

Request from Lorcan O'Donnell, 4th yr Sport Science.

Dear Roberta,

I'm a 4th year Sport Science student and former co-president of Out in UL. I'm looking to form a campaign this coming semester to lobby the student council and SU to take a public stance in favour of the introduction of PrEP, a HIV prevention drug.

Last year I was the main organiser in our incredibly successful campaign of raising HIV awareness and bringing rapid HIV testing on campus. I worked closely with Caolan and other members of the SU and Out in UL.

HIV is on the rise in Ireland again and it is at epidemic standards with one new diagnoses occurring every 18 hours. Our government, including Health Minister Simon Harris and new Taoiseach Leo Varadkar are ignoring the issue completely and have failed to even mention it in recent years. PrEP is a form of medication taken daily that has proven to be 97% affective in preventing someone from contracting the virus. PrEP needs to be introduced freely in Ireland and this will only happen if the public and student unions put pressure on the government to do something about it.

Last year UCD SU, after a successful campaign, took and continue to take a public and active stance in campaigning for the introduction of PrEP in Ireland. I believe we can learn from this and now it is UL's turn to do the same.

If it's ok, I would like to arrange a meeting with yourself and the sabbatical officers and members of the SU to discuss the course of action I would need to take for a campaign like this and to see if the SU would be able to help. I already have the support of Out in UL and I believe other clubs and societies, as well as the student body as a whole, would come on board once shown the urgency of this situation.

Thank you so much for reading and I look forward to your reply.

Kind regards,
Lorcan O'Donnell

'PrEP' or Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis medication for HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is not currently licensed for prescription in Ireland.

As PrEP is not licensed for prescription it is not covered by the HSE's Drug Payment Scheme or Medical Card and is all but impossible for those in need to access legally.

HIV has reached a crisis point in Ireland, with 1 diagnosis every 18 hours, more than ever previously recorded. PrEP is a preventative HIV drug that has been recommended by the World Health Organisation since 2015 as an effective additional measure for those at risk of HIV. The PROUD study in the UK and the IPERGAY study in France found that making PrEP available to men at substantial risk of HIV reduced the number of new transmissions by 86%. The iPrEx study found that those who take 7 PrEP pills per week have a protection level of 99%. HIV disproportionately affects disenfranchised groups of people: sexually active men and trans people attracted to men; sex workers; intravenous drug users; and their partners.

Request to Council the SU to take a positive stance on, and actively campaign for the licensing of PrEP