

# #PeersInThePandemic Advocacy Campaign Guidance



## Campaign Overview

#PeersInThePandemic is a global campaign calling for reforms to harm reduction and treatment systems in light of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the global response for people who use drugs. The campaign will be run online from 9 November – 11 December primarily using social media to amplify our five key policy demands. These demands were selected based on [INPUD's peer-driven research](#) on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the health and rights of people who use drugs. Each week of the campaign we will highlight a different demand by sharing calls for action and messaging over Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with the goal of influencing advocacy for these peer-driven demands by the broader drug policy and harm reduction communities.

In this document you will find summaries of each key demand along with text you can use on social media. Participation in the campaign is not limited to what is in this document; we encourage you to adapt these messages to reflect the situation on the ground in your countries, and to get creative in how you engage your own audiences on social media.

## **Core Objective:**

- To initiate, maintain and expand positive harm reduction programme reforms enacted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Strategic Objectives:**

- To ensure any gains made towards more accessible and available harm reduction services and programmes during COVID-19 are not lost.
- To encourage thought leadership on the global public and individual health benefits of providing improved access to harm reduction services and programmes for people who use drugs.
- To raise awareness of the need to expand access to and increase availability of core harm reduction services and programmes for people who use drugs.

## Campaign Timeline

9–13 Nov: **Demand 1 – Declare Harm Reduction as Essential**

16–20 Nov: **Demand 2 – Expand & Maintain OAT Take Home Doses**

23–27 Nov: **Demand 3 – Prioritize Peer-led Responses**

30 Nov - 4 Dec: **Demand 4 – NO to Punitive Measures in Harm Reduction**

7–11 Dec: **Demand 5 – Act on Decriminalisation**

## INPUD's Social Media Profiles

Before the campaign begins, make sure you are following all INPUD's social media pages:

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/inpud](http://www.facebook.com/inpud)

**Twitter:** @INPUD

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/channel/UC3Udu73NA6VEththojAhvTg](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3Udu73NA6VEththojAhvTg)

**Instagram:** @INPUD\_Official

Keep an eye out for our #PeersInThePandemic posts and share them widely. If we are not following you or your organisation's pages yet, please let us know so we can share your posts as well!

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## General Campaign Guidelines

- **Participants should use #PeersInThePandemic for all social media posts**, along with any other relevant hashtags pertaining to the action of the week
  - **#HarmReduction** should also be used to follow the main hashtag. We also encourage using **#COVID19** as much as possible.
  - Feel free to generate your own hashtags as well, keeping on topic to the demands.
- **Use pictures/videos** in your posts to increase visibility. We will be providing some for you to use/share, but we also encourage you to get creative and make your own
  - Quick photos and brief videos made on your phone using an app like [Magisto](#) or [Canva](#) are perfect for this – you don't need to have fancy equipment! We will also provide a short video script for you to make your own videos on your phone.
  - If you don't have a social media profile of your own but have photos/videos to include in the campaign, send them to [jakeagliata@inpud.net](mailto:jakeagliata@inpud.net) to share from the INPUD accounts.
- **Utilize tagging in your posts.** Think about decision makers and other people in your country/region you would like to influence and tag them in your #PeersInThePandemic posts. Social media handles of government officials can typically be found with a simple Google search or checking their website. Consider also tagging allies or supporters as well, to encourage them to participate in the campaign.
  - For country level targets, consider:
    - Government agencies (Ministry of Health, Center for Disease Control, any departments overseeing pandemic response)
    - Health officials (health ministers, healthcare administrators, doctors)
    - Politicians/decision makers
    - Prominent media outlets
  - For UN agencies and international targets, consider:
    - World Health Organization: [@WHO](#)
    - UN Development Programme: [@UNDP](#)
    - UNAIDS: [@UNAIDS](#)
    - UN Population Fund: [@UNFPA](#)
    - UNODC HIV: [@UNODC\\_HIV](#)
    - Global Fund: [@GlobalFund](#)
- **No social media? No worries!** There are still many ways to participate in the campaign outside of social media. We encourage creativity; there is no limit on how to get involved. Some suggestions:
  - Start a letter writing campaign to decision makers
  - Print and post flyers listing the demands in high traffic areas
  - Organise a virtual workshop/event on one or all the asks
  - Write a press release to the media or get an editorial published
- **Share ongoing work relevant to each demand.** We encourage everyone participating to use this campaign as an opportunity to elevate work they have done or are doing to advance each of these demands.

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## **Demand 1 – Declare Harm Reduction as Essential**

We demand that states firmly declare support for harm reduction programmes by declaring these services as essential, ensuring they remain open during lockdowns, and directing public health funding towards the maintenance, delivery and expansion of services.

Hashtag of the week: **#HarmReductionIsEssential**

*Please use this along with #PeersInThePandemic and #HarmReduction all week*

Sample social media text:

- Any service which saves lives is essential. #HarmReductionIsEssential #PeersInThePandemic
- #HarmReductionWorks: countries which declare #harmreduction essential during #COVID19 have a measurable decrease in overdose deaths #PeersInThePandemic #HarmReduction
- Closing down #harmreduction services during #COVID19 can lead to spikes in #overdose and #HIV #HarmReductionIsEssential #PeersInThePandemic
- #COVID19 has confirmed what we already knew: #HarmReductionIsEssential #PeersInThePandemic #HarmReduction

## **Demand 2 – Expand & Maintain OAT Take Home Doses**

In response to the pandemic 47 countries have expanded take home OAT doses or delivery. As lockdown measures are lifted some states have rolled back these policies despite evidence showing they were an essential part of keeping people who use drugs safe and healthy during the pandemic. We demand take home OAT be adopted as an ongoing policy, and states which have yet to implement this should make it a priority.

Hashtag of the week: **#TakeHomeOAT**

*Please use this along with #PeersInThePandemic and #HarmReduction all week*

Sample social media text:

- 47 countries implemented #TakeHomeOAT during the #COVID19 pandemic. Don't let them roll it back #PeersInThePandemic #HarmReduction
- #TakeHomeOAT can significantly improve the health of people who use drugs during & after #COVID19. Expand & Maintain #OAT NOW #PeersInThePandemic #HarmReduction
- #TakeHomeOAT is a PRIORITY for ME #HomeRun4OAT #PeersInThePandemic
- Fulfilling right to health obligations means permitting #TakeHomeOAT. Protect the health rights of people who use drugs NOW #PeersInThePandemic #HarmReduction

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### **Demand 3 – Prioritise Peer-led Responses**

Peers are central to the COVID-19 response in their communities. We call for the prioritisation of peer-led responses by directing funding towards harm reduction services led by peers as community members, and to facilitate peer secondary distribution for essential harm reduction supplies such as new injecting equipment, naloxone distribution and overdose prevention education, etc.

Hashtag of the week: **#PowerOfPeers**

*Please use this along with #PeersInThePandemic and #HarmReduction all week*

Sample social media text:

- Peer-led #HarmReduction leads to positive health outcomes for people who use drugs #PowerOfPeers #PeersInThePandemic
- More people using alone during #COVID19 means #naloxone is more crucial than ever. Support peer distribution of naloxone #PowerOfPeers #PeersInThePandemic
- With rising #overdose numbers during #COVID19 it's critical to prioritise peer-led education in #HarmReduction #PowerOfPeers #PeersInThePandemic
- Safe injecting equipment is best distributed by those who use them. Give peers the resources to save lives #PowerOfPeers #PeersInThePandemic

### **Demand 4 – NO to Punitive Measures in Harm Reduction**

For too long harm reduction programs have emphasised social control over the right to health. Punitive measures in harm reduction have restricted people from accessing services such as OAT. COVID-19 has shown these restrictions have always been unnecessary. We demand an end to compulsory urine testing, age limitations, HIV/HCV testing, non-consensual discharges, mandatory attendance, forced reductions, transfer refusals and other stigmatising & exclusionary practices in harm reduction.

Hashtag of the week: **#RightsNotControl**

*Please use this along with #PeersInThePandemic and #HarmReduction all week*

Sample social media text:

- #HarmReduction means saving lives, not controlling them. End punitive measures in harm reduction NOW #RightsNotControl #PeersInThePandemic
- #COVID19 has proven mandatory attendance was never necessary in #HarmReduction. End social control over peers in harm reduction #RightsNotControl #PeersInThePandemic
- Compulsory urine testing violates the right to privacy for people accessing #HarmReduction #RightsNotControl #PeersInThePandemic
- Young people deserve the right to practice #HarmReduction without fear of reprisal. End age limitations and other unnecessary restrictions NOW #RightsNotControl #PeersInThePandemic
- No one should be denied health services based on stigma, especially during #COVID19. #RightsNotControl #PeersInThePandemic

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## **Demand 5 – Act on Decriminalisation**

The criminalisation of drugs is the basis of systemic issues faced by people who use drugs. Acting on decriminalization is necessary to ensure all other reforms are achievable and sustainable. COVID-19 has shown us the dangers of failing to do so; within a lockdown environment people who use drugs are forced to rely on an increasingly unsafe supply of drugs, put themselves at risk for exposure when buying/selling drugs, and have found themselves targets of police emboldened by emergency powers and acting on existing discrimination against peers. All of this is exacerbated by an ongoing overdose crisis. Our campaign will end with a call for decriminalisation without discrimination, eliminating all elements of the criminal justice system from the lives of people who use drugs.

Hashtag of the week: **#DecrimTheSystem**

*Please use this along with #PeersInThePandemic and #HarmReduction all week*

Sample social media text:

- Securing a #SafeSupply of drugs will notably help protect the health of peers during #COVID19 and beyond. #DecrimTheSystem #SafeSupply #PeersInThePandemic
- Criminalisation has increased health risks for people who use drugs during #COVID19. #Decrim saves lives. #DecrimTheSystem #PeersInThePandemic
- Effective #HarmReduction is impeded by prohibition. #DecrimTheSystem to meet the health rights of peers NOW #PeersInThePandemic
- #COVID19 lockdown measures have forced people who use drugs into high exposure environments. A #SafeSupply could prevent this. #DecrimTheSystem #PeersInThePandemic
- #COVID19 lockdown measures increasing police attention towards people who use drugs proves prohibition was always about social control and never about drugs #DecrimTheSystem
- People who use drugs will never be free of harm so long as states fail to act on #Decrim. Time to #EndtheDrugWar and #DecrimTheSystem #PeersInThePandemic