



COVID-19 HIV PREVENTION, TREATMENT, CARE AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS¹

Advice for service providers

Plan ahead

Evaluate the needs and stock up on sterile needles and syringes and all other commodities, over-the-counter medications, and naloxone.

Have a clear communication strategy.

Plan for employee absence.

Promote the secondary (peer-to-peer) distribution of sterile needles and syringes. Plan for home deliveries for those on lockdown.

Provide permits for outreach workers in line with government requirements to avoid them being subject to fines or imprisonment.

Establish a safe working environment in the HIV harm reduction¹ services – avoid overcrowding:

- ▶ Offer extra supplies to clients, including sterile needles and syringes, other injecting, smoking and snorting paraphernalia, and naloxone.
- ▶ Make sure people with stable clinical conditions are given a possibility of longer Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) take-home doses.
- ▶ Prepare doses in advance for each client.
- ▶ Schedule the pick-up times to avoid overcrowding the premises.
- ▶ Start implementing OST take-home policy, where it does not already exist.
- ▶ Provide extra refills and doses for clients on HIV/HCV or other chronic condition medications.
- ▶ Coordinate with other health services to ensure the continuity of health care.



Prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace

Practice Social Distancing. Both staff and clients should keep at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between each other at all times.

Provide field services maintaining the 1 metre (3 feet) distance between outreach workers and clients, and following hygiene protocols.

Make sure your workplaces are clean and hygienic:

- ▶ Surfaces (such as desks and tables) and objects (such as telephones and keyboards) need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly.
- ▶ Promote regular and thorough hand-washing (20 seconds) by employees and clients.
- ▶ Put sanitizing hand rub dispensers in prominent places around the workplace, and make sure these dispensers are regularly refilled.
- ▶ Display posters promoting hand-washing.
- ▶ Make sure that staff and clients have access to places where they can wash their hands with soap and water.



Promote good respiratory hygiene in the workplace:

- ▶ Display posters promoting respiratory hygiene and coughing etiquette.
- ▶ Where possible, make available face masks and latex gloves for your workers, along with closed bins for hygienically disposing of used equipment.



Brief your employees and clients that if COVID-19 starts spreading in your community anyone with even a mild cough or low-grade fever (37.3 oC / 99.14 oF or more) needs to stay at home.

Apply the one-on-one principle. Avoid overcrowding of the premises by allowing one client at a time. All staff and client consultations and interactions should be one-on-one.



Go virtual. Medical consultations, psychosocial and mental health services should be moved to virtual or online platforms such as phone and email.

¹ WHO, UNODC, UNAIDS Technical Guide for Countries to Set Targets for Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment and Care for Injecting Drug Users, 2012 revision, (Geneva, WHO, 2012)