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Session Summary

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Summary Scope	~3 page(s)
Focus Areas	ignore "Portugal has made significant progress on its HIV cascade targets. With Pr 95% nationally and late diagnosis falling below 10% (CD4 <350 at diagnosis), the u

Executive Summary

C-Suite Brief -- Portugal HIV Standard of Care and System Improvements (Draft v3.1, March 2026)

Strategic objective

Decide whether the current Portugal HIV Standard of Care (SoC) and system-improvement roadmap is sufficiently de-risked to submit for DGS review, and what near-term investment and governance decisions are required to stabilize upstream performance (prevention and diagnosis) while preparing for near-term innovation pressures (long-acting PrEP readiness) without over-committing before payer decisions.

What was found -- top verified signals only (and why they matter)

1) Upstream gaps remain the dominant avoidable-harm driver

Verified signal. Portugal's 2024 surveillance snapshot in the draft shows:

- 997 new HIV diagnoses (2024).
- Estimated 49,699 people living with HIV (2023 estimate).
- Estimated 2,894 undiagnosed (about 5.8 percent).
- Late diagnosis 53.9 percent defined as CD4 count below 350 at diagnosis.
- Advanced disease 36.3 percent defined as CD4 count at or below 200 at diagnosis.

Why it matters. Even if downstream care is strong after sustained linkage, the late-diagnosis rate in the current draft implies the system's highest ROI is still upstream: testing normalization, rapid linkage, and reducing time-to-service. Shifting resources away from upstream now would be inconsistent with the burden profile presented in the draft and could increase long-term cost and transmission risk.

2) PrEP is structurally enabled, but delivery continuity is fragile and politically visible

Verified signal. The draft anchors oral PrEP access to:

- **Portaria 402/2023**, establishing exceptional reimbursement and expanded access, explicitly including a community pharmacy dispensing pathway while preserving free hospital access as an alternative channel.
- **DGS Norma 001/2024**, providing updated clinical guidance for PrEP and superseding the prior norm.
- **Key Portaria 402/2023 operational controls are now captured as verified provisions in v3.1**, including (as summarized in the draft) reimbursement tier and co-payment logic, a price ceiling per pack, prescriber specialty constraints, and dispensing limits intended to manage safe and affordable access.

Why it matters.

- The existence of a formal access and reimbursement scaffold reduces policy risk, but it increases execution accountability: once the channel exists, performance failures become immediately “system failures,” not “policy gaps.”
- The plan’s credibility now hinges on operational readiness and contracting, not just clinical guidance.

3) Verified implementation “stress signals” indicate access bottlenecks and contracting gaps

Verified signal 1 (primary source). A community-delivery intervention by GAT in Lisbon was launched in response to what GAT describes as an access breakdown for initial hospital PrEP consultations, including claims of long waits and real-world harm (people acquiring HIV while waiting). The draft also notes that a government working group was created (October 2024) to define conditions for public funding of community organizations, with contracting lag at the time of the GAT publication.

Verified signal 2 (media report). National media reported (February 2026) that PrEP prevention consultations were suspended by a community association due to funding and contracting issues, with a waiting list.

Why it matters.

- These are “permission-to-operate” risks: they can trigger reputational escalation and policy intervention, and they directly undermine prevention outcomes if not stabilized.
- They also justify the plan’s non-optional additions: a commissioning blueprint, backlog protocol, continuity clauses, and a defined escalation path to DGS and ACSS when access degrades.

4) Long-acting PrEP is an innovation pressure, but national adoption is not yet a payer reality

Verified signal. The draft states:

- EU marketing authorization for lenacapavir (Yeytuo) for PrEP dated 25 August 2025, with product information updated 26 February 2026.
- Clinical evidence supporting twice-yearly injectable PrEP efficacy was published in 2025.
- Portugal reimbursement and operations are explicitly not confirmed, and the plan positions long-acting PrEP as “readiness planning” only, not rollout.

Why it matters.

- This is the correct risk posture for public-sector work: readiness protects future time-to-benefit, while avoiding over-promising budget impact before INFARMED and payer decisions.
- However, it forces a near-term decision: whether to fund readiness activities now (workflow, cold chain, safety reporting, pilot design), and at what scale, versus waiting for payer signals.

5) Governance structure is clear; performance management is moving in the right direction

Verified signal. The draft defines governance ownership across DGS, INSA (surveillance), INFARMED (feasibility and affordability), SPMS (digital prescribing and infrastructure), ULS and hospitals (capacity and monitoring), community pharmacies, community organizations, and patient advocacy.

Why it matters.

- Clear ownership is a necessary condition for delivery in a multi-actor system.
- The plan's "minimum viable KPI set" is a strong executive lever, because it ties investment to measurable operational performance (time-to-specialist visit, time-to-PrEP initiation consult, waiting list size and aging, retention recovery rate, PrEP persistence/refill continuity).

What remains unknown (and why it matters to investment decisions)

Unknown (decision-relevant)	Why it matters	Executive consequence if not resolved
Objective downstream performance indicators (viral suppression, retention in care) from national sources.	The executive summary asserts downstream strength but flags the need to substantiate.	Risk of over-claiming system performance; reduces credibility of a "reallocation" narrative and weakens value framing.
Final, quotable details from DGS Norma 001/2024 (eligibility, cadence, monitoring checkpoints).	The SoC must be operationally consistent with national norms.	Mismatch between SOPs and national guidance increases governance friction and clinical risk.
Definitive status of APECS ART guidance update (draft notes Dec 2023 PDF availability and inability to confirm Jan 2025 update).	Treatment pathway language must align to the current authoritative national clinical recommendation set.	Risk of citing an outdated standard; creates avoidable clinician pushback during review.
Confirmed SPMS evidence package for PrEP e-prescribing (archivable primary source).	Digital operational claims are part of delivery feasibility.	If evidence is not archivable, reviewers may discount feasibility claims and request rework.
Payer pathway and funding source decision for community PrEP commissioning (DGS/SNS allocation vs ACSS contracting vs blended).	This is the single largest execution determinant for continuity.	Without a funding route decision, the plan remains "strategy-complete" but "delivery-incomplete."
Portugal-specific payer and operational stance for long-acting PrEP (beyond EU authorization).	Determines whether readiness stays theoretical or becomes a near-term pilot.	Without a clear payer pathway, readiness investment can drift or be seen as premature.

Recommended executive decisions and actions (2-3)

Decision 1 -- Approve an “Upstream Stabilization” investment package as the primary ROI lever (next 90 days)

What to decide.

- Keep prevention and diagnosis as the dominant strategic focus until late diagnosis materially improves versus the levels in the current draft.
- Fund the commissioning blueprint as an executable program, not a document artifact.

What to action now.

- Require a signed commissioning model choice (single accountable contracting authority) and adopt minimum service levels aligned to the draft’s blueprint (first consultation within 14 days; quarterly follow-up completion at or above 85 percent; formal continuity clauses; escalation triggers when backlog exceeds defined thresholds).

Strategic impact.

- Converts the plan from “policy-sound” to “delivery-credible,” reducing political and reputational exposure while improving prevention outcomes.

Decision 2 -- Make KPI governance the “control tower” for the program (immediate) What to decide.

- Elevate the “minimum viable KPI set” into a formal monthly executive dashboard with named owners across DGS, SPMS, INSA, and ULS.

What to action now.

- Mandate monthly performance review focusing on time-to-service, waiting list aging, and PrEP persistence continuity.
- Enforce confidentiality and GDPR-grade controls as stated in the draft (role-based access, consent touchpoints, and setting-specific privacy protections in pharmacies and community sites).

Strategic impact.

- Creates an investment-grade governance loop where funding, capacity, and contracting decisions respond to measured bottlenecks rather than anecdote.

Decision 3 -- Maintain long-acting PrEP as a gated readiness program, not an adoption commitment (next 6-12 months) What to decide.

- Endorse the draft’s three-stage gating (site readiness, payer feasibility decision, pilot activation) as the formal national posture.

What to action now.

- Fund low-regret readiness outputs only (workflow design, safety reporting, pilot protocol template, budget impact framework), contingent on a clear payer evidence plan.
- Do not imply Portugal reimbursement or rollout timing in any external-facing narrative until INFARMED and payer positions are documented.

Strategic impact.

- Preserves optionality and accelerates time-to-pilot if reimbursement becomes feasible, without creating budget commitments the system cannot sustain.

Notes (for internal alignment only)

- The strategic note asking to ignore the prior “cascade targets have improved” narrative is consistent with the verified signals in the current draft: the late diagnosis and PrEP fragility signals presented remain substantial and do not support a major near-term pivot away from upstream investment.
- If you want, I can convert this brief into a one-slide executive memo format (headline, 3 signals, 3 decisions) as an optional adjacent deliverable.

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