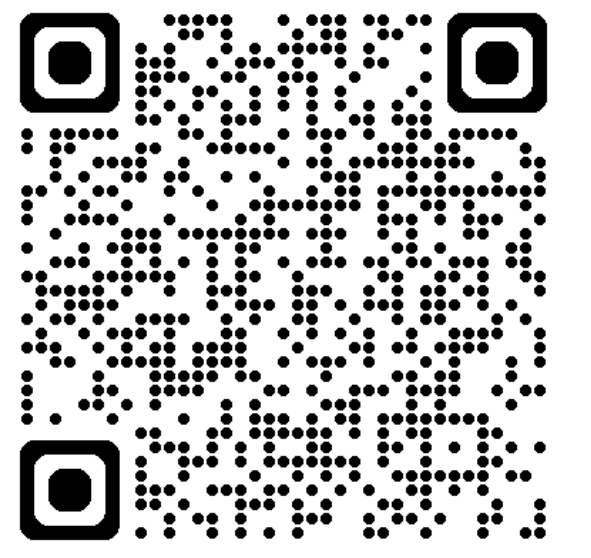


## BACKGROUND

Comprehending HIV risk and protection options, paired with self-determining access to methods, empowers youth to make informed decisions about their risks for HIV. We sought to understand youths’ personal motivations and experiences that influenced uptake of and persistence with long-acting injectable cabotegravir (CAB-LA) for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) within the first adolescent CAB-LA trial in the US.

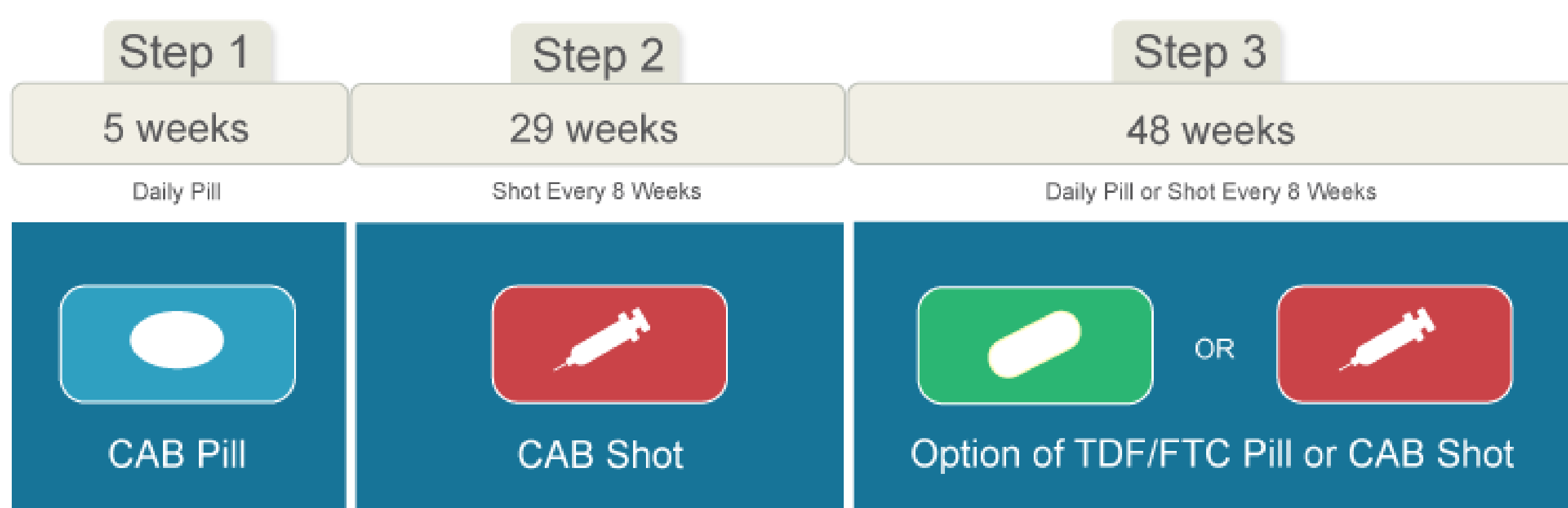


The desire for independence and self-efficacy was a significant driver for participants to enroll, initiate and persist with CAB-LA injections. Four adolescents joined the study *independently, self-consenting* without guardian support, demonstrating exceptional self-efficacy and self-reliance. Additionally, a majority of the participants reported strong motivation to adhere to the injection schedule after receiving *appropriate sexual health education* from clinic staff.

## METHODS

HPTN 083-01 investigated whether CAB-LA for PrEP was safe, tolerable, and acceptable for adolescents assigned male at birth, including sexual and gender minorities. Nine males aged below 18 enrolled in Aurora (CO), Boston, Chicago, and Memphis from 2020-2022 and completed a series of five CAB-LA injections. Eight adolescents and four parent/guardians were interviewed near the end of the injection series about participant experiences of CAB-LA and motivations to join the study. Transcripts from the interviews were coded and analyzed using a thematic approach.

FIGURE 1. Study Schematic



\*In step 2, the first two shots are four weeks apart and 8 weeks apart after that

## RESULTS

The desire for independence and self-efficacy was a significant driver for participants to enroll, initiate and persist with CAB-LA injections. Four adolescents joined the study independently, self-consenting without guardian support, demonstrating exceptional self-efficacy and self-reliance. They felt *smart enough* to make decisions and did not expect parental permission or support. Their parents confirmed this experience, noting that their children often discussed the study in passing, arranging their visits and transportation independently. Additionally, a majority of the participants reported strong motivation to adhere to the injection schedule after receiving appropriate sexual health education from clinic staff. Participants felt their new skills and knowledge allowed them to protect themselves and others, utilizing the sex education they gained during the study. Parents/guardians also noted improved health education to be a notable benefit of their adolescent’s study participation. Of the nine participants in the study, eight completed all scheduled injections.

TABLE 2. Self-Efficacy Quotes

Theme	Speaker	Quote
Self-Efficacy	Participant	“Just that it’s a clinical trial, you never know. It’s not approved. There’s medical risks obviously. And they were just upset I didn’t tell them, but obviously part of the reason I didn’t tell them is because I didn’t want to have to come out to my parents, because I honestly don’t feel that my sexuality has anything to do with my parents in a way. It doesn’t affect my day-to-day life like it does for a lot of other people. Which is why I wasn’t outed by the study.”
Self-Efficacy	Parent	“I mean, I have no impact because he’s been really, I mean, I was kind of concerned about doing the study or doing this interview because I haven’t been impacted by it much at all. He’s been driving since he started, and I have never actually physically come in with him one time.”
Self-Efficacy	Participant	I’ve talked to my best friend; I mentioned it to her, and I didn’t tell my parents ever that I was participating in this until I had to tell them that I was coming in for the last appointment because they asked where I was going. So, I had to explain to them that I was going in for a study and then they searched all the studies on Fenway and found that this was the only one I could be in.

## CONCLUSIONS

In HPTN 083-01, HIV prevention education and self-consent empowered participants to make informed decisions about HIV prevention options and remain adherent to their selected method. Providing youth with means and options to independently protect themselves promotes autonomy and, thus, ownership of their choices and sexual health safety.

TABLE 1. Health Education Quotes

Theme	Speaker	Quote
Health Education	Participant	“I did wear condoms, but not enough. I was very overconfident and just not wearing it. I got help with education [from clinic staff] on it because my school did not really do that properly.”
Health Education	Participant	“I enjoyed educating my friends on it because they don’t really know anything about it. I feel like it’s a very important thing to talk about, because it’s a very taboo subject. I think talking about it is honestly the best way of prevention other than PrEP itself, is education.”
Health Education	Parent	“At first, I thought for a minute he was like oh I get money with it [joining the study]. But I think it benefited him more with the education, because a lot of things he talk[s] about that I don’t even know. And he tells me, “Mom, I’m really glad you put me in this because sometimes we can be reckless.”

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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