

MEDICATION LOCKERS

# Expanding Safe, Dignified Access to HIV Medications

*A Community-Based Policy Initiative for  
San Francisco*



# THE PROBLEM

## Housing Instability

No safe, private place to store medications consistently

## Limited Pharmacy Hours

Pharmacy schedules don't align with patients' lives and work

## Transportation Gaps

Long travel times create real barriers to consistent refills

## Stigma & Privacy

HIV-related stigma deters people from traditional pharmacy settings

*These barriers fall hardest on women, trans and nonbinary people, and those navigating multiple marginalizations.*

# WHO IS MOST AFFECTED



## **Women & Gender-Expansive People Living with HIV**

Face compounding stigma and structural barriers that disrupt access to consistent HIV care

## **People Experiencing Housing Instability**

No safe, private space to store medications — forced to choose between security and health

## **Those Deterred by Stigma**

Traditional pharmacy and clinical settings can feel exposing or unsafe for many HIV-positive individuals

## **People with Transportation & Schedule Barriers**

Limited mobility, long travel times, or work schedules that conflict with pharmacy hours

# THE PROPOSED SOLUTION



01

## Community-Based Lockers

Secure, client-controlled medication lockers placed in trusted community settings across San Francisco

02

## Extended Availability

Accessible outside standard clinic and pharmacy hours — on patients' terms, not institutional schedules

03

## Low-Threshold & Dignified

No appointment needed, minimal paperwork, no stigma — pre-loaded by care teams, retrieved by clients privately

04

## Harm Reduction Framework

Meets people where they are, reduces structural obstacles, and centers autonomy and self-determination

# THE POLICY PATH



## STEP 1

### Legislative Visits

Direct visits to SF Board of Supervisors members to present the proposal



## STEP 2

### Formal Resolution

Introduce a Board resolution to secure City & County funding for a pilot



## STEP 3

### Pilot Funding

City-funded pilot at SFCHC's transgender-focused location as inaugural site



## STEP 4

### Scalable Model

Establish a sustainable, replicable city-supported model that grows over time

*Goal: A durable city infrastructure investment — not a one-time grant.*

# OUR PARTNERS



## Positive Women's Network

- Organizational home for this initiative
- Shared commitment to equity and self-determination
- Rooted in the lived experience of women and gender-expansive people with HIV
- Provides advocacy infrastructure and community trust

## SF Community Health Center

- Preliminary approval confirmed; finalizing with leadership
- Enthusiastic support for the medication locker pilot
- Inaugural locker site: new SFCHC location specifically serving the transgender community
- Trusted community setting with existing care infrastructure

# GROUNDING IN HARM REDUCTION & HEALTH EQUITY

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## Meet People Where They Are

Remove structural obstacles to staying on HIV treatment rather than asking patients to navigate around them

## Center Self-Determination

Client-controlled access restores agency — people retrieve their own medications, on their own schedule

## Dignity Without Stigma

No surveillance, no bureaucratic friction, no judgment. Access designed around the person, not the institution

## Equity as Architecture

Designed for women, trans, and nonbinary people living at the intersections of multiple marginalizations

# ANTICIPATED PUBLIC HEALTH BENEFITS



Medication  
Adherence



Emergency  
Department Visits



System  
Costs

- Improved viral suppression for HIV-positive individuals — supporting long-term health outcomes
- Reduced hospitalizations driven by missed doses and interrupted treatment
- Stronger continuity of care for people with unstable housing or unpredictable schedules
- Prevention-focused model generates long-term cost savings for the broader health system



# SYSTEM-LEVEL IMPLICATIONS



## **Decentralizes Medication Distribution**

Reduces strain on clinics and pharmacies by extending access into trusted community spaces

## **Scalable & Replicable**

Creates a city-funded model that can expand to serve other populations and conditions beyond HIV

## **Builds Systemic Trust**

Deepens the relationship between marginalized communities and the formal health system through low-barrier access

## **National Model**

Positions San Francisco as a leader in dignified, equity-driven HIV care and community health infrastructure

# NEXT STEPS

**01**

**Board of Supervisors**

Legislative visits and formal resolution introduction to secure City & County funding

**02**

**SFCHC Partnership**

Finalize host org agreement and confirm inaugural locker site at the transgender-focused location

**03**

**Stakeholder Engagement**

Broaden coalition: community members, clinical staff, pharmacy partners, and city agencies

**04**

**Funding Strategy**

Pursue city budget allocation, federal health equity grants, and philanthropic support

**05**

**Communication &  
Advocacy**

Deploy fact sheet as foundational advocacy tool for stakeholder engagement and media outreach