



**Take Action**



# Take Action for TX!

(with thanks for some ideas from ActUP NY)

Treatment Access (TX) for people living with AIDS around the world depends upon access to affordable drugs—and that depends, in part, on US activists bringing it home to our government and our drug companies!

So, what can you do? Remember taking action can take on many forms. Talking with your friends, family, and people you go to school with—that's taking direct action. So is taking over the office of the CEO of the nearest drug company to demand affordable prices for people dying around the world. So is writing a letter to your member of congress asking them to stop bad trade deals.

So, in that spirit, here are some suggestions. Even better, make up your own! Some actions are totally risk free, while others carry some risks and will require legal advice and support. But, whatever you do, don't just sit there—take action today... or at least tomorrow.

## No-Risk Actions

1. Do a phone- or fax-zap on Gilead, Abbott, or the USTR's office.
2. Write letters or send post cards to the US Trade Rep or the CEOs of Abbott & Gilead demanding national leadership in response to the AIDS crisis.
3. Organize a postcard mail-in campaign to a local legislator asking them to lobby the US Trade Rep to put people living with HIV and AIDS over profit and stop the SACU and Thai FTAs.
4. Phone in to local radio talk shows and discuss access to treatment for AIDS globally; organize on your campus so that the station is flooded with calls throughout the program.
5. Organize a teach-in on treatment-related issues on your campus or, better yet, do outreach to others by doing teach-ins at other local colleges and high schools.
6. Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper/magazine, discussing the greed that pharma corporations are demonstrating in failing to provide affordable drugs and pushing bad trade deals on poor countries.

## Low-Risk Actions

1. Organize a peaceful picket with signs and creative chants in front of an important target—one of Gilead or Abbott's factories or a government building. Make sure to invite the media (email [erin@fightglobalaids.org](mailto:erin@fightglobalaids.org) or [mkavanagh@globaljusticenow.org](mailto:mkavanagh@globaljusticenow.org) for help).
2. Wheatpaste attention-grabbing posters or fliers around your community demanding action—especially if you are near one of the pharmaceutical headquarters.
3. Hold a vigil with candles every night for a week in front a good target like a Gilead or Abbott factory or a government building—mourn the death of millions who could be saved by affordable drugs.
4. Build a mock graveyard of tombstones (of people who have died from government/drug company neglect) and place it in prominent location on your campus. Get passers by to take some sort of action—write a letter, make a call.

## Not-So-Low-Risk Actions

1. Organize a big demonstration that blocks traffic and marches through your town or city demanding action from one of our targets.
2. Hang a banner from a prominent location (highway overpass, tall building, church steeple, etc.).
3. Stage a massive die-in (a form of street theater in which demonstrators lie down in the streets symbolically in memory of those who have died from HIV disease).
4. Take over the office(s) at one of the drug companies or government agents and refuse to leave until your demands have been met.
5. Interrupt/disrupt a speaking event of a politician or company executive and demand that they take action on these issues.
6. Fill a casket with bloody bones (check with local restaurants and meat markets) and place it in front a prominent location—even better if it's in front of a good target.
7. Interrupt a local live newscast with AIDS-treatment-specific information.



## Do A TX Zap!

(From ActUP NY's YELL Zine: [www.actupny.org/YELL/zine/](http://www.actupny.org/YELL/zine/))

A Zap via phone, fax, or letter is a great way to get our Treatment Access (TX) demands across to our targets. Look at the fact sheets on each of the targets for phone, fax, and addresses and remember to include our demands!

### Phone

A phone zap is when a number of people call a target to make a demand. Phone zaps serve a double purpose: they let your target know how many people support your demands, but they also make it hard for your target to conduct business as usual because they keep the phone lines busy, making it hard for an office to function. To conduct a phone zap, find out the phone number(s) of your target, write a sample script with your demands and some facts about the issue, and put it on a flyer with the phone numbers. Give it to as many people as possible, and start calling.

### Fax

A fax zap is similar to a phone zap because it is both a way of communicating your demands and a way of inconveniencing your target by keeping their fax machine busy. To do a fax zap, give out a sheet with your demands on it and your target's fax number and have people fax it whenever they want, as often as they want. Another way of doing this if you only have access to one fax machine, is to feed one copy of your flyer through the fax machine. As it comes through, tape on another copy to form a loop. Once the loop is created you may either be able to set the fax machine to automatically redial and keep sending over and over or you may have to stand there and keep dialing.

### Letter

The point of a letter zap is to show, by generating a flood of mail, how many people support your demands. There are two ways to do a letter zap. The first is to have lots of people write individual letters to your target - this is particularly powerful because it gives a human voice to your demands. Sometimes it's not possible to get enough people to actually write individual letters, so the other way to do a letter zap is to write a form letter to your target outlining your demands and make a lot of copies. All people have to do is sign the letters. It helps to have each person individually put the address and their own return address on the envelopes because if the letters are obviously all the same they won't be opened. Letter zaps can also be done via email.



# Do TX Pickets, Protests or Street Theater!

Getting out there to the streets is a fun and effective way to both get our message out and put pressure on our Treatment Access targets. Check out the fact sheets on each of the targets for demands. Many chapters are actually located near a factory or office of one of our target drug companies or government targets (check out the targets section of TX Access guide).

There's many different high-profile events or actions you can hold—some that require many people and some only a few.

Ideas include:

- **Hold a peaceful moving picket or a night-time vigil** in front of one of the targets. This can be especially effective if there are lots of people or, with just a few people, if you repeat the action often (like every day for a week).
- **Create a great photo-op.** ACTUP, for example, has done actions like lining up hundreds of shoes representing people who have died in front of decision-makers' offices or delivering a 30 foot long spine to politicians. Focusing on treatment, visuals could include lining up hundreds of empty prescription bottles outside a pharma office or bringing a coffin full of prescription bottles and leave it in front of the target. Make sure to call the media!
- **Do some street theater.** This January, SGACers and others pulled out 30 people—one dressed up as a drug company executive, another as a Grim Reaper representing the Thai FTA, and then 25 others, playing HIV+ Thais, were “killed” by the FTA and piled into body bags with signs saying “killed by the FTA.” Then they were “eulogized” with speeches about trade and AIDS. The news photographers ate it up and it made international news!

## Target

Make sure that you are clear about who the target is, and what the demands are. If you are trying to influence a target, how will they know about it (is it at their office? Will you send them photos or press clippings?).

## Media

Think about what the press story will be and why media will want to come (what's new, why will they care?). Have good visuals at your demo with clear messages on them. Make your press announcements catchy and do follow-up calls!

## Turnout

Think about your goals—do you need a lot of people or can you be effective with fewer? Set a specific turn-out goal, then get at least twice that many commitments—keep a list! Consider things like assigning dorm captains to bottom-line turn out, doing classroom presentations, and knocking on doors and making phone calls.

## Prep

Make a list of all the roles for the day and all the props, megaphones, stages, signs, etc. you'll need. Walk through the “scenario” to make sure everyone will know what to do, where to go. Plan how you're going to end the event, don't just let people drift off.

More ideas? Check out some of the most creative at: [www.actupny.org](http://www.actupny.org) and [www.ruckus.org](http://www.ruckus.org)

Check out SGAC's advocacy guide for more tips or call/email the national coordinator!