

FRIENDS

IT'S ELECTION TIME

and political parties are our friends again, angling for the pink vote. That's cool - talking, listening to us, signing rainbow agreements - that's how we progress.

It's ok to disagree with friends - that's the way of friendship, sometimes agreeing to disagree. But friendship is based on honesty and acknowledging mistakes. Which takes me to our friends the VVD.

The VVD is against PrEP. I disagree with that, but that's their right. But it's based on misinformation. That's ok, we all get it wrong sometimes. But when they're corrected and still don't listen - that's not cool.

This is what happened in Den Haag in December.

Last year D66 and Groenlinks put in a 'bridging proposal' for 370 people taking PrEP in the AmPrEP trial. This 3 year trial ends in June and there's no plan for the 370 participants after. (Fortunately the price of PrEP has dropped dramatically from €550 per month to €54 - no thanks to our politician friends but pure luck that the patent ran out in 2017. That makes PrEP affordable for many but not everyone.)

The 'bridge' was until the Health Commission decides in 2018 whether to include PrEP in the basic insurance program, to be implemented sometime in 2019. The decision is widely expected to be positive.

Aukje de Vries, the responsible VVD parliamentarian, wrote in reply to pleas to vote for the proposal:

"With the amendment, the petitioners want to set aside money to extend and expand the pilot that Amsterdam is doing. If a municipality takes an initiative for a pilot, then of course it can. But it is the responsibility of the city council to make funds available for this."

To which the Aidsfonds replied: "AMPrEP is not an Amsterdam pilot and not initiative from the municipality of Amsterdam. It is a pilot that takes place in Amsterdam... 40% of the participants come from outside the city... in The Netherlands additional sexual health care is financed through the National Government but carried out locally."

There was no answer,
VVD subsequently voted **NO**
and the proposal sank.

VVD has now blocked access to PrEP for 4 years.

According to Aidsfonds that has lead to roughly 1000 extra HIV cases in Holland. That's pretty outrageous.

On De Vries's homepage is her life motto: 'Action, not words'. She should add three more verbs - listen, read, think. There's one action we can do though- don't vote for her or our fake friends the Amsterdam VVD this coming March.

