



Thato Patricia Mtshweni

PrEP Ambassador & CIA (Community Information Agent)

Hospitality student • Pretoria Campus

3rd SAHCS Long-Acting HIV Treatment and Prevention Conference
Closing session • Long-acting prevention: LEN
15 September 2026 | Johannesburg

Who I Am



I am Thato Patricia Mtshweni, a PrEP Ambassador and CIA (Community Information Agent) from Soshanguve, Block F West, currently studying Hospitality at Pretoria Campus.

I recently turned 22, and my PrEP journey has given me first-hand experience of oral PrEP, CAB-LA and, most recently, long-acting prevention with LEN.

My Journey to Long-Acting Prevention



2019 — Started PrEP using oral pills.

2023 — Transitioned to CAB-LA, the 2-monthly injection.

Late October 2024 — Paused PrEP.

April 2026 — Started using LEN.

My earlier PrEP experiences helped me appreciate the importance of prevention options that can fit into everyday life.

What Has Been Good About LEN For Me



Convenience has been the biggest benefit for me.

I like having a long-acting prevention option rather than needing to travel to the clinic every now and then.

Using LEN has helped me feel more confident that I am taking action to protect my health.

For me, convenience and confidence make long-acting prevention feel more practical.

What Was Difficult: My Fears Before Starting LEN



I was afraid that the needles would be painful.

I worried that I would get big lumps that could be visible when I was wearing clothes.

I was nervous about what other people might think or say.

I had also heard stigma and misinformation in the community, including the idea that PrEP is a “tracking device.”

What My Experience Taught Me



Starting something new can come with fear and uncertainty.

My concerns were real, and I needed information and reassurance before feeling comfortable.

My journey reinforced for me how important it is for young people to have trustworthy information about long-acting prevention.

People should be able to ask questions about injections, side effects, stigma and privacy without being judged.

The Community Perspective: Information vs Stigma



Stigma can make people afraid to ask questions or seek prevention.

Rumours can create unnecessary fear around PrEP and long-acting options.

As a PrEP Ambassador and CIA, I want to help people access accurate information and make informed choices.

My message is not to pressure someone into LEN—it is to make sure they know that long-acting prevention is an option they can learn about.

What I Would Tell Someone Considering LEN



First, get the facts. Ask questions and seek reliable information at a clinic.

Do not let rumours or fear make the decision for you.

Tell the healthcare provider about your concerns—especially worries about injections, visible lumps or stigma.

Think about what fits your life and what will help you stay engaged with HIV prevention.

You have choices. If LEN is not the option you want, discuss other PrEP options with a healthcare provider.

Why This Matters to Me as a Young Woman



PrEP has helped me feel more confident and more in control of my health.

Long-acting prevention can offer convenience while supporting my ability to plan around my own life.

Young women deserve information, privacy, choice and respectful healthcare.

For me, PrEP is not just a medical option—it is part of feeling empowered to make decisions about my health.



As a PrEP Ambassador and CIA, I want people to have information before they have fear.

LEN has given me a convenient long-acting prevention experience that has strengthened my confidence.

My hope is that every young person can make an informed choice that fits their life.

Thank you.