Outreach in Alabama

MAO turns 30.

August 14, 2017 By Trent Straube

At the end of its first year, in 1987, Montgomery AIDS Outreach Inc. (also known as Medical AIDS Outreach of Alabama) had five clients. Today, it sees nearly 1,700 people annually. While it marks 30 years of service, the nonprofit has adopted a new name: Medical Advocacy and Outreach (MAO). As CEO Michael Murphree, LCSW, explains: “The new name reflects our expansion of quality services to new health care issues facing rural Alabama.” Those issues include hepatitis C virus (a common coinfection among those with HIV), diabetes and challenges related to inequities in rural health care.

“We must take care of the whole patient to help them take care of themselves,” adds Laurie Dill, MD, chief medical officer at MAO. This means that in addition to HIV-specific services, clients can also seek, for example, mental health counseling or social work support services.

Working through its two hub clinics—one each in Montgomery and Dothan—MAO’s telemedicine network, Alabama eHealth, connects with 10 satellite clinics across 28 counties, giving vulnerable rural populations fast access to care without having to drive hours away. MAO’s efforts have been so successful that the state health department is integrating telemedicine on a large scale. And MAO itself is expanding, opening a dental clinic, a division for maternity and infant services, a specialty pharmacy and a new PrEP clinic (a prevention service built around the daily med Truvada as pre-exposure prophylaxis for those at risk of contracting HIV). “For the first time,” Dill says, “I truly believe we have all the tools needed to get our country to zero new rates of infection.”

Doug McCloud in the food pantryCourtesy of MAO

The Tread Red Walk & Run, held each SeptemberCourtesy of MAO

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