



Calling All HIV Stigma Warriors!

Every July 21st, the world pauses for Zero HIV Stigma Day to confront a pernicious and enduring barrier in the global HIV response: STIGMA.

June 2, 2025 By [Zero HIV Stigma](#)

Every July 21st since 2023, the world pauses – if only for a moment – to confront a pernicious and enduring barrier in the global HIV response: stigma. This year’s Zero HIV Stigma Day is more than an observance; it is a rallying cry. Under the theme “HIV Stigma Warriors,” we are shifting from passive awareness to active resistance. We are celebrating individuals and communities who confront HIV-related stigma with courage, creativity, and conviction. These warriors are redefining what it means to be seen, to be heard, and to be free from the weight of judgment.

In honor of this movement, we are proud to launch the newly redesigned [ZeroHIVStigma.org](#) website – a platform that offers tools, messaging resources, campaign visuals, and storytelling guidance to mobilize a global army of stigma warriors. Whether you are a community advocate, healthcare provider, policymaker, or person living with or affected by HIV, this website was built with you in mind. It is a home for those who refuse to let HIV stigma go unchallenged.

Why Stigma Still Matters

Despite decades of progress in HIV treatment, prevention, and policy, stigma remains one of the most insidious and stubborn drivers of the epidemic. It keeps people from getting tested. It discourages people living with HIV from starting or staying on antiretroviral therapy (ART). It creates barriers for HIV-negative individuals to assess pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). It compromises mental health, diminishes quality of life, and fuels health disparities, especially among the most marginalized.

Stigma is not just a social attitude; it is a structural barrier that intersects with racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and ableism. In many communities, these intersections magnify the trauma of living with or being at risk for HIV. In others, stigma is codified into law, policy, and public discourse. We cannot end the HIV epidemic if we do not dismantle stigma at every level – interpersonal, institutional, and systemic.

Who Are the HIV Stigma Warriors?

#HIVStigmaWarriors are the people who refuse to be silent. We are the storytellers who speak truth to power. The artists who reclaim narratives. The health workers who practice care without

judgment. The mothers who embrace their children with pride. The youth who demand to learn the truth about HIV in their schools. The lawmakers who use their platforms to advocate for justice rather than perpetuate injustice.

HIV Stigma Warriors do not wear capes, but we carry something far more powerful, including lived experience, fierce compassion, and an unyielding belief that stigma is not inevitable. We are people living with and affected by HIV and allies alike. Our battles may look different, but our mission is the same: to end the silence, shame, and discrimination that continue to fuel the HIV epidemic in communities around the world.

To celebrate HIV Stigma Warriors, this year's campaign will uplift stories of resistance. Share your story as stigma warriors on our social media platforms, including @ZeroHIVStigmaDay (X/Twitter) and zeroHIVstigma (Instagram). Through your tweets and Instagram posts, we are sharing the journeys of HIV Stigma Warriors from across the globe – voices that are often unheard but urgently needed.

Tools to Take Action

We know that change does not happen spontaneously – it must be organized. That is why ZeroHIVStigma.org features a messaging toolkit designed to help individuals and organizations activate your communities. Whether you are planning a town hall, creating content for your organization's social media, or organizing a march, the toolkit includes:

- Suggested language for messaging
- Graphics and downloadable posters
- Ideas for virtual and in-person engagement
- Ways to amplify stories from people living with HIV

This year's toolkit also includes content aligned with intersectional advocacy – recognizing that dismantling HIV stigma must also mean confronting the many other stigmas that travel alongside it. LGBTQ+ advocates, women's rights defenders, youth leaders, and migrants living with HIV all have a place in this movement. The fight against HIV and all other forms of stigma is stronger when it is collective and inclusive.

Partners in Progress

The 2025 Zero HIV Stigma Day campaign is made possible through partnerships that span the globe. The campaign is spearheaded by the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (IAPAC) and Fast-Track Cities Institute (FTCI). In addition, we are proud to partner with:

- GNP+ (Global Network of People Living with HIV)

- Prevention Access Campaign (PAC)
- Health Care Advocates International (HCAI)

Together, we are united in our commitment to undetectable equals untransmittable (U=U), equitable access to HIV prevention and care, and the full dignity of every person living with and affected by HIV. These partners bring expertise, reach, and passion to a movement that must be both global and local – rooted in lived experience, scientific evidence, and justice.

The Work Ahead

Let's be clear: a world without HIV stigma is not a dream, it is a demand. It is a moral and public health imperative. But we cannot get there without fighting for it. HIV Stigma Warriors are not only needed on Zero HIV Stigma Day 2025. They are needed every day – in clinics, classrooms, courtrooms, congregations, and communities. Here are five ways you can be an HIV Stigma Warrior today:

- Educate yourself and others about the science, including the U=U message, and challenge misinformation.
- Listen to and amplify voices of people living with and affected by HIV, especially those from underserved and underrepresented communities.
- Hold institutions accountable – from health systems to media platforms – for how they portray and treat people living with HIV.
- Push for HIV and intersectional stigma-free policies that protect human rights and eliminate discriminatory laws, regulations, and practices.
- Celebrate resilience through art, storytelling, and joy, because thriving is a radical act of defiance central to our movement.

This year's Zero HIV Stigma Day theme reminds us that every act of resistance, no matter how small, is a step closer to an HIV stigma-free world. Let's flood social media and fuel the conversation. Let's lift up the HIV Stigma Warriors message and let it be known: We will not be silenced. We will not be erased. We will not stop until stigma is history.

Visit ZeroHIVStigma.org to access the 2025 campaign's resources and join the movement.

Disclosure: The Zero HIV Stigma Day 2025 campaign is made possible through an exclusive sponsorship from Health Care Advocates International (HCAI). We are grateful for their support and commitment to a future free from HIV stigma.

This Zero HIV Stigma blog was written by Dr. José M. Zuniga, who is President/CEO of the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (@IAPAC) and the Fast-Track Cities Institute (@FTC2030).

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