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## Fighting with our digital might, **AIDS Walk Long Beach** goes virtual

Long Beach area, disproportionately affected by HIV,  
struggles with COVID-19 demand for care

**LONG BEACH, CA (October 8, 2020)** – **The LGBTQ Center Long Beach** presents a virtual and physically distanced **AIDS Walk Long Beach** where fundraisers can walk or run anywhere they live, work or play. Several 5k routes throughout Long Beach are available for participants to use in solidarity while maintaining a safe distance and following the current COVID-19 guidelines. The annual fundraiser on **Sunday, November 15** will benefit programs and services at **The LGBTQ Center Long Beach**, the **AIDS Food Store**, **St. Mary's CARE Program**, and the **Bickerstaff Clinic at Long Beach Memorial**. Registration at [www.centerlb.org/AidsWalkLB](http://www.centerlb.org/AidsWalkLB).

The Long Beach area continues to be one of the California cities most impacted by new HIV cases. According to the [Long Beach Health Department](#), Black women of any age and white men over the age of 50, are disproportionately impacted by HIV. Black women represent only 14% of the total female population in Long Beach but account for 34% of females living with HIV in the city. In addition, people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions are at an increased risk for COVID-19. Long Beach has a rate of 21 HIV cases per 100,000 residents, historically higher than Los Angeles. Those newly diagnosed include gay, bisexual and queer men, people who identify as Latinx, and are between the ages 30-40.

“Agencies who care for people impacted by HIV are in desperate need of funds this year,” said **Andrew Dorado**, interim executive director of The LGBTQ Center Long Beach. “COVID-19 increased calls for service from our clients while it hobbled our traditional fundraising efforts. We encourage everyone to shut off the television and go for a walk while putting some good in the world.”

Participants are encouraged to fundraise individually or as a team and to engage with family, friends and co-workers to join in or donate. A free online home page where donations can be collected electronically is provided. Raise \$50 or more and receive an AIDS Walk Long Beach 2020 face mask. All participants will receive an AIDS Walk Long Beach 2020 complimentary t-shirt. Runners will also be awarded a medal.

All entrants are encouraged to post photos, screenshots of maps featuring their chosen route, or step counter to The Center’s Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages **@CenterLB** and to use hashtag **#AIDSWalkLB2020**.

Originally founded in 1988 by The Center, the iconic walk has raised more than \$2 million that directly benefits local non-profits that provide care and support to those living with and impacted by HIV. This year’s goal is \$20,000.

The LGBTQ Center Long Beach supports more than 25,000 people a year through programs including youth services, senior services, counseling, legal services, domestic violence support, trans health programs, HIV and STI testing, and more than 20 weekly support groups. Currently many of these services are offered online during the pandemic. Drive up and walk up HIV/STI testing is now available by appointment Monday through Friday in a private area of the parking lot behind The Center at 2017 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Long Beach. For more information on services, visit [www.centerlb.org](http://www.centerlb.org) or follow **@CenterLB** on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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