



July 31, 2025

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Dear Community Supporter,

Did you know that the Gulf Coast (6 coastal counties) is in the top five locations for the highest new HIV infection rate in the state of Mississippi? Despite encouraging advances in HIV treatment and research, according the latest available statistics (AIDSVu 2022), there are 9,915 persons with diagnosed HIV in the state of Mississippi. Of these almost 10,000 people, 1,304 of these diagnosed persons reside in the 6 coastal counties of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

South Mississippi AIDS Task Force (EIN 64-0789159) (SMATF) is holding its **15th Annual Bridge for Life HIV-AIDS Awareness Walk/Run** on September 6, 2025, at the Biloxi/Ocean Springs bridge. This event is held annually to increase HIV awareness and to provide support for SMATF in delivering services to the Gulf Coast community. SMATF was founded in 1988 with a mission to educate the public about HIV/AIDS prevention and transmission, as well as to provide services to those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Our motto, "***The Fight Isn't Over***," perfectly captures the spirit of this event and SMATF's mission. Our Bridge-for-Life event on September 6, 2025 will begin at 8:00am and end at 10:00am.

We are asking for your support as follows: Youth Groups (up to 10) \$100; Adult Groups (up to 10) \$200; Individuals \$30; and Organization \$300 sponsorship for this event. The sponsorship includes ten individual walk/run registrations and your logo will be included on all promotional materials and social media outlets and displayed at the event. All participants will receive our Commemorative Medallion.

Additionally, SMATF operates a **Food Pantry** that provides free food to all MS Gulf Coast residents who are in need. In conjunction with our awareness walk/run, we are asking for food and monetary donations to keep our pantry stocked.

SMATF appreciates your support of our **15th Annual Bridge for Life HIV-AIDS Awareness Walk/Run** and **Food Pantry**. We look forward to your participation and assistance in achieving our mission.

Make your check payable and mail to: SMATF, P. O. Box 8009, Biloxi, MS 39535 or scan and pay through Cash App or Pay Pal. Please feel free to call SMATF at 228-207-0801 if you have any questions regarding our **15th Annual Bridge for Life HIV-AIDS Walk**.

Sincerely,

Deborah Aiken
SMATF Board Treasurer



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SMATF's mission is to educate the public about the prevention and transmission of HIV/AIDS while providing services to those affected.