



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blantyre, Malawi

2nd July 2026

GEM Celebrates Malawi's Adoption of Lenacapavir, Calls for Urgent Action to Make Long-Acting HIV Prevention Accessible to All

New twice-yearly injectable PrEP expands choice in the fight against HIV, but GEM warns that choice means nothing without access for every district, every community, and every young woman who needs it.

BLANTYRE - Generational Empowerment Movement (GEM) joins all Malawian in celebrating one of the most significant HIV prevention milestones in our country's history. Following the Launch by the Ministry of Health and Sanitation Honourable Madalitso Baloyi, MP that Lenacapavir (LEN), a long-acting injectable Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis administered twice a year, will be introduced into Malawi's public health facilities effective today 2nd July 2026, GEM extends its profound excitement and gratitude to the Government of Malawi, the National AIDS Commission (NAC), and all partners who made this moment possible.

This is great news that Malawi has been waiting for. Having already introduced oral PrEP in 2019 and the bi-monthly injectable CAB-LA in 2023, Malawi now joins a small group of nations bringing Lenacapavir, a twice-yearly option, directly to its people. For GEM, this is not simply another product launch, it is a turning point in expanding real, meaningful choice for HIV prevention, particularly for young women and adolescent girls who continue to bear the heaviest burden of new HIV infections in Malawi and across the region.

Adolescent girls and young women in Malawi continue to acquire HIV at disproportionately higher rates, 2 times higher than their male peers, often due to power imbalances, limited negotiating ability around safe sex, economic dependency, and structural barriers to healthcare. For many young women, discreet HIV prevention options gives them the power to protect themselves without fear of stigma.

Lenacapavir will change the prevention landscape, with twice-a-year injection means fewer clinic visits, greater discretion, and significantly reduced burden of adherence. It means a young woman in a rural community no longer has to choose between attending school or work and protecting herself from HIV. This is what real choice looks like, and GEM believes every young woman in Malawi deserves the right to choose the prevention method that best fits her life, needs and circumstances.

GEM emphasizes that this new prevention option does not automatically create choice. Choice only becomes real when people can access it. GEM welcomes this as a starting point, not a destination. We cannot celebrate the arrival of Lenacapavir whilst most people that need it remain unsure of when,

or whether, this option will reach them. Prevention choice is not defined by what is available somewhere. It must be defined by what is accessible to everyone who needs it, regardless of where they live.

Call to Action

As Malawi takes this bold step forward, GEM calls on all stakeholders to act with urgency to ensure that the promise of Lenacapavir reaches the most at-risk persons.

To Donors and Development Partners

- Mobilize and sustain adequate funding to procure and distribute Lenacapavir beyond initial sites, ensuring no district is left waiting for years for access.
- Invest in demand creation and community education so that young women and key populations know this option exists and how to access it.

To the Government of Malawi

- Publish and commit to a clear, time-bound national scale-up plan that extends Lenacapavir from few health centres to public facilities in every district, including hard-to-reach and rural areas.
- Prioritise adolescent girls and young women in distribution planning, recognizing their disproportionate HIV burden and the unique barriers they face in accessing care.
- Ensure health workers across the country are trained and equipped to deliver Lenacapavir safely and without stigma.

Civil Society Organizations

- Join GEM in monitoring the equity of this rollout and holding duty-bearers accountable to a true national scale-up.
- Carry accurate, accessible information on Lenacapavir into communities, churches, schools, and youth centers so that young people can make informed choices.

Community Members and Young People

- Seek accurate information about Lenacapavir and other HIV prevention options from trusted health workers and credible organizations.
- Raise your voice. Demand that this option reaches your community, and support your peers, especially young women, in exercising their right to choose.

GEM remains excited that Lenacapavir represents more choice, more dignity, and more control for young women over their own health and futures. We celebrate Malawi's leadership in bringing this option to our country, and we stand ready to work alongside Government, donors, and fellow civil society actors to ensure that this milestone becomes a true national achievement, felt by young women in every district, not a privilege enjoyed by a few.

ABOUT GENERATIONAL EMPOWERMENT MOVEMENT (GEM)

GEM is a Women-led civil society organisation based in Blantyre, Malawi, advancing the health, rights, and empowerment of young people, with a focus on adolescent girls and young women, and equitable access to HIV prevention services.

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