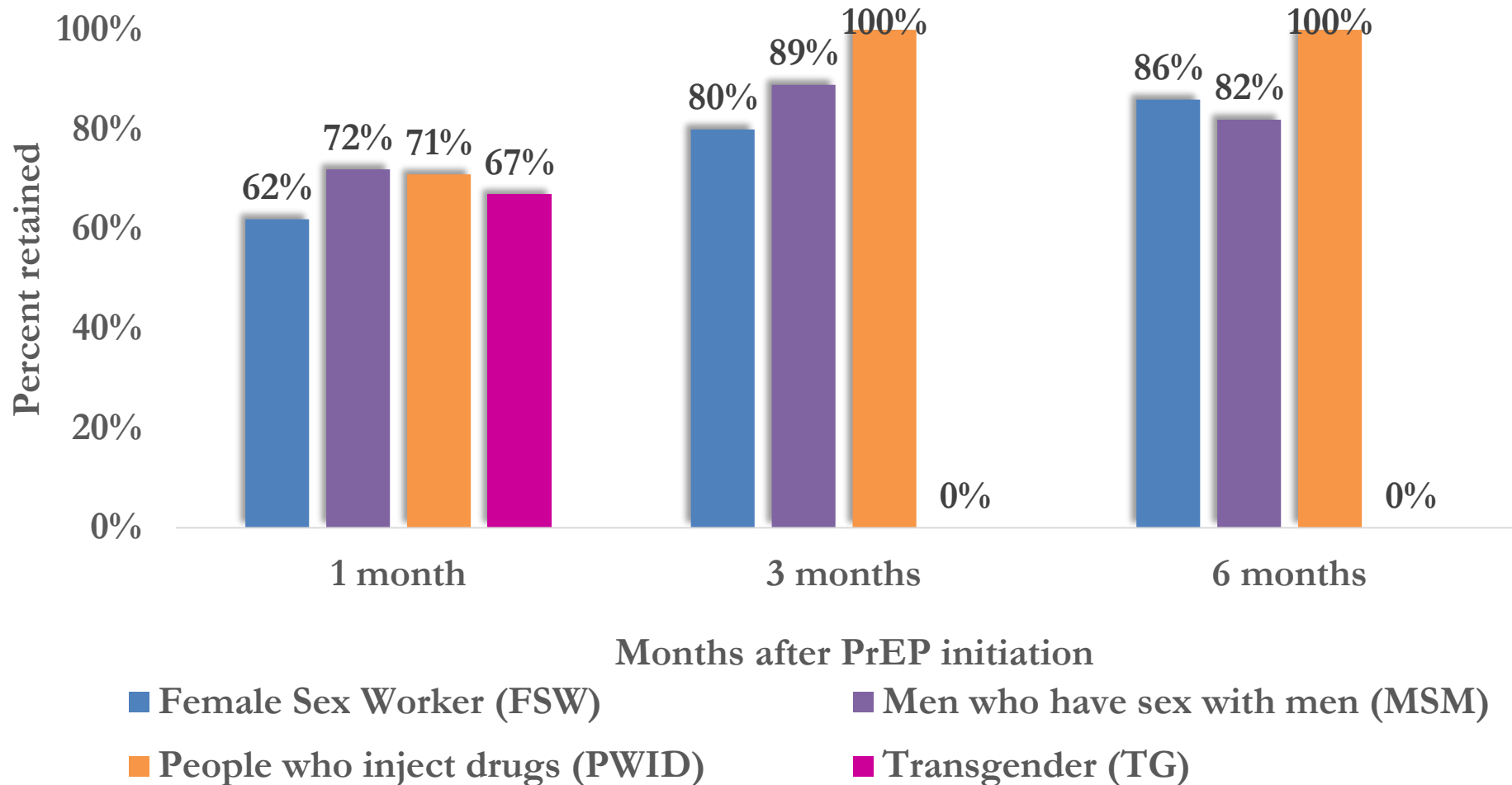


PrEP Enrollment by Key Population Group, at 7 Implementation Facilities (N=356)



Olsen H, Reidy W, Mushimbele N, Tenda R, Tchissambou T, Malele Bazola F, Djomand G, Bingham T, Dee J, Mukinda E, Ewetola R, Franks J. Short-term Retention on HIV Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Services in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI), Seattle, March 2019 [Poster].

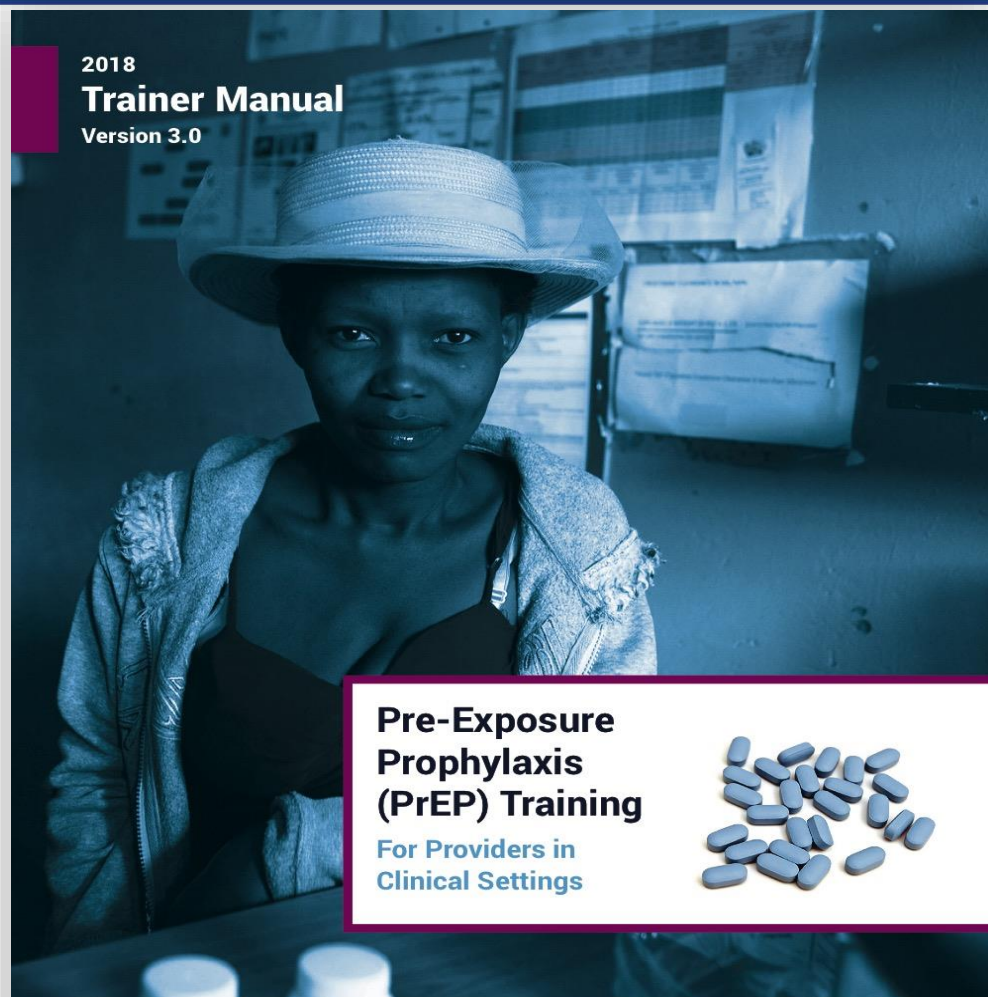
Retention by Key Population Group at 1, 3 and 6 Months After PrEP Initiation



Global PrEP Capacity Building

- ICAP developed a PrEP training for multidisciplinary facility teams to deliver PrEP
 - 6-day curriculum
 - Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools
 - Clinical job aids

https://icap.columbia.edu/tools_resources/icap-pre-exposure-prophylaxis-prep-package-2/



National PrEP Capacity Building

- Provided guidance on establishing national PrEP guidelines
- Supported a national PrEP technical working group to garner input from local stakeholders
- PrEP training curriculum and materials adapted to local context
- PrEP M&E tools tailored to existing clinic tools
- PrEP specific clinic procedures
 - Ensuring that PrEP services are provided in a standardized and comprehensive sequence
- Healthcare worker sensitization training

Facility-Level PrEP Capacity Building

- Training healthcare workers, M&E teams, and peer workers on PrEP service delivery
- Providing comprehensive PrEP education to healthcare workers and clients
- On-site monitoring and mentorship of clinic staff and PrEP service delivery procedures
- Expanding PrEP-specific outreach and retention activities

PrEP Implementation in DRC

- 38 facility staff, 48 peer workers, and 15 community leaders trained on PrEP
- PrEP enrollment February to May 2018
- 356 KP initiated PrEP
 - Successful achievement of PrEP targets
- High overall percentages of PrEP retention compared to other sub-Saharan Africa projects
 - 62% at 1- month, 82% at 3-month, 86% at 6-month

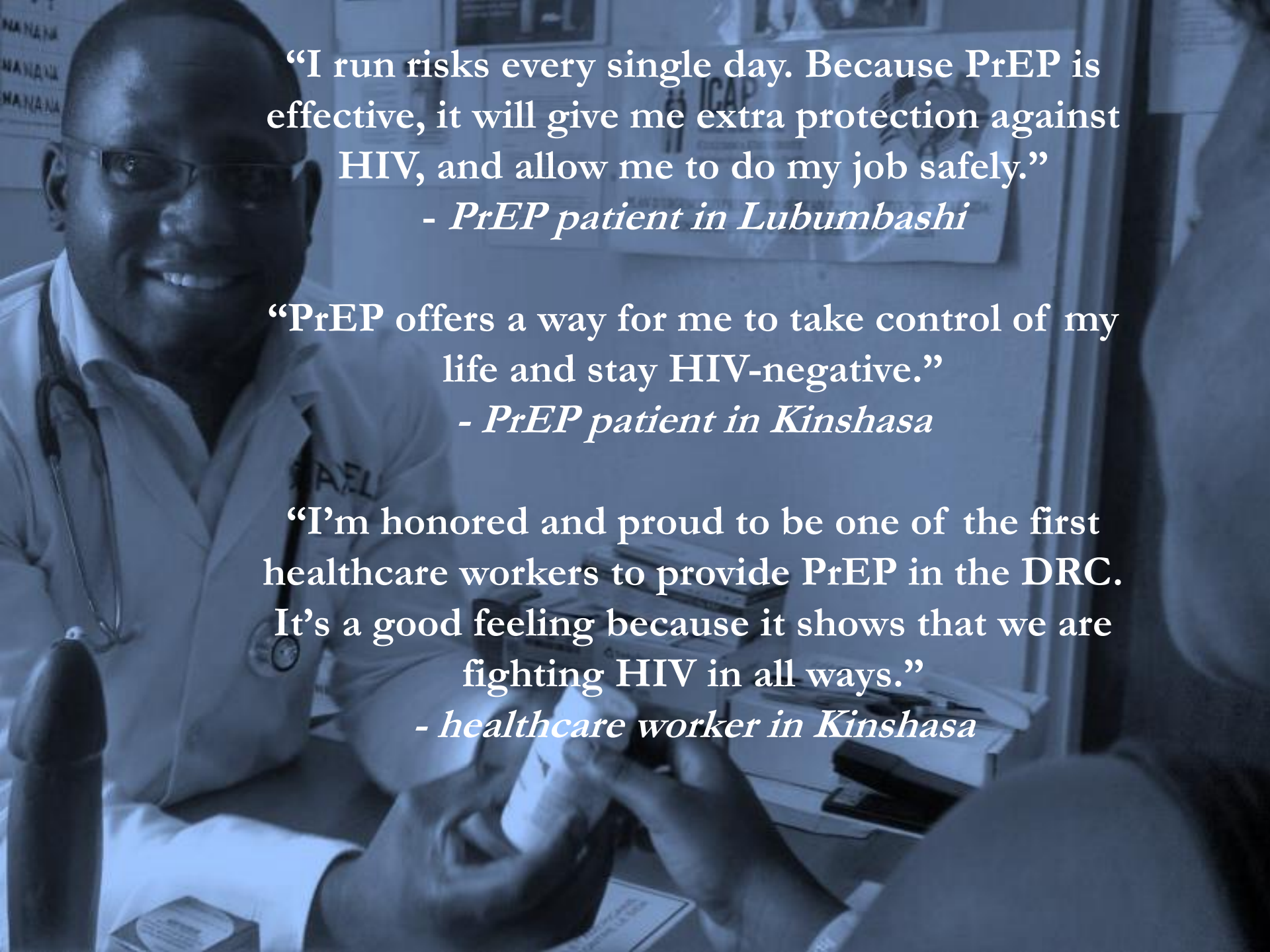
Findings and Lessons Learned

- Lay counselors, peers, and outreach workers included in PrEP training
- PrEP specific clinic procedures
- Tailored outreach to improve PrEP retention
- Service delivery and M&E tools standardized across facilities
- PrEP education materials for staff and clients
- Ongoing clinic “PrEP refresher” trainings



Conclusion

- Clinic staff must have a clear understanding of the importance of PrEP
- Providing comprehensive PrEP education to clients promotes increased retention
- Standardized procedures are essential to monitoring PrEP service delivery
- Lessons learned in DRC will be shared with KP programs in other African countries
- Project findings will support the endorsement of national PrEP guidelines and the scale-up of PrEP in DRC



“I run risks every single day. Because PrEP is effective, it will give me extra protection against HIV, and allow me to do my job safely.”

- *PrEP patient in Lubumbashi*

“PrEP offers a way for me to take control of my life and stay HIV-negative.”

- *PrEP patient in Kinshasa*

“I’m honored and proud to be one of the first healthcare workers to provide PrEP in the DRC. It’s a good feeling because it shows that we are fighting HIV in all ways.”

- *healthcare worker in Kinshasa*

Acknowledgements

- PrEP clients
- PrEP peers and outreach workers
- Key populations communities
- Healthcare workers and facility teams
- DRC Ministry of Health
- CDC Atlanta and DRC
- Wafaa El-Sadr
- Elaine Abrams

