



AIDS Walk Northwest Raises Nearly \$259K for HIV Advocacy

Organized by Oregon's Cascade AIDS Project, the walk combats HIV stigma and raises funds for equitable HIV care.

October 3, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

Saturday, September 28, marked the 36th annual AIDS Walk Northwest, which celebrates [HIV](#) advocacy, reduces [stigma](#) and raises funds for HIV and AIDS research and care.

Held in Portland, Oregon, AIDS Walk Northwest (formerly AIDS Walk Portland) commemorates those lost to HIV and [AIDS](#) while celebrating life and providing vital resources to the community. Emceed by drag performer and longtime community [activist](#) Poison Waters, this year's walk raised almost \$259,000, according to a press release from Cascade AIDS Project (CAP), which has organized the event since 1988.



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A post shared by Cascade AIDS Project (@cascadeaidsproject)



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A post shared by Kevin Cook (@poisonwaters)

This year's AIDS Walk took place at Tom McCall Waterfront Park. Participants had access to free on-site HIV testing offered by the CAP Prevention team as well as flu shots and mpox vaccines provided by the Multnomah County Health Department.

For more than four decades, CAP has served as the largest community-based provider of HIV services, education, housing and advocacy in Oregon and Southwest Washington. CAP promotes health equity through inclusive and compassionate health care.

"Working hard to erase the stigma around HIV and AIDS is a big part of the AIDS Walk and just getting everybody out there," Waters [told KOIN 6 News](#). "People think that it's a bad, awful thing that happens to bad, awful people, and that's just not true."

As director of CAP's [Camp KC \(Kids Connection\)](#), Waters also works to empower and support

children living with and affected by HIV throughout Oregon.

Although new HIV diagnoses in Oregon have decreased over the last decade, officials have seen a rise since 2020, likely due to limited access to HIV services during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the [Oregon Health Authority](#).

In 2022, about 9,330 people were living with HIV in Oregon, including 1,087 people who don't know their status. What's more, there were about [244 new HIV diagnoses per 100,000](#) Oregon residents, an increase from 201 per 100,000 the previous year.

While more people in Oregon are starting to take pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention, uptake remains low. Indeed, after a steady increase from 2013 to 2019, the number of Oregon residents starting PrEP decreased in 2020, according to End HIV/STI Oregon's Annual Progress Report from December 2023. What's more, [only about 27% of people who could benefit from PrEP in Oregon](#) are using it, and many people who start PrEP do not stay on it.

[Click here](#) to donate to AIDS Walk Northwest today.

Missed this walk? Sign up for the 40th annual [AIDS Walk Los Angeles](#), which takes place Sunday, October 13. Last year, AIDS Walk LA [surpassed its goal](#) by raising and donating \$1.275 million. Click [#AIDS Walk](#) to read more about other walks throughout the country.