When we **Walk**, we walk **TOGETHER!**
Dear Friends,

THANK YOU for your interest in supporting the 9th annual Tread Red Walk and Fun Run! Tread Red 2022 again reminds us how many people just like you have been involved in helping to advance the work of MAO and the vital testing, counseling, medical care and wellness services MAO provides to more than 2,000 individuals across 28 counties and 18,675 square miles. Even as MAO celebrates its 35th Anniversary this year, sadly, it comes as no surprise that we are continuing to battle multiple pandemics, and they have impacted South Alabama immensely.

On Saturday, September 24, 2022, members of our medical, behavioral health, social services, education and administrative teams, and an audience of hundreds will walk and run on behalf of everyone served by MAO. Through Facebook LIVE, on site participation, and other means, we invite you to connect with us. As has been the case in years past, the onsite event is really the culminating activity of months-long efforts by organizers and supporters to spread the word and raise critical funds not only for the event, but to raise the funds we need to improve lives. Much like the last two years, we have set-up an online system to better coordinate the event which also empowers supporters with digital tools to fundraise and reach people across the distance. Please take advantage of these tools. In addition to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards for the top competition 5k registered runners, thankyou gifts and incentive prizes will be given to the top fundraising Individual and Team, regardless of whether you walk or run.

We encourage you to ask questions, spread the word, and explore other ways you can support MAO’s vision for improving the state of healthcare in South Alabama’s rural communities. Remember, when we Walk, we walk TOGETHER even when we are miles apart!

Although we continue to wait for a cure for HIV, with testing and adherence to treatment, HIV no longer has to be a death sentence. For those diagnosed with Hepatitis C, testing and treatment can result in cures. Similarly, in most cases, with early diagnosis, diabetes, substance addiction, and other behavioral health issues can be managed. However, they each still contribute to the deaths of millions every year, including too many here in Alabama. HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, diabetes, substance use disorder, particularly opioids, and, now, COVID-19, do NOT discriminate regardless of gender, age, orientation, belief or geography.

There is still SO MUCH to be done; SO MANY who still need quality care, compassion and assistance; and TOO MANY who still need to be tested. They need our HELP! Together, we can save lives. Most important, our demonstration of unity will serve to inspire others to see people, not illnesses.

Please join me in taking steps to improve the health of South Alabama. This packet of information is provided to make sure we are all on the same page regarding the facts about a critical health causes Tread Red helps support and to provide fundraising tips that can help you succeed.

Ashley M. Tarrant, MPH
Interim Chief Executive Officer
Medical Advocacy & Outreach (MAO)
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START BY SELF-CHECKING YOUR INFO

UNDERSTANDING THE EPIDEMIC

What is HIV/AIDS?
HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus, which is the virus that causes HIV infection. The abbreviation “HIV” can refer to the virus or to HIV infection.

AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV infection.

HIV attacks and destroys the infection-fighting CD4 cells of the immune system. The loss of CD4 cells makes it difficult for the body to fight infections and certain cancers. Without treatment, HIV can gradually destroy the immune system and advance to AIDS.

How is HIV spread?
HIV is spread through contact with certain body fluids from a person infected with HIV. These body fluids include:
- Blood
- Semen
- Pre-seminal fluid
- Vaginal fluids
- Rectal fluids
- Breast milk

The spread of HIV from person to person is called HIV transmission. The spread of HIV from an HIV-infected woman to her child during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding is called mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

In the United States, HIV is spread mainly by having sex with or sharing drug injection equipment with someone who is infected with HIV. To reduce your risk of HIV infection, use condoms correctly and consistently during sex, limit your number of sexual partners, and never share drug injection equipment.

Mother-to-child transmission is the most common way that children become infected with HIV. HIV medicines, given to HIV-infected women during pregnancy and childbirth and to their babies after birth, reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

You can’t get HIV by shaking hands or hugging a person infected with HIV. You also can’t get HIV from contact with objects such as dishes, toilet seats, or doorknobs used by a person with HIV. HIV does not spread through the air or through mosquito, tick, or other insect bites.

What is the treatment for HIV?
First, GET TESTED! Knowing your status is the first step. At home, self-testing kits are now available. You can even request one from MAO. IF you do test positive, working with your medical provider, you will develop a plan of care and treatment including diet, exercise and HIV medicines.

The use of HIV medicines to treat HIV infection is called antiretroviral therapy (ART). ART involves taking a combination of HIV medicines (called an HIV regimen) every day. (HIV medicines are often called antiretrovirals or ARVs.) ART prevents HIV from multiplying and reduces the amount of HIV in the body. Having less HIV in the body protects the immune system and prevents HIV infection from advancing to AIDS. ART can’t cure HIV, but it can help people infected with HIV live longer, healthier lives. ART also reduces the risk of HIV transmission. Did you know when people living with HIV reach the point in which treatment adherence has resulted in an undetectable level of the virus in the body – THEY CANNOT PASS HIV TO SOMEONE ELSE?
What are the symptoms of HIV/AIDS?
Soon after infection with HIV, some people have flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache, or rash. The symptoms may come and go for a month or two after infection.

After this earliest stage of HIV infection, HIV continues to multiply, but at very low levels. More severe symptoms of HIV infection, such as chronic diarrhea, rapid weight loss, and signs of opportunistic infections, generally don’t appear for many years. (Opportunistic infections are infections and infection-related cancers that occur more frequently or are more severe in people with weakened immune systems than in people with healthy immune systems.)

Without treatment, HIV can advance to Stage 3 or AIDS*. The time it takes for HIV to advance to AIDS varies, but it can take 10 years or more. Sadly, individual health and influences vary from person to person.

HIV transmission is possible at any stage of HIV infection—even if an HIV-infected person has no symptoms of HIV.
* The person’s immune system is severely damaged, as indicated by a CD4 count of less than 200 cells/mm3. (A CD4 count measures the number of CD4 cells in a sample of blood. The CD4 count of a healthy person ranges from 500 to 1,600 cells/mm3.)
   AND/OR the person has one or more opportunistic infections.

SEPARATING TRUTHS FROM MYTHS REGARDING HIV/AIDS

There are lots of myths about how you can get HIV.

First, how is HIV passed on?
HIV is passed on from person to person IF infected body fluids (such as blood, semen, vaginal or anal secretions and breast milk) get into your bloodstream. The five main forms of exchange:

- unprotected sex
- from mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding
- injecting drugs with a needle that has infected blood in it
- infected blood donations or organ transplants
- a healthcare worker who gets the blood of an infected patient inside their body.

You can only get HIV from someone who is already infected with HIV (and not undetectable!)

You cannot get HIV from...

- Someone who doesn’t have HIV
- Touching someone who has HIV
- Sweat, tears, urine or feces of someone who has HIV (There is no HIV in an infected person’s sweat, tears, urine or feces.)
- Mutual masturbation (Mutual masturbation, fingering and hand-jobs are all safe from HIV. However, if you use sex toys make sure you use a new condom on them when switching between partners.)
- Insects (You cannot get HIV from insects. When an insect (such as a mosquito) bites you it sucks your blood – it does not inject the blood of the last person it bit.)
- Air (HIV cannot survive in the air so coughing, sneezing or spitting cannot transmit HIV.)
- New or sterilized needles (New needles cannot transmit HIV because they haven’t been in the body of an infected person. If used needles are cleaned and sterilized properly they can’t transmit HIV either.)
- Water (HIV can’t survive in water, so you won’t get HIV from swimming pools, baths, shower areas or from drinking water.)
- Toilet seats, tables, door handles, cutlery, sharing towels (HIV doesn’t survive on surfaces, so you can’t get HIV from any of these.)
• Musical instruments (HIV can’t survive on musical instruments. Even if it is an instrument that you play using your mouth, it can’t give you HIV.)
• Used condoms (HIV can only survive for a really short amount of time outside of the body. Even if the condom had sperm from an HIV-positive person in it, the HIV would be dead.)
• Kissing (There is such a small amount of HIV in the saliva of an infected person that HIV can’t be passed on from kissing. There is only a risk if you both have large open sores or bleeding gums and blood is exchanged.)
• Hugging or touching someone (HIV can’t survive outside of the body so you won’t get HIV from touching someone, hugging them or shaking their hand.)
• Oral sex (As with kissing, the risk of HIV from oral sex is so small unless you or your partner have large open sores on the genital area or bleeding gums/sores in your mouth. Always use a condom or dental dam to eliminate the risk.)
• Tattoos and piercings (There is only a risk if the needle used by the professional has been used in the body of an HIV-infected person and not sterilized afterwards.

It is important, however, to consider making routine HIV testing part of your regular health screenings because no one is immune. Contrary to myth, HIV does NOT target certain groups of people. Statistics provide us with a real time glimpse of where HIV is most prevalent; however, statistics shift over time based on a variety of factors. Lack of knowledge paired with certain behaviors that could introduce HIV into the bloodstream make everyone at risk. Furthermore, although some common symptoms have been observed, the symptoms of HIV can differ from person-to-person and some people may not get any symptoms at all. Without treatment, the virus will get worse over time and damage the immune system. There are three stages of HIV infection with different possible signs and outcomes. The three stages of HIV infection are: (1) acute HIV infection; (2) chronic HIV infection; and (3) acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

Living Considerations for People Living with HIV
Cost of living is as much of a challenge for people living with HIV as it is for many of us; however, some factors compound costs for people living with HIV. Many do not have insurance coverage or find it financially challenging to secure insurance coverage. Such challenges are compounded by the persisting stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS. Often, stigma results in social as well as employment issues and/or downright rejections. Consider the following:

• Do you remember a time when you had to work even though you were sick?
• Where you ever sick and unemployed?
• Have you ever been unable to pay for or pick up your prescription?
• Were you ever afraid that you could not pay your rent? Your power bill?
• Did you ever not have enough money for gas in your car? Imagine, not being able to get to a doctor when you need to or for routine care.
• Have you ever counted pennies for food?
• What if you lived in a rural area with one doctor, or, worse, no doctor within 25 to 50 miles?

According to the CDC, The Body.com and other sources, routine medical treatment and monthly medications for someone living with HIV/AIDS can range from $2,000 to $5,000 per month, or $24,000 to $60,000 per year if no insurance coverage exists.

According to The Body.com, nearly 500,000 people living with HIV will require some form of housing assistance in their lifetime. Who would you turn to if you had HIV and were living on the street?

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture using January 2019 information, for a single male or female between the ages of 19 and 50, a low-cost grocery estimate can average $186.50 to $241.70 per month. How much do you spend on groceries each month?
**Economic impact of HIV/AIDS**

Analysts have observed that HIV and AIDS affects economic growth by reducing the availability of human capital. Without proper prevention, nutrition, health care and medicine we risk more infection, loss of lives and rising costs. Some answers can be found in early diagnosis, routine care, and managed assistance programs. If left unaddressed, increased medical care costs will rise and more of the population unable to work. Furthermore, by killing off young adults, HIV/AIDS weakens the taxable population, significantly reducing the resources available for public expenditures such as education and health services NOT related to AIDS.

Additionally, households and organizations that must spend more on treating the severely sick, training (to replace sick workers), sick pay and caring for AIDS orphans spend less in other areas. This translates to a weakening economy and a lower GDP (Gross Domestic Product). These factors support the existence of government-supported assistance programs and private service providers. Think of the latter as a managed response to prevent a potentially global economic catastrophe.

**How can I reduce my risk of getting HIV?**

Again, ANYONE can get HIV, but you can take steps to protect yourself from HIV infection.

**Get tested and know your partner’s HIV status.** Talk to your partner about HIV testing and get tested before you have sex. If your partner is living with HIV, are they maintaining an undetectable level? Ask! Again, **YOU CAN NOW REQUEST A FREE AT-HOME, HIV SELF-TEST KIT FROM MAO, or visit an MAO site to get tested.**

**Have less risky sex.** HIV is mainly spread by having anal or vaginal sex without a condom or without taking medicines to prevent or treat HIV.

**Use condoms.** Use a condom correctly every time you have vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

**Limit your number of sexual partners.** The more partners you have, the more likely you are to engage with a partner living with HIV whose HIV is not well controlled, or to have a partner with a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Both of these factors can increase the risk of HIV transmission. If you have more than one sexual partner, get tested for HIV regularly.

**Get tested and treated for STDs.** Insist that your partners get tested and treated too. Having an STD can increase your risk of becoming infected with HIV or spreading it to others.

**Talk to your health care provider about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).** PrEP is an HIV prevention option for people who don’t have HIV, but who are at high risk of becoming infected with HIV. PrEP involves taking a specific HIV medicine every day. MAO offers Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) by appointment through the new MAO Wellness Center for insured and uninsured individuals.

**Don’t inject drugs.** BUT, if you do, use only sterile drug injection equipment and water and never share your equipment with others.

**What is Hepatitis C?**

**What is Hepatitis C?**

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. It is also the name of viral infections that affect the liver. Hepatitis C is a contagious liver disease that can range in severity from a mild illness to a serious lifelong illness that attacks the liver. Acute Hepatitis C virus is a short-term illness that occurs within the first 6 months after someone is exposed to the virus. For most people, it leads to chronic infection. This infection is a long-term illness that occurs when the virus remains in a person’s body. It can last a lifetime and lead to cirrhosis or liver cancer.

**How is Hepatitis C spread?**

It is usually spread when blood from an infected person enters the body of an uninfected person. The most common means of transmission is through sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs. It can also be spread if you were born to an infected mother; sharing personal care items like razors, toothbrushes, etc.; or sexual contact. It can also be
spread when blood that contains the virus is on a surface and is touched by another person who is not infected; or when a person touches and contaminates something while the blood is on their fingers or hands.

Who is mostly at risk for Hepatitis C?

- Current or former Injection drug users
- Recipients of blood transfusions
- People who have received tattoos from non-sterile instruments
- HIV-infected persons
- Children born to mothers with Hepatitis C
- Baby boomers born between 1945-1965
- Sharing personal care items such as razors, toothbrushes, etc. (Anything in contact with blood)
- Sexual contact

Who should get tested for Hepatitis C?

- Current or former Injection drug users
- Recipients of blood transfusions
- People who have received tattoos from non-sterile instruments
- HIV-infected persons
- Children born to mothers with Hepatitis C
- Baby boomers born between 1945-1965
- Sharing personal care items such as razors, toothbrushes, etc. (Anything in contact with blood)
- Sexual contact

- You have an abnormal liver test or liver disease
- You received a blood transfusion or organ transplant before July 1992.
- You have been exposed to blood through a needle stick or other sharp object injury.

Can Hepatitis C be treated?

Yes. New and improved treatments are available that can cure Hepatitis C for most people. However, treatment depends on many different factors, so it is important to talk to a doctor about options.

HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV)

Hepatitis C is common among people living with HIV. In the United States, 20 to 30 percent of people living with HIV are co-infected with HCV. Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is a disease that infects the liver. HCV can cause lifelong infection, and over time it can cause fibrosis (mild to moderate liver scarring), cirrhosis (serious liver scarring), liver cancer, liver failure and death.

Given that HIV attacks the immune system, HIV can worsen Hepatitis C. Not only does HIV increase the risk of liver damage, but it can also speed up the onset of liver damage following infection. It is important for people who are co-infected with HIV and HCV to work closely with their health care providers in order to safely and effectively monitor and treat both conditions.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is the condition in which the body does not properly process food for use as energy. Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose, or sugar, for our bodies to use for energy. The pancreas, an organ that lies near the stomach, makes a hormone called insulin to help glucose get into the cells of our bodies. When you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use its own insulin as well as it should. This causes sugars to build up in your blood. This is why many people refer to diabetes as “sugar.”
Diabetes can cause serious health complications including heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, and lower-extremity amputations. Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.

What are the types of diabetes?

Type 1
Type 1 diabetes, previously called insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM) or juvenile onset diabetes, may account for 5 percent to 10 percent of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. Risk factors are less well defined for Type 1 diabetes than for Type 2 diabetes, but autoimmune, genetic, and environmental factors are involved in the development of this type of diabetes.

Type 2
Type 2 diabetes was previously called non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM) or adult-onset diabetes. Type 2 diabetes may account for about 90 percent to 95 percent of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. Risk factors for Type 2 diabetes include older age, obesity, family history of diabetes, prior history of gestational diabetes, impaired glucose tolerance, physical inactivity, and race/ethnicity. African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians, and some Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are at particularly high risk for type 2 diabetes.

Gestational diabetes develops in 2 percent to 5 percent of all pregnancies but usually disappears when a pregnancy is over. Gestational diabetes occurs more frequently in African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians, and people with a family history of diabetes than in other groups. Obesity is also associated with higher risk. Women who have had gestational diabetes are at increased risk for later developing Type 2 diabetes. In some studies, nearly 40 percent of women with a history of gestational diabetes developed diabetes in the future.

Other specific types of diabetes result from specific genetic syndromes, surgery, drugs, malnutrition, infections, and other illnesses. Such types of diabetes may account for 1 percent to 2 percent of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.

HIV and Diabetes
In people with HIV, the risk of type 2 diabetes is greater in people who are also infected with Hepatitis C. Additionally, the use of some HIV medicines may increase blood glucose levels and lead to type 2 diabetes. People with HIV should have their blood glucose levels checked before they start taking HIV medicines. People with higher-than-normal glucose levels may need to avoid taking some HIV medicines and use other HIV medicines instead.

Can diabetes be prevented?
A number of studies have shown that regular physical activity can significantly reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is also associated with obesity.

Is there a cure for diabetes?
In response to the growing health burden of diabetes mellitus (diabetes), the diabetes community has three choices: prevent diabetes; cure diabetes; and take better care of people with diabetes to prevent devastating complications. All three approaches are actively being pursued by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Behavioral Health, Opioids, and Illness
The state of the mind is as important as that of the body, particularly when it comes to treating HIV, Hepatitis C, diabetes, and other already life-threatening conditions. As stated by HIV.gov, “Almost every person faces mental health challenges at some point. Major stresses—like the death of a loved one, divorce, loss of a job, or moving—can have a major impact on mental health. Having a serious illness, like HIV, can be another source of major stress. You may find that a diagnosis of HIV challenges your sense of well-being or complicates existing mental health conditions. HIV and some opportunistic infections can also affect your nervous system and can lead to changes in your behavior.” Depression and substance use are two of the most damaging co-existing challenges for many living with HIV and other major illnesses. “Depression can range from mild to severe, and the symptoms of depression can affect your day-to-day
life. Both HIV-related medical conditions and HIV medications can contribute to depression.” Substance abuse can be a factor not only in the lives of those living with HIV and Hepatitis C, but can be a significant contributor to transmission from one person to another. Did you know that 40% of people living with HIV (PLWHIV) are associated with injection drug use (IDU) either directly or by having sex with an IDU user. The misuse of and addiction to opioids—including prescription pain relievers, heroin, and synthetic opioids such as fentanyl—is a serious crisis that affects public health as well as social and economic welfare.

We hope that this information empowers you as you take your first steps to Tread Red! MAO is always available to answer questions for you. By promoting public awareness and understanding, you are helping us reduce risks and end stigma. Visit us at maoi.org or call one of MAO’s service locations for additional information.

Now, let’s explore some ideas that may help you attract your donors and sponsors for Tread Red!

**PLANNING YOUR WALK/RUN FUND-RAISING STRATEGY**

*Got questions? We’re happy to help!* Call (334) 481-1602 or e-mail dmccloud@maoi.org to speak with MAO’s Tread Red Walk and Run Coordinator.

**LET’S BEGIN WITH SIMPLE TIPS**

- **Sign up online.** You can start a team and then add yourself as the first team member, or just create an individual supporter/participant page. Either way you can use our site to capture donations made using major credit cards and have them automatically applied to your individual or team goals. *(Manual payments by check must be sent to MAO to be applied to your web account on your behalf.)*

- If you create a team or just sign up as an individual supporter, DONATE TO YOURSELF, even if only $10 – it shows your donors you are serious.

- Add a personal note to your fund-raising messages whether sending by mail, web or social media.

- Don’t forget the value of reminders; for example, e-mail your family and friends at least two (2) times.

- Share the **Tread Red** page link *(http://maoi.org/treadred)* with your family and friends.

- Engage friends and family on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc., AND, make it personal. *You are speaking with people you know; so, let them know why this is important to you!*)

- Like “Tread Red Walk and Run” [@MAOtreadred](http://maoi.org/treadred) and “Medical Advocacy & Outreach” [@MAOofAlabama](http://maoi.org/treadred) on Facebook.

- Consider organizing a Virtual Walk Team in your office, from your church or club.

- Get matching gifts! Many companies/employers match gifts made by employees. Ask a local business you frequent for a donation.

- Trade or Barter! Offer your time doing yard work, typing, answering phones, etc. in exchange for donations. Just remember to social distance and wear a mask. *My mask protects you and your mask protects me!*

- Make yourself a **Tread Red** Piggy Bank. Gather your loose change and keep adding those pennies, nickels and dimes as they accumulate.

- Challenge yourself! Have you been trying to motivate yourself to exercise or lose weight? Make a deal with yourself to drop a quarter in your Piggy Bank for Tread Red every time you open the refrigerator or $1 when you miss exercising.

- Again, get matching gifts! Just like employers, consider getting commitments from friends and family members to match funds you raise in your Piggy Bank and through other activities.

Let’s face facts. The number one barrier for people in fund-raising is the fear of asking.

However, there is no reason to fear. The worst thing they can say is no and that is their prerogative. The tip here is to get into the right mind set.
When you ask someone to donate or sponsor you, you’re giving them a rare opportunity to support an important cause that you believe in. If they say no, you have still helped MAO and the thousands of people who are living with HIV or are at risk of becoming infected begin to educate one more person. For those who say yes, you probably have done more than just raise money for a worthy cause. Ask yourself. Didn’t you feel good when you donated to a cause someone asked you to support?

**PLAN FOR FUND-RAISING SUCCESS**

1) *Set a personal goal.* Consider the highest level you feel confident you can get and then add $25. This provides you with a tool that will not only motivate you, but to strategically mention when you are asking people for their support. If you remain committed, you will probably exceed the goal anyway. When you reach the goal, celebrate and keep going.

2) *Complete and customize your Individual and Team Pages through MAO’s Flipcause System by choosing “Fundraising_Peer-to-Peer” from the registration menu. This will allow you to capture online payments and share your efforts/page link through e-mail and social media. Download a copy of the Participant Sign Up Instruction Guide for step-by-step setup instructions.* Also, don’t forget to register as a Walker or a Runner at the same time. When joining us for in person events, please plan to wear your face masks when in enclosed settings and support guidelines imposed at entrances.

3) Always begin by asking those you believe are most likely to give. Every commitment counts and getting the easier ones in the bag first helps build your confidence. It is also always better to be able to tell people you do not know that you have some sponsors already and how much further you have to go to meet your goal. You might be shocked by how generous people can be when they know they are doing something meaningful, but NOT footing the entire lump sum.

4) Ask for a specific dollar amount; aim high! Even if someone is not ready to give the amount you ask for, they will let you know what works for them.

5) Frame your conversation with potential donors as an opportunity to support you while also making a direct impact on the crucial fight against HIV/AIDS.

6) Keep this in mind: The number one reason people say they haven’t donated to a cause is because no one ever asked.

7) Be respectful, but do Not give up easily. Even if you end up getting someone to only commit $1, you are $1 closer to your goal. Consider the following. In an ideal world and assuming you could reach enough people, you could get or raise $1 million by getting one million people to each chip in $1. The larger gifts from some just allow you to reach the goal faster.

**Like shoes, we all need different sizes. The same can be said for fund-raising!**

- Make it personal. Why do you care about HIV and AIDS? Why are you going the extra mile by participating in Tread Red?
- Consider your listener. What are they passionate about? Women’s issues? Youth? Employment? Homelessness? Economic problems in the country or world? Connect what your listener cares about with relevant information related to addressing the needs of people with HIV and commitment to preventing AIDS.

**TOOLS TO CONSIDER**

1) **SNAIL MAIL**

Most are aware that more and more communication today, and therefore fund-raising, takes place on the Internet today; HOWEVER, some people still prefer to receive a letter. Simple cards and letters can be great ways to reach people who aren’t getting e-mail or social media notifications, or have no interest in those mediums.

- Draft the card or letter you’d like to send. Keep it personal and feel free to copy language about MAO and Tread Red from maoi.org as you develop your message.
✓ Don’t forget to include the reason you’re participating. The most powerful message will include whether you’ve been affected by HIV/AIDS personally or you’re passionate about one or more of the issues faced by people living with HIV/AIDS.

✓ Be clear about payment collection and when you need to have payments; so, you can make sure you are prepared to hand over funds collected the morning of the Walk. Checks should be made payable to MAO.

✓ Consider inviting the individual receiving your letter to walk or run with you.

✓ Follow up! Call or email whoever you sent the letter to about a week to ten days after mailing your letter or card. “I sent you a letter in the mail. Did you get it?”

✓ Don’t forget to thank you supporters. Almost everyone enjoys getting a simple hand written thank you note. Those who prefer hard mail even more.

**OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE LETTER APPROACH**

Regardless of personal views about texting, social media and e-mail, a great many people voice concerns about feeling bombarded through these systems. Sending a letter is a great way to ensure people see your request and in a form not limited by message length, size or number of pictures.

However, be prepared for a longer process with mailed letters and cards. You might not get a return for 2-4 weeks; so, make sure you allow enough time before the Walk.

2) E-MAIL

Like mailed letters and cards, e-mail provides greater opportunity for customizing, length and attaching images, forms, etc. However, unlike snail mail, the cost to e-mail is nearly free and can be used to communicate faster. You also can require “delivery” and “read receipts” in most associated applications. You can also embed active links to [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) information, news stories, and websites (like maoi.org) to help paint the picture for those receiving your message. E-mails can also be easily forwarded.

✓ Create a list or list group you plan to e-mail. The more people you reach, the more positive responses you will get.

✓ Decide to send individual custom messages (always most effective) or will you be e-blasting to your entire group at the same time. (If you are e-blasting to a group, consider the “blind copy” function so everyone you email is not visible to everyone.

✓ When creating your message, make sure there is a direct ask like, “Please donate now to support my efforts.”

✓ Always reread and proof. Have you included everything? Ask yourself, “Would this make me want to give?” You may wish to get the opinion of a friend or family member before you click send.

✓ Thank everyone who responds.

✓ Wait at least a week after sending, and then follow-up with those who have not responded with a simple “Did you receive my message?”

**OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE E-MAIL APPROACH**

Put the most important information first: why you’re doing it and how to donate.

Keep your paragraphs short and sweet. Two to three sentences are easier to read together. Unlike snail mail, good e-mail practice is to keep the message short, but to the same degree as Facebook and Twitter.

3) SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, TWITTER, ETC.)

Facebook and Twitter aren’t the only social media tools, but they are the most powerful for modern fundraising, unless your online connections are mostly career-based, then you may wish to consider LinkedIn. On Facebook, you can reach family, friends, and co-workers. On Twitter, you can reach the masses.
FACEBOOK
✓ Follow everything MAO. @MAOofAlabama on Facebook.
✓ Follow Tread Red Walk and Run on Facebook as well so you can exchange memories and images from past walks, your walk activities and the current year’s walk with other participants, family and friends: @MAOtreadred.
✓ Indicate you will be attending the Tread Red Walk & Fun Run 2022 on Facebook, and then invite select Facebook friends to attend as well. This will help make sure they receive our reminders as well. This also opens up a dialogue in which you can ask your friends, etc. to sponsor you.

TWITTER
✓ Follow everything MAO.
✓ Follow @MAOofAlabama on Twitter.
✓ Make sure to always include #treadred in communications to help others follow event discussions on Twitter.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE SOCIAL MEDIA APPROACH
Remember, that social media is more like real time conversations. Keep your messages short and mix them up. Always keep your posts fresh. When possible, direct readers back to other sources like http://www.maoi.org/treadred for complete information; so, you only have to cover the major bullets.

4) SHARE RELATED INFORMATION
IF your crew is the kind that would sit and watch an informative documentary and then discuss it, there are many to choose from. Here are a two:


Other Information Resources
The health information provided in this guide represent information available from the following public resources:
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services: Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration - https://www.samhsa.gov/

5) NETWORK FUND-RAISING AROUND THE COPY MACHINE OR BREAK ROOM
Workplace fund-raising must be explored with tact and with permission of your employer; however, this might have the added benefit of helping you get to know your coworkers interests. Furthermore, they start to learn yours. Here are some thoughts:
• Ask your employer or supervisor if they see any conflicts to forming a company Tread Red Walk & Fun Run team! Wearing company t-shirts and sharing the pictures of you doing so with a description about Tread Red can provide your company great exposure on social media, in local publications and newsletters!

• Explore your company’s matching gift program and policies. Some larger companies will match employee donations to charities. When and where such programs exist, they can be a great way of doubling or even tripling your fund-raising efforts.

• Place a special donation basket, jar or container on your desk and tell your coworkers you are raising money for MAO and the Tread Red Walk & Fun Run. You could even pair it with a candy bowl and ask co-workers to drop fifty cents into your donation container each time they take a piece of candy.

• If your company has a human resources department, talk to someone who works there about fundraising opportunities.

6) ON-LINE REGISTRATION AND PEER-TO-PEER CHALLENGING
To increase convenience for our participants, MAO has partnered with Flipcause to make starting participation an easy online process. Once you have completed setting up your Individual or Team Page, you can easily share your participation and campaign goals with friends, family and colleagues using social media or e-mail. Step by step instructions can be downloaded at https://www.maoi.org/treadred.

IF there are people who want to have their support credited to you or your team, they will simply need to select your name or the name of your team from the drop down area during their participation signup or donation transaction.
SO YOU’VE CREATED A PAGE... NOW WHAT?

Thanks so much for creating your very own page for our campaign! Below are tips on what’s next:

FIRST, SPRUCE UP YOUR PAGE!

1. Set a Goal
   Set a realistic goal for how much to raise and make sure it is within the parameters of what the organization needs. Don’t make your goal too high, either — we want you to succeed! A goal does not have to be exclusively financial. You can set other goals beneficial to the campaign, such as spreading awareness of the mission to your network and recruiting other fundraisers to create their own pages.

2. Craft Your Story
   Strengthen your page by sharing a compelling personal story about your own connection to the cause. Your network is primarily interested in you, and now it’s your job to convince them of the importance of an organization’s work. Speak to your passions for the organization’s mission, your history as a supporter with it, and why it would be worthwhile for your network to get involved.

3. Add Media (Optional)
   Pages with visuals are much more engaging than those with just copy. Add photos and videos that illustrate your personal story in relation to the campaign’s mission. Videos are especially engaging and memorable, and have the added benefit of allowing your network to hear your real voice convey your message. Photos and videos can be embedded in your story.

NOW THAT YOUR PAGE IS COMPLETE:

4. Share
   Announce your campaign through multiple outlets to reach the most potential donors in your network. Spread the word on your social media channels and through email outreach. Make print-outs or business cards with a link to your page to distribute to your friends. You can even throw a small launch event to kick it off!

5. Keep it Up
   Send follow-up emails to your network reminding them about the importance of the cause you are supporting as well as your fundraising goal and deadline. Keep track of who has donated and get creative with outreach to those who have yet to support the campaign. Continue to share your page on social media as your approach your goal.

6. Say Thanks!
   Remembering to say thank you goes a long way! Write your donors thank you emails or take it a step further and write personalized, handwritten notes. Give your campaign supporters regular shout outs on social media. With a simple thank you, donors in your network are far more likely to become long-term supporters.