

Public Relations Portfolio: AID Upstate  
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Taylor Summey  
[tasumme@g.clemson.edu](mailto:tasumme@g.clemson.edu)

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# Communication Audit for AID Upstate

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Note: This is an overview of the entire document. Any information from external sources is cited within the full-length sections below the Executive Summary.

**Introduction and Background:** AID Upstate is a South Carolina-based nonprofit whose mission is “preventing and treating HIV through direct services, advocacy, education and awareness” (AID Upstate, n.d.c). Relevant publics include HIV patients, their families (including friends/romantic partners), members of the community at risk of contracting HIV, potential volunteers and donors and people who want to learn more about HIV, among many others.

**Statement of Needs/Problems:** AID Upstate’s primary goals are to be an educational source for the general public regarding sexual wellbeing and to have the public understand what AID Upstate can do for them. There are two obstacles to this goal’s success. First, AID Upstate needs help planning the type of language they should use when creating PR materials to be most effective without making people feel bored or uncomfortable. Second, AID Upstate needs to update their PR/communications materials.

**Review of Research:** There are three main issues relevant to AID Upstate’s PR efforts:

- **Issue 1: HIV Stigma.** Many individuals maintain negative feelings toward those living with HIV, which may make AID Upstate patients hesitant to give testimonials/participate in PR initiatives. However, PR materials can still be created involving these individuals through anonymity.
- **Issue 2: Social media.** Experts suggest that organizations maintain content calendars for regular posting. Also, there are processes in place for consolidating social media platforms.
- **Issue 3: Brand voice.** It is important for organizations to have a clear sense of the voice they want to use when communicating with their publics; many experts offer advice to develop this voice effectively.

**Method:** A few steps were necessary to gather the appropriate background information on AID Upstate. First, I reviewed the interview Dr. Morehouse conducted with Mr. Jose Giocamea and took notes. Then I looked over the last few months of AID Upstate’s social media posts to gain a sense of AID Upstate’s voice. I also visited AID Upstate’s website, reviewed recent media coverage and looked through external sources that discussed relevant to AID Upstate. Finally, I used the information I gathered from these sources to plan out this entire document.

**S.W.O.T Analysis Results:** S.W.O.T. stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Strengths are things that AID Upstate is currently doing well, while weaknesses are things that can be improved. Opportunities are areas for growth, or “goals,” as Dr. Morehouse describes in the assignment sheet for the audit. Threats are elements that might cause issues for the organization. See below for an overview of each of these topics.

- **Strengths:** AID Upstate already has an individual committed to PR efforts and a pre-existing online presence.
- **Weaknesses:** Social media posting is inconsistent and AID Upstate does not have a completely developed brand voice.
- **Opportunities:** Opportunities include improving AID Upstate’s social media practices, creating updated PR materials and working on brand voice.

- **Threats:** AID Upstate’s primary threat is the stigma surrounding HIV.

**Conclusion and Recommendations:** There are five main suggestions for AID Upstate at the end of this audit:

- **Suggestion 1:** Push through the HIV stigma to create content that involves patients/individuals served by AID Upstate.
- **Suggestion 2:** Consolidate social media accounts.
- **Suggestion 3:** Create a content calendar.
- **Suggestion 4:** Update PR materials.
- **Suggestion 5:** Work on brand/organizational voice.

**References:** All sources are referenced in APA Style.

**Appendices:** You will find a full list of sources that shaped my understanding of AID Upstate at the bottom of this document.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

AID Upstate is a nonprofit organization based in the upstate of South Carolina that serves individuals affected by HIV/AIDS. Their mission is “preventing and treating HIV through direct services, advocacy, education and awareness” (AID Upstate, n.d.c). All of AID Upstate’s activities and initiatives serve this mission.

AID Upstate started in 1987 “as a committee and task force composed of individuals working in public health in response to a then unnamed illness that was primarily affecting young gay men and rapidly progressing to death” (AID Upstate, n.d.c). AID Upstate has grown and expanded since then. Currently, “approximately 54 individuals are employed in support of the provision of high quality direct and prevention services” (AID Upstate, n.d.c).

AID Upstate offers a variety of services. Per an interview conducted by Dr. Jordan Morehouse with their Director of Community Relations, Jose Giocamea, their services include STD testing/screening, case management for HIV patients and medical care (Interview). Other support services include “[a] food pantry, transportation, pharmaceutical assistance, ... [and] short-term rent” (AID Upstate, n.d.c), among many others. Additionally, AID Upstate is associated with Red Ribbon Resale, a thrift store that provides additional funding to the organization (Red Ribbon Resale, n.d.).

Relevant publics for AID Upstate include, but are not limited to: HIV patients, their families (including friends/romantic partners), members of the community at risk of contracting HIV, people who want to learn more about this topic, volunteers, staff/employees, medical professionals associated with the clinic, donors, grant organizations, thrift store workers, thrift store customers and thrift store donors.

Prior public relations efforts include a brochure, social media marketing, print ads, and billboards, according to Mr. Giocamea (Interview, 2020). Additionally, for a long time, the majority of AID Upstate’s public relations was through word-of-mouth due to the stigma surrounding HIV in our society, though that has changed in recent years (Interview, 2020).

AID Upstate’s current communication situation is as follows. There are several social media accounts used to communicate with relevant publics, as well as a website full of useful information about AID Upstate’s services. According to Mr. Giocamea, AID Upstate’s billboards are effectively defunct because the bus stops the billboards were placed on are no longer operational. Additionally, he explained that the brochure is in need of updates.

Peer institutions to AID Upstate in South Carolina include Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services (PALSS, 2021) and Piedmont Care, Inc. (Piedmont Care, Inc., 2021). Even more

examples of related nonprofits in South Carolina can be found at <https://www.sciway.net/org/heal.html#hiv> (this is where I located the aforementioned institutions).

This communication audit is intended to analyze AID Upstate's current communication tactics and suggest additional measures to enhance those already in place.

## **STATEMENT OF NEEDS**

According to Mr. Giocamea, one of AID Upstate's biggest strategic communication/PR goals "is to educate the public about their sexual health and also about the services that we offer and that our services are usually at no cost or very little cost to people who walk in through the doors. And that we just want to be a resource not only for the general public but also for other medical practices" (Interview, 2020). AID Upstate wants the general public (as well as their specific publics) to understand key information about their sexual wellbeing, what AID Upstate does and how AID Upstate can help them.

There are a few obstacles to AID Upstate achieving this goal. First, and most importantly, AID Upstate needs help figuring out the appropriate language to use in their PR materials. In his interview, Mr. Giocamea said, "One of the biggest struggles we have is getting it into the right kind of language to where ... we can get people to understand what we're doing and also not kind of bore them to death with all of the medical terminology and also not scare them as well" (Interview, 2020). Effectively, AID Upstate needs to find a voice that fits their organization's "brand," so to speak. This ties into the stigma research detailed below - AID Upstate needs PR materials that explain their mission without making people overly anxious (while still being understandable).

Another obstacle is that AID Upstate needs to update their current PR materials. As Mr. Giocamea explained, their brochure is currently out of date and their bus stop advertisements have been made defunct (Interview, 2020). Additionally, they have numerous social media accounts (Interview, 2020), which means AID Upstate's social posting is spread thin rather than being concentrated in a few accounts. That is three entire avenues of PR that have either been eliminated or are not working at their full potential capacity.

## **REVIEW OF RESEARCH**

One major topic related to AID Upstate is the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS in American society. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), "[a] lack of information and awareness combined with outdated beliefs lead people to fear getting HIV. Additionally, many people think of HIV as a disease that only certain groups get. This leads to negative value judgements about people who are living with HIV" (Centers for Disease Control, 2020), which results in stigma. Mr. Giocamea mentioned in his interview with Dr. Morehouse that for many years, AID Upstate engaged in minimal PR efforts due to this stigma, and it still affects their communications in some ways (i.e. patients don't generally want to be involved in promotional materials) (Interview, 2020).

Despite this stigma, there are still measures that PR/nonprofit Communications professionals can take to reach their publics. It might still be helpful to attempt to get some sort of testimonials from patients. As Nancy Schwartz writes on Network for Good, "when others who benefit from your organization's work share its value—the difference it makes in their lives—their comments are convincing and accepted" (Schwartz, 2014). To encourage responses from AID Upstate's publics on social media, many of whom may not want to openly interact

with the organization due to stigma, AID Upstate could encourage anonymity. According to one academic article, “Social media platforms have varying designs and features, such as options for anonymity, which can be tailored to meet the needs of target populations and increase use ... of the platform ... Anonymity allows users to control the information they disclose about themselves, which may allow marginalized populations to feel more comfortable communicating about HIV on social media platforms” (Taggart et al., 2015).

Another relevant topic is AID Upstate’s occasionally inconsistent social media posting (see S.W.O.T. Analysis Results for details). According to one industry article, “Every good content marketing strategy starts with a well-planned content calendar” (Caramela, 2019). It goes on to suggest that organizations “determine how often [they] want to post. Depending on [their] resources ... and what works for [their] business, [they] might post on certain platforms daily, semiweekly, weekly, biweekly or even less frequently. Regardless, it’s important to be consistent” (Caramela, 2019).

Additionally, Mr. Giocamea mentioned wanting to consolidate AID Upstate’s many accounts. One article on SocialMediaToday describes the process one team undertook to “consolidat[e] [multiple] social media presences” (Srinivasan, 2018) for a client. While the situation in the article is slightly different than the one AID Upstate faces, the article still provides a useful model for solving AID Upstate’s social media problem, including steps like “creat[ing] a transition timeline,” “bringing the brands together” (or in this case, accounts), and “effecting the merge” (Srinivasan, 2018).

Finally, several sources discuss the process of creating a set “brand voice,” which speaks to the trouble AID Upstate has had with phrasing their messages. In a blog post, CauseVox, a fundraising software company, suggests determining the organization’s “personality,” “style,” and “humor” (Donahue, n.d.). An article from ContentMarketingInstitute also suggests that organizations/companies “ensure that [their] writers understand how to put [their] brand voice into action” (Heald, 2018). In AID Upstate’s situation, anyone who works on the PR materials should understand how AID Upstate wants to present itself.

## **REVIEW OF METHODS**

The first approach I took to understand AID Upstate’s PR efforts was to review and make detailed notes about the interview Dr. Morehouse conducted with Mr. Giocamea, Director of Community Relations. This allowed me to gain a firsthand understanding of AID Upstate’s PR/Communications situation from someone who is actually associated with the organization. I took the information I gleaned from this interview and indicated in my draft of this audit where the information would fit in.

After reviewing the interview, I looked over AID Upstate’s website and social media accounts to get an understanding of what their online presence looks like. For the social media pages, I looked through the last few months of posts. For the website, I looked through every page I could find. I took time to look at the kinds of content AID Upstate has available online, what messaging is present there and how often they update. I made a mental note of all of this information to use in my analysis.

I then searched for media coverage of AID Upstate. To locate this, I used LexisNexis/NexisUni and searched “AID Upstate.” Then, I used the “Search within results” option on the left of the page to specify “South Carolina.” Several articles came up about AID Upstate, but I only saw one from the past year or so. The article I read was titled “Greenville City Awards CARES Act Funds to Community Partners” and described funding AID Upstate

received from the city of Greenville due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Greenville City Awards..., 2020).

Finally, I completed some additional general research for the “Review of Research” section. This was relevant to my understanding of AID Upstate’s PR efforts because it gave me context for issues the organization faces, like HIV stigma.

Once I had completed all of this background research, I got to work writing my report. For the S.W.O.T. analysis in particular, I took time to go back through the notes I had made and pick out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are relevant to AID Upstate. The planning process took about an hour. I then described each of the elements of the S.W.O.T. analysis, referencing back to the “Review of Research” section of the audit when appropriate.

## **S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS RESULTS**

**Strengths:** One of AID Upstate’s greatest strengths is that they have an individual dedicated to Community Relations (Interview, 2020). There is already an employee in place with the goal of increasing AID Upstate’s PR presence. This shows that there is a level of organizational support for PR initiatives, which will be helpful in implementing the work students in this course create.

AID Upstate also already has a well-designed, high-quality website that is easy for the user to navigate (<https://www.aidupstate.org/>) and a presence on social media (see Appendix for list of accounts), which gives them an avenue to connect with their publics.

**Weaknesses:** One of AID Upstate’s weaknesses is that their social media is not completely consistent. Some accounts (like Facebook) are updated fairly regularly (AID Upstate, n.d.a), while others have been left dormant for several months (like Instagram) (AID Upstate, n.d.b). Additionally, social media efforts are spread over numerous accounts, rather than a few (Interview, 2020). This means that AID Upstate’s social media PR efforts are spread more thinly than is strictly necessary. Users may not know which account to select when choosing to follow AID Upstate, which means they could miss out on potentially important information.

Another weakness, per Mr. Giocamea’s interview with Dr. Morehouse, is that AID Upstate doesn’t quite have a sense of their brand voice (Interview, 2020). They struggle with communicating the necessary information to their publics in an effective, engaging way.

**Opportunities:** AID Upstate’s first opportunity lies with social media. AID Upstate has several social media accounts, but their posts are not completely regular. There are some instances where several posts will be created in a short period of time (AID Upstate, n.d.a), while other times the social media coverage will lapse (AID Upstate, n.d.b). More regular posting could be a major opportunity for AID Upstate to reach their target publics on a daily basis, in tandem with consolidating the number of accounts being used.

AID Upstate’s second opportunity is to update all of their PR materials. As Mr. Giocamea mentioned, many of AID Upstate’s prior PR materials need to be updated/are defunct. This is a great opportunity for AID Upstate to refresh its image.

Lastly, AID Upstate has the opportunity to work on its brand voice. Through the materials students will submit through this class, they have the chance to examine different approaches to covering their content in order to find something that will work for AID Upstate in the long run.

**Threats:** The biggest Public Relations threat that AID Upstate faces is the public stigma that HIV/AIDS has. Per an interview with Mr. Giocamea, many of AID Upstate's patients are unwilling to be publicly involved with AID Upstate because of this stigma (Interview, 2020). That makes gaining testimonials or action shots of AID Upstate's services challenging. Additionally, the stigma facing HIV/AIDS has meant that historically, AID Upstate has not sought out a large amount of publicity (Interview, 2020). AID Upstate's PR endeavors are relatively recent due to the cultural view of HIV/AIDS (compared to other organizations that might serve less stigmatized issues).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of my biggest suggestions for AID Upstate is to push through the stigma surrounding HIV to create engaging, effective PR materials. Like I mention in the Review of Research portion of this document, anonymity is a great tool that AID Upstate can use to gather testimonials or other engaging content from individuals they have served.

My second suggestion is to work on consolidating the number of social media accounts that AID Upstate runs. Like Mr. Giocamea mentioned in his interview, AID Upstate has about 24 accounts (Interview, 2020). While it is important to have an online presence to connect with relevant publics, the current number of accounts feels a bit too high. I would suggest focusing on a single account per social media platform so that AID Upstate isn't spreading itself too thin with social media communications. It will be much easier to create content for a single Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram account rather than trying to keep track of several of each.

In addition to consolidating the number of accounts, I would suggest creating a content calendar (Caramela, 2019) to ensure that AID Upstate is posting as regularly as possible. That way, no accounts would be neglected or left dormant because there would be a plan already in place for the posts that needed to be made.

Next, I would suggest updating AID Upstate's PR materials. This is something that the other students in COMM 3570: Public Relations Writing will be working on all semester. Once we submit our work, it would be beneficial for AID Upstate to incorporate the different pieces or even use them as a model for future work. Generally speaking, it will be helpful to have some new and refreshed content to share with AID Upstate's publics and to achieve AID Upstate's strategic communication goals.

Finally, I suggest that AID Upstate take time to really think through the voice/tone they want to take with their audience as they update their PR materials. As Mr. Giocamea mentioned, one of AID Upstate's biggest struggles is the phrasing used for PR messages. While the PR materials are being redone and updated, it would be beneficial for AID Upstate to take some time to determine what kind of voice they want to use moving forward. This will allow the new PR materials to A) have a feeling of commonality between them in terms of tone and complexity and B) be more effective for AID Upstate's specific publics.

I hope that this audit will be helpful for AID Upstate as they work on their PR efforts in the coming months.



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## APPENDICES

### AID Upstate's Website:

<https://www.aidupstate.org/>

### AID Upstate's social media:

These are the social media accounts I explored. When I mentioned AID Upstate's social media efforts, these are the accounts I am referring to. I just went with the ones linked on AID Upstate's website.

- Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/aid.upstate/>
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/aidupstatesc/>
- Twitter - <https://twitter.com/AIDUpstate>
- LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/aid-upstate/>

### Similar Organization to AID Upstate:

- <http://palss.org/>
- <https://www.piedmontcare.org/>
- List I used to find these organizations: <https://www.sciway.net/org/heal.html#hiv>

### Background research:

#### HIV

- <https://dx.doi.org/10.2196%2Fjmir.4387>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/hiv-stigma/index.html>
- <https://www.networkforgood.com/nonprofitblog/how-collect-and-use-testimonials-your-nonprofit>

#### Social Media

- <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/what-we-learned-merging-multiple-social-media-accounts/516573/>
- <https://www.prdaily.com/8-steps-for-building-an-effective-content-calendar/>

#### Brand Voice

- <https://www.causevox.com/blog/nonprofit-communications/>
- <https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2018/04/find-brand-voice/>

#### News Coverage

- <https://advance-lexis-com.libproxy.clemson.edu/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60NV-STB1-JDKC-R3MC-00000-00&context=1516831>

## Public Relations Plan for AID Upstate

### Mission Statement

AID Upstate’s mission statement is “preventing and treating HIV through direct services, advocacy, education and awareness” (AID Upstate, n.d.). They employ a variety of tactics and initiatives to achieve this goal.

### Communication Problems

AID Upstate’s biggest public relations goal is to “is to educate the public about their sexual health and also about the services that [they] offer” (Interview, 2021). Obstacles to this goal include a need for A) a defined brand voice, B) updated PR materials, and C) improved social media strategy. Additionally, AID Upstate must navigate a major stigma toward HIV in the community and society at large (Interview, 2021).

### Public Relations SMART Objectives

SMART objectives are goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (Morehouse, 2021).

- **Target Publics:**
  - **Target public 1: People in the upstate who are HIV positive**
    - This group may contain a variety of demographics, but is unified by the fact that they are all HIV positive. Benefits this public can glean from the organization’s activities include: “HIV specialty and primary care, medical case management, referrals/payment for medical care, health insurance premiums and copayment costs, food pantry, transportation, pharmaceutical assistance, mental health, addictions counseling, short-term rent, mortgage, utilities, long-term group housing, adherence and treatment education, and risk reduction counseling” (AID Upstate, n.d.).
  - **Target public 2: Donors**
    - Donors includes anyone who donates money and/or physical resources to AID Upstate to support its mission. Donors may or may not be HIV positive/have some connection to HIV.
  - **Target public 3: Members of the community at risk of contracting HIV**
    - According to HIV.gov, the group that is most at risk of contracting HIV is “gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men” (HIV.gov, 2020). Other groups that are at risk include “injection drug users” and “transgender women who have sex with men” (HIV.gov, 2020). Additionally, Black and Latino individuals are at greater risk than other ethnicities (HIV.gov, 2020). For the purposes of this plan, “the community” is defined as the counties AID Upstate primarily serves: Pickens, Greenville, Anderson, and Oconee (AID Upstate, n.d.).
- **Most important public relations goals:**
  - **Goal #1** is to increase the number of HIV positive patients that AID Upstate treats by 5%. These would be individuals that already have HIV, but have not yet received any services from AID Upstate.
  - **Goal #2** is to increase monetary donations by at least 10%.

- **Goal #3** is to reduce the number of new reported HIV cases in the upstate area by 5%.
- **How these goals can be measured:**
  - **Measurement plan for goal #1:**
    - Success for this goal will be measured based on the number of new patients coming to AID Upstate. Per AID Upstate’s website, “Over 1,300 individuals living with HIV received medical case management and/or care services in the prior year” (AID Upstate, n.d.). If at least 65 new individuals begin using AID Upstate's services (10% of the above figure), then it will be clear that goal #1 was satisfied. However, if less than 65 new patients visit, that will indicate a failure of this goal.
      - A secondary measurement tactic would be asking new patients how they heard about AID Upstate. If more new patients say that they heard about the organization from its PR materials, then that would indicate that these initiatives have been successful.
  - **Measurement plan for goal #2:**
    - Success for this goal will be based on how much donations increase for AID Upstate. Leadership would need to calculate the amount of donations they received last year. Then, they would calculate what 10% of that figure is. That is the minimum amount of money that should be added to AID Upstate’s donation total for this goal to be successful. If less than that quantity is raised, the goal has been unsuccessful.
  - **Measurement plan for goal #3:**
    - Success for this goal will be measured using local health data. AID Upstate will take a benchmark of the most recent local HIV diagnosis statistics at the start of implementation. Per SCDHEC, there were 307 new HIV diagnoses from 2017 to 2019 (SCDHEC, 2019) in the counties AID Upstate serves (AID Upstate, n.d.). 5% of that amount is 15.35, or 16 individuals. Success will be based on whether or not new HIV diagnoses in Oconee, Greenville, Pickens, and Anderson counties decrease by 5%, or 16 cases.
- **How these goals are attainable:**
  - **Explanation for goal #1:**
    - This goal is attainable because AID Upstate has already shown that it can increase awareness for its services. The organization went from a small initiative to a full-blown nonprofit over time (AID Upstate, n.d.), which indicates that more and more people became aware of their work over time. This goal would simply be an intentional continuation of this process.
    - Additionally, 10% is a reasonable increase. Per AID Upstate’s website, “over 1,300 individuals living with HIV received medical case management and/or care services in the prior year” (AID Upstate, n.d.) through their services. A 5% increase would mean an increase of 65 patients, which is not a particularly large amount.

- **Explanation for goal #2:** This goal is attainable because a 10% increase is not very high. According to one source, “online giving grew by 12.1% over the past year” (Double the Donation, 2021) for nonprofits. 10% is well within that amount and is a good goal to aim for without being too high.
  - **Explanation for goal #3:** A 5% decrease in HIV cases in Oconee, Anderson, Greenville, and Pickens counties (AID Upstate, n.d.) would mean 16 fewer new diagnoses than occurred in the 2017-2019 period (SCDHEC, 2019). Preventing 16 individuals from contracting HIV is certainly an attainable goal over the course of three years.
- **How these goals are relevant to AID Upstate’s mission:**
    - **Explanation for goal #1:**
      - This goal relates to the “treating HIV” (AID Upstate, n.d.) portion of the mission statement. If more patients are visiting AID Upstate for HIV treatment, then that portion of the mission will be fulfilled.
    - **Explanation for goal #2:**
      - The more money the organization has, the more funding they can put toward “preventing and treating HIV through direct services, advocacy, education and awareness” (AID Upstate, n.d.). More funding gives AID Upstate the ability to better execute its mission.
    - **Explanation for goal #3:**
      - This goal relates to the “prevent[ion]” (AID Upstate, n.d.) portion of AID Upstate’s mission statement because it seeks to prevent new people from being infected with HIV.
  - **Timing of these goals:**
    - **Timing for goal #1:**
      - This goal should span approximately one year. That will allow enough time for word to spread about AID Upstate’s services and for patients to find their way to the organization. After one year, the goal can be evaluated for success/failure.
    - **Timing for goal #2:**
      - This goal should span one year so that it can be compared to the previous year’s donation total.
    - **Timing for goal #3:**
      - This is a longer-term goal. The most up-to-date statistics are provided in three-year increments (SCDHEC, 2019), so the goal should cover three years so the data can be compared. This goal may need to be repeated twice to get an accurate measurement because we are currently in the middle of one of the three year measurement periods (SCDHEC, 2019).
  - **Complete SMART objectives:**
    - **Concise SMART objective for goal #1:** Increase the number of HIV positive individuals treated at AID Upstate by 5% in one year.
    - **Concise SMART objective for goal #2:** Increase monetary donations from donors by at least 10% over one year.

- **Concise SMART objective for goal #3:** Reduce the number of new reported HIV cases in vulnerable upstate populations by 5% over three years.

**Public relations tools used to achieve SMART objectives:**

- **PR tools utilized to achieve SMART objective #1:** website content, news releases
- **PR tools utilized to achieve SMART objective #2:** fact sheet + backgrounder, newsletter
- **PR tools utilized to achieve SMART objective #3:** social media content calendar, crisis plan, pitch letter

**Key Topics and Messages**

- **Key messages for SMART objectives:**
  - **Key message for SMART objective #1:** AID Upstate’s services will help improve your overall health and wellbeing as an HIV positive patient.
  - **Key message for SMART objective #2:** Donations to AID Upstate will help treat HIV positive members of the community.
  - **Key message for SMART objective #3:** HIV transmission is preventable.
- **Key messages for PR tools:**
  - **Key message for news releases, which speaks to SMART objective #1:** AID Upstate works to benefit members of the community who are HIV positive.
  - **Key message for pitch letter, which speaks to SMART objective #3:** You should write an article about AID Upstate to inform the public about HIV prevention measures.
  - **Key message for newsletter, which speaks to SMART objective #2:** Donations to AID Upstate allow the organization to care for its patients.
  - **Key message for crisis plan, which speaks to SMART objective #3:** The information shared in the media about HIV transmission is not correct; AID Upstate can provide you with the actual facts.
  - **Key message for fact sheet + backgrounder, which speaks to SMART objective #2:** AID Upstate runs off of donations from community members.
  - **Key message for social media content calendar, which speaks to SMART objective #3:** Maintaining healthy sexual practices is important for preventing the spread of HIV.
  - **Key message for website content, which speaks to SMART objective #1:** AID Upstate offers a variety of services that will benefit HIV positive patients.

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**NEWS RELEASE**

Media Contact:  
Taylor Summey, PR Coordinator  
Phone: 555-555-5555  
Email: [tasumme@g.clemson.edu](mailto:tasumme@g.clemson.edu)

EMBARGOED BY: June 6, 2021

**AID UPSTATE CELEBRATES NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY**

GREENVILLE, S.C. — National HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) Testing Day will take place on June 27. AID Upstate, a nonprofit based in upstate S.C., will celebrate by providing free HIV testing to members of the local community to reduce the spread of the virus.

According to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, there are over 20,000 people living South Carolina who are HIV positive or have AIDS. Individuals should seek testing if they have shared needles with others, had unprotected sexual intercourse, recently been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection or are concerned they may have HIV.

“Knowing whether or not you have HIV means you can be confident you are protecting your health and the health of your sexual partners,” said Jose Giocamea, director of community relations at AID Upstate. “Being diagnosed with HIV early gives you a better chance of living a long and healthy life.”

AID Upstate’s free HIV testing services are available year-round. Testing facilities are located in Anderson, S.C. and Greenville, S.C. Community members interested in receiving HIV testing from AID Upstate should make appointments by calling (864) 232-2310.

**About AID Upstate**

AID Upstate is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in upstate South Carolina whose mission is preventing and treating HIV through direct services, advocacy, education and awareness. Services include primary care, case management, transportation, short-term rent and a food pantry, among many others. AID Upstate serves patients in Greenville, Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties.

For more information, visit <https://www.aidupstate.org/> or follow AID Upstate on Twitter ([@AIDUpstate](https://twitter.com/AIDUpstate)), Instagram ([@aid.upstate](https://www.instagram.com/aid.upstate)) or Facebook ([@aidupstategsc](https://www.facebook.com/aidupstategsc)).

-END-



**NEWS RELEASE**

Media Contact:  
Taylor Summey, PR Coordinator  
Phone: 555-555-5555  
Email: [tasumme@g.clemson.edu](mailto:tasumme@g.clemson.edu)

EMBARGOED BY: Sept. 4, 2021

**RED RIBBON RESALE CELEBRATES 15<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

GREENVILLE, S.C. — Greenville’s Red Ribbon Resale will celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Sept. 25. Opened in 2006, Red Ribbon Resale is a thrift store run by AID Upstate, a local nonprofit that treats individuals with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). All proceeds directly support AID Upstate’s work.

Since 1987, AID Upstate has supported local HIV patients in need through services including free HIV testing, medical case management, primary care, transportation and housing. Last year, AID Upstate provided medical services to over thirteen hundred patients and HIV testing to approximately fourteen hundred patients.

“Red Ribbon Resale provides over \$100,000 in unrestricted funds annually,” said Jose Giocamea, director of community relations at AID Upstate. “Proceeds support the mission of AID Upstate by providing financial support to help meet the service and prevention needs of people affected by HIV in our community, in addition to growing our capacity to serve and help additional people. With these funds, AID Upstate has been able to provide rent and mortgage assistance, food assistance and prescription co-pay assistance.”

Red Ribbon Resale is located at 803 Pendleton Street, Greenville, S.C. 29601. AID Upstate encourages the community to visit Red Ribbon Resale to celebrate this milestone and support local HIV patients.

**About AID Upstate**

AID Upstate is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in upstate South Carolina whose mission is preventing and treating HIV through direct services, advocacy, education and awareness. Services include primary care, case management, transportation, short-term rent and a food pantry, among many others. AID Upstate serves patients in Greenville, Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties.

For more information, visit <https://www.aidupstate.org/> or follow AID Upstate on Twitter ([@AIDUpstate](https://twitter.com/AIDUpstate)), Instagram ([@aid.upstate](https://www.instagram.com/aid.upstate)) or Facebook ([@aidupstateresc](https://www.facebook.com/aidupstateresc)).

-END-

Taylor Summey, PR coordinator  
AID Upstate | [www.aidupstate.org](http://www.aidupstate.org)  
**Phone:** 555-555-5555  
**Email:** [tasumme@g.clemson.edu](mailto:tasumme@g.clemson.edu)

Feb. 25, 2021

Jarvis Robertson  
Reporter  
FOX Carolina  
21 Interstate Court  
Greenville, S.C. 29615

Dear Mr. Robertson:

I loved [the story](#) you wrote for FOX Carolina that featured AID Upstate last August. The information you included in the article was helpful for educating the public about human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and informing your readers about our services. I have two new topics connected to AID Upstate that might interest you for future pieces, including an HIV prevention method and a food pantry we offer to local HIV patients.

The first story idea focuses on an HIV prevention medication. There is a pre-exposure prophylaxis medication called Truvada that can reduce a patient's risk of contracting HIV by 70% to 90%. You can find more detailed information on Truvada here: <https://www.aidupstate.org/prep>. As part of our services, AID Upstate provides prescriptions for Truvada. However, there is still a stigma surrounding pre-exposure prophylaxis (like the stigma toward the birth control pill in decades past). This means that many people who are at risk of contracting HIV are not taking advantage of an effective preventative measure. A story from you could inform your readers of this potentially life-saving medication and help AID Upstate achieve its goal of reducing HIV stigmatization.

Another topic you might want to cover is AID Upstate's food pantry. Many of the HIV patients that we treat struggle to pay for the cost of treatment on top of basic needs like food. AID Upstate is solving this problem by allowing low-income HIV patients to pick up an order of groceries once a month to ensure that they have appropriate nutrition. We accept donations from the community and encourage local organizations to host food drives; a full list of accepted items is available at <https://www.aidupstate.org/foodpantry>. This story would benefit your readership by educating them on the food insecurity that many HIV patients face and offering them an opportunity for community service.

I believe that both of these stories would be informative for your readership. I can provide any additional resources you may need, including more information, photos or quotes from our director of community relations, Jose Giocamea. You are welcome to reach out to me via phone (555-555-5555) or email ([tasumme@g.clemson.edu](mailto:tasumme@g.clemson.edu)). I will follow up with a phone call in one week (on March 4) to check in with you.

Warmest regards,

Taylor Summey, PR coordinator  
AID Upstate | [www.aidupstate.org](http://www.aidupstate.org)  
**Phone:** 555-555-5555  
**Email:** [tasumme@g.clemson.edu](mailto:tasumme@g.clemson.edu)

## Newsletter Content

**Dissemination method:** This newsletter will be disseminated through email because it will allow for links to online webpages (like the organization's donation page). Additionally, sending the newsletter electronically will save AID Upstate money that could otherwise be put toward their services.

**Target public:** The target public for this newsletter is AID Upstate donors. These are individuals who have donated to the organization previously (or have signed up for updates about donation opportunities). A newsletter would be appropriate for this public because it will allow AID Upstate to continue to develop a relationship with individuals who have the ability to augment their resources (through money, physical donations, etc.). Keeping the donor public in the loop is a great idea for effective public relations for AID Upstate.

### Design decisions:

- **Colors within newsletter:**
  - The newsletter will use four colors (the following are hex codes to communicate the exact color): #8cbde6 (baby blue), #374c98 (navy blue), #000000 (black) and #ffffff (white). The font should be primarily in black, with the navy blue being used for accent text (i.e. article titles), like on AID Upstate's website. The background should be primarily white to make the text easy to read. The baby blue color can be used for borders/other decorative/accent elements. The two shades of blue are pulled directly from AID Upstate's website, so they are appropriate for the organization's brand.
- **Fonts within newsletter:**
  - The font on AID Upstate's website appears to be Arial, so that would be an appropriate font for the newsletter, given their current branding.
- **Ideal images/graphics to include with:**
  - **Article 1:**
    - A photo of the food pantry (specifically where the food is stocked) would be appropriate for this article. The article describes different ways the reader can support AID Upstate, including donating to the food pantry, so a visual of that would be a helpful tool to allow the donor to see a physical manifestation of where their donations go
  - **Article 2:**
    - A photo of the inside of Red Ribbon Resale would be appropriate for this piece (specifically an overview of the whole store). It would allow the reader to visualize the store and get an idea of the kinds of things that are available there.
  - **Article 3:**
    - A nice photo of Jose Giocamea would be perfect here. It would allow the reader to visualize who the newsletter is talking about, which would make this particular article more personable. His [headshot](#) on AID Upstate's website would be perfect.
  - **Article 4:**

- A photo of a therapist talking with a patient (maybe across a desk) would be ideal for this article because it would represent a concrete way that AID Upstate donors' contributions are helping (through counseling).

## Articles:

### Article 1

#### **AID Upstate and COVID-19: Three Ways to Continue Supporting Us During These Unprecedented Times**

Though the pandemic has changed the way we care for our patients, we are still operating and serving our community. We realize that, as donors, you may not know how you can continue to support us at this time. For that reason, we wanted to share a list of ways that our donors can continue to support AID Upstate safely (and in some cases, remotely). These include monetary donations, donations for our food pantry and spreading the word about AID Upstate's activities via social media.

First, AID Upstate always accepts monetary donations. Any and all contributions from our donors go toward our services, including providing medical care to patients and helping patients pay their rent. You can access our online donation portal at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3cgcQ8s>. Any amount helps!

Second, we are still accepting donations for our food pantry. Here is a list of the items we accept for our patients: <https://www.aidupstate.org/foodpantry>. We will personally pick up the items from you in a socially-distanced manner. Contact us at (864) 250-0607 for more information and to schedule a time for pickup.

Third, you can use social media to spread the word about AID Upstate. We are constantly updating our accounts with content about our work and the impact it has on the communities we serve. Re-sharing these posts is a pandemic-safe way to engage with AID Upstate and to inform your friends and family about our services. Make sure you're following us on all of our social media accounts: [@AIDUpstate](#) on Twitter, [@aid.upstate](#) on Instagram and [@aidupstatesc](#) on Facebook.

## **Article 2**

### **Thrifting for Good: AID Upstate's Red Ribbon Resale Thrift Store**

Do you love a good bargain? Do you also love supporting important causes? If so, Red Ribbon Resale is the store for you. AID Upstate runs Red Ribbon Resale, and the proceeds go directly toward supporting our patients. Every purchase from the store is a donation to AID Upstate.

Red Ribbon Resale was founded 15 years ago by AID Upstate as a fundraising tool. Red Ribbon Resale sells a variety of items, from furniture to decor, at affordable prices. To see what we have in stock and keep up with any announcements, check out our Facebook account [@RedRibbonResale](#). Visit us at 803 Pendleton St., Greenville, SC 29601 to find your new favorite piece while also supporting AID Upstate's mission.

If you don't want to shop, you can still contribute to Red Ribbon Resale. We accept donations of gently-used, clean items. In fact, we will pick them up for you so you do not have to make the trip yourself. To register for pickup, visit <https://redribbonresale.com/> and click the "Schedule a Pickup" button in the bottom right corner. Next time you are cleaning out your attic and stumble across a great find, reach out to us to donate it and help upstate HIV patients thrive.

## **Article 3**

### **Staff Spotlight: Jose Giocamea, Director of Community Relations**

We are excited to introduce a new segment of our newsletter: "Staff Spotlights." In each edition of our newsletter, you will have the opportunity to get to know one of our employees and learn about what they do for AID Upstate. For this first segment, we would like to introduce you to Jose Giocamea, our director of community relations. Jose is responsible for a variety of tasks here at AID Upstate, including social media, communications, event planning, fundraising and overseeing our Red Ribbon Resale thrift store. Keep reading to get to know Jose!

When he was 18, Jose joined the military, and he remained there for about seven years. During that time, he worked with morse code. He was responsible for collecting the signals and interpreting what they said. This position prepared him for his later communications roles.

After leaving the military, he worked in a few different positions before making his way to AID Upstate. He worked in strategic communications at a railroad company for a brief time, and then in sales at a truck company for eighteen years. Through these jobs, he continued honing his communications skills and building experience. Finally, in November of 2018, he joined AID Upstate as the director of community relations.

"I love working at AID Upstate because it gives me the opportunity to serve my community," said Jose. "HIV is a major issue in the upstate, and I am passionate about helping our HIV positive community thrive. Through my work as director of community relations, I am able to get the word out about our work and build relationships with our donors. I am excited to see where AID Upstate will go from here!"

## Article 4

### Why Our Donors Matter: AID Upstate's Impact in the Upstate Community

Through the support of our donors, AID Upstate has had the resources to offer medical case management and care services to more than 1,300 people over the previous year. Our services provide appropriate medical care to HIV patients who may otherwise be unable to afford it. Additionally, we offer support in other ways, like mental health counseling. AID Upstate is integral to ensuring the health and wellness of HIV patients in upstate South Carolina, and our donors are a major part of that.

HIV treatment can be [expensive](#), especially without insurance. Patients often struggle to make ends meet while also paying off medical bills for services that keep them alive. That's why we offer the medical care opportunities that we do. We provide treatment services for low-income patients, as well as assistance with prescription costs, insurance premiums and copays. Beyond the medical-specific services we offer, we also assist patients with other expenses they may encounter, like rent, transportation or food costs. AID Upstate takes some of the financial burden off of our patients to allow them to focus on taking care of themselves.

An HIV diagnosis can also be challenging for the patient psychologically. We offer our patients a variety of mental health services to assist them in navigating their treatment healthily and effectively. Beyond general mental health assistance, we offer two specific types of counseling catered to the communities we serve: addiction and risk reduction counseling. Not only do we care for our patients' physical wellbeing, but we also emphasize their mental health.

"Our goals could not be accomplished without our donors," said Jose Giocamea, director of community relations at AID Upstate. "Our fundraising efforts are the backbone of the services we provide for our community, and we are grateful for our donors' support. So are our patients. Everyone at AID Upstate is so excited to see what we will accomplish with the help of our donors in the coming months!"

## **Crisis Communication Plan**

***Crisis 1:*** *Hackers broke into the AID Upstate computer systems and stole medically sensitive and private information about participants and clients. The hackers have not been caught, and likely will not be caught or prosecuted.*

### **Affected Publics**

Affected publics (in order of importance) include current AID Update patients, prospective AID Upstate patients, AID Upstate patients' families, donors, and employees/staff. This crisis affects current patients because their records may have been stolen, while prospective patients may now be wary of visiting AID Upstate in the future because of this incident. This crisis affects patients' families because their loved ones' information has been stolen; the families will likely be upset or even scared about what the information will be used for. Another relevant public are AID Upstate's donors because they may not want to be associated with an organization that puts its clients' records at risk. Lastly, this crisis also affects AID Upstate employees and staff because they are the ones who will have to manage the fallout of the incident.

### **Immediate Crisis Response**

It has come to our attention that a hacker has broken into our computer system and stolen private, medically sensitive information about our clients. At this time, the culprit or culprits have not been caught, and, from what we understand from the authorities, likely will not be. We are unsure how this occurred because patient privacy is our priority, and we have multiple digital security measures in place to protect your data. We are currently investigating the issue and will communicate with you further when we have more information. Please contact our director of community relations, Jose Giocamea, at (864) 250-0607 if you have any questions.

### **Post-Crisis Response**

Two weeks ago, an unidentified hacker infiltrated AID Upstate's computer system and stole medically sensitive patient records. Since the breach, we have been working with law enforcement to attempt to locate the perpetrator(s), but we have been unable to do so. AID Upstate would like to apologize for any stress this incident caused you as our patient. We know how alarming this news has been, and we have been working to ensure that it will never happen again. Currently, we are in the process of enhancing our digital security measures to make our records even more secure than they were previously. These measures should take effect at the start of next week. Please do not hesitate to contact our director of community relations, Jose Giocamea, at (864) 250-0607 if you have any questions.



***Crisis 2:*** *A tornado has destroyed AID Upstate's headquarters. No building or storefront remains.*

### **Affected Publics**

Affected publics (in order of importance) include AID Upstate patients, families of AID Upstate patients, AID Upstate employees, donors, and volunteers. Patients and their family members are the two publics that are most affected by this situation. AID Upstate's services (i.e. rent assistance, the food pantry, etc.) will no longer be available to them, which could pose a major hardship in their daily lives. Employees are another relevant public; if there is no AID Upstate building then they don't have a job. Donors are relevant because they may want to donate to the facility's rebuilding or to patients who are struggling. Lastly, volunteers will be impacted by this crisis because they will no longer have a location to complete their volunteering hours.

### **Immediate Crisis Response**

During last night's storm, a tornado hit our building and completely destroyed our facilities. We are unsure how long it will take us to rebuild, so at this time, we are unfortunately not able to continue providing services to our patients. No one had any way to foresee this incident, and we know that this will put a sudden strain on many patients and their families. Later today we will be sending a list of emergency medical and food resources for you to use until we are able to resume services. If you have any questions, please contact our director of community relations, Jose Giocamea, at (864) 250-0607. We apologize for the inconvenience that this situation causes and hope to get back to serving our community soon.

### **Post-Crisis Response**

Two weeks ago, a tornado levelled our facilities and rendered AID Upstate unable to serve our patients. In the time since, we have contacted our insurance provider and have begun developing a plan to rebuild. Until we can do so, we have come to an agreement with several organizations in the upstate area that have agreed to take on our caseload full-time until we can rebuild. We will be sending more information on these locations later today. Once we have rebuilt, we will be glad to accept all former patients back at our facilities. We would like to again apologize for the inconvenience that this presents to many of our patients and their families, and we hope to see you all again soon! Please direct any questions to our director of community relations, Jose Giocamea, at (864) 250-0607.

***Crisis 3:*** *An employee within the AID Upstate was arrested for knowingly spreading HIV to their sexual partners. According to the police report, the employee stated they knew they had HIV, did not tell their sexual partners, and had unprotected penile-vaginal sex with five individuals. The employee was arrested after one of their sexual partners tested positive for HIV after having intercourse with the AID Upstate employee.*

### **Affected Publics**

Affected publics (in order of importance) include current AID Upstate patients, prospective AID Upstate patients, employees, volunteers, and donors. This crisis is relevant to current and prospective AID Upstate patients because it calls the safety of AID Upstate's facilities into question; if one of the organization's employees are knowingly spreading HIV to their sexual partners, why should the patients trust AID Upstate to adequately care for them? Additionally, this crisis involves employees because the perpetrator was one of their coworkers. Like the employees, volunteers may have also worked with the perpetrator, so they are also a relevant public. Lastly, this crisis affects donors because they may not want to support an organization that employs a predator who goes against the organization's mission.

### **Immediate Crisis Response**

This morning, law enforcement arrested one of our employees for knowingly spreading HIV to their sexual partners after one of this individual's partners tested positive for HIV. The employee admitted that they were aware of their positive status and engaged in unprotected sex with five different people without telling them. As of today, this individual is no longer employed at AID Upstate and will not be welcome on the premises moving forward. Furthermore, we will be launching an internal investigation into this situation and will keep you updated with what we find. AID Upstate is dedicated to serving and caring for the sexual health of our community, and we do not condone this individual's actions. We are sorry for any fear or hurt this may cause you as our patients. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our director of community relations, Jose Giocamea, at (864) 250-0607.

### **Post-Crisis Response**

Two weeks ago, law enforcement arrested one of our employees for knowingly spreading HIV to their sexual partners after one of their former partners tested positive. During police questioning, this individual admitted that they knew they were HIV positive but still had unprotected sex with multiple partners without telling them. Since this individual's arrest, AID Upstate has conducted a thorough internal investigation and has concluded that none of our current employees were aware of or involved in this situation. Moving forward, we will revise our employee training program to emphasize the importance of reporting your status to any sexual partners you may have. Additionally, we are developing a series of workshops for our employees to participate in throughout the year that emphasize consent, transparency and communication with sexual partners. AID Upstate is dedicated to creating a safe space for our clients, and we apologize for the harm this individual has caused in our community. Any questions or concerns should be directed to our director of community relations, Jose Giocamea, at (864) 250-0607.

Contact: Taylor Summey, PR coordinator  
 Telephone: 555-555-5555  
 Email: [tasumme@g.clemson.edu](mailto:tasumme@g.clemson.edu)



AID Upstate  
 811 Pendleton St., Suite 11  
 Greenville, S.C. 29601  
<https://www.aidupstate.org/>

## **FACT SHEET**

### **AID Upstate Celebrates National HIV Testing Day**

AID Upstate will celebrate National HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) Testing Day on June 27 by providing HIV testing to members of the local community. Through this initiative, AID Upstate hopes to reduce the spread of HIV among upstate citizens.

#### **WHO**

- AID Upstate is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in upstate South Carolina.
- All members of the local community are welcome to receive testing if desired.
- Specific groups that should receive testing include individuals who have shared needles with others, had unprotected sexual intercourse, recently been diagnosed with a sexual infection or are concerned that they may have HIV.

#### **WHAT**

- AID Upstate's mission is preventing and treating HIV through direct services, advocacy, education and awareness.
- National HIV Testing Day (June 27) is a national holiday to encourage people to receive HIV testing.
- AID Upstate will fulfill its mission by providing free HIV testing to community members on National HIV Testing Day.

#### **WHEN**

- AID Upstate's National HIV Testing Day event will be held from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on June 27.
- AID Upstate also offers free HIV testing year-round.

#### **WHERE**

- Testing will occur at AID Upstate's Greenville and Anderson facilities.
- The Greenville facility is located at 13 South Calhoun St., Greenville, S.C. 29601.
- The Anderson facility is located at 118 Montgomery Drive, Anderson, S.C. 29621.

#### **WHY**

- Getting tested can provide individuals with peace of mind and prevent them from spreading HIV to others.
- Receiving HIV testing can catch an infection in its first stages, allowing for early medical intervention.

-more-

**HOW**

- Testing is by appointment only.
- Community members interested in receiving HIV testing from AID Upstate should make appointments by calling 864-232-2310.
- AID Upstate provides rapid testing, which means patients will receive their results the same day they are tested.

**QUOTE**

- Jose Giocamea, director of community relations: “Knowing whether or not you have HIV means you can be confident you are protecting your health and the health of your sexual partners. Being diagnosed with HIV early gives you a better chance of living a long and healthy life.”

-END-

Contact: Taylor Summey, PR coordinator  
Telephone: 555-555-5555  
Email: [tasumme@g.clemson.edu](mailto:tasumme@g.clemson.edu)



AID Upstate  
811 Pendleton St., Suite 11  
Greenville, S.C. 29601  
<https://www.aidupstate.org/>

### **AID Upstate: BACKGROUNDER**

This document will provide answers to frequently asked questions about AID Upstate. Our public relations coordinator, Taylor Summey, responds to these FAQs below.

#### **Q: What is AID Upstate?**

A: AID Upstate is a nonprofit organization based in upstate South Carolina. Our mission is preventing and treating HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) through direct services, advocacy, education and awareness.

#### **Q: What services does AID Upstate provide?**

A: AID Upstate provides a wide array of services primarily focused on supporting HIV positive members of our community. These include HIV medical care (including testing and treatment), assistance with medical bills and insurance costs, a food pantry, transportation assistance, rent assistance and mental health counseling, among many others. For a full list of services, please visit our website: <https://www.aidupstate.org/>.

#### **Q: How can prospective patients access AID Upstate's services?**

A: The majority of our services are by appointment only. Prospective patients can make an appointment by calling us at 864-250-0607.

#### **Q: Where is AID Upstate located?**

A: AID Upstate's administrative offices are located at 811 Pendleton St., Suite 11, Greenville, S.C. 29601. For testing and other services, patients will visit one of our two medical locations. Our Greenville medical location's address is 13 South Calhoun St., Greenville, S.C. 29601. Our Anderson medical location's address is 118 Montgomery Drive, Anderson, S.C. 29621.

#### **Q: Does AID Upstate have volunteer opportunities?**

A: Yes, but there are only a few. Due to the sensitive nature of our organization, we can only have a few volunteers at a time. Volunteers are mainly responsible for clerical tasks. Prospective volunteers can sign up here: <https://www.aidupstate.org/volunteer>.

-more-

**Q: What other opportunities are there to help out?**

A: AID Upstate always welcomes donations. Financial donations can be made at the following link: <https://bit.ly/39PR634>. We also accept food pantry donations from individuals or organizations. To organize a food drive with your company or organization, please contact us at [Community@AIDUpstate.org](mailto:Community@AIDUpstate.org). For a full list of accepted food pantry items, please visit <https://www.aidupstate.org/foodpantry#>.

**Q: What is Red Ribbon Resale?**

A: Red Ribbon Resale is a thrift store run by AID Upstate. All proceeds directly support AID Upstate's work. It is located at 803 Pendleton St., Greenville, S.C. 29601.

**Q: I still have questions. Where can I find more information about AID Upstate?**

A: Our website describes all of our services in detail. You can visit that here: <https://www.aidupstate.org/>. You can also follow us on Twitter ([@AIDUpstate](https://twitter.com/AIDUpstate)), Instagram ([@aid.upstate](https://www.instagram.com/aid.upstate)) or Facebook ([@aidupstatesc](https://www.facebook.com/aidupstatesc)) for updates on our activities. If you can't find the information you are looking for online, feel free to reach out to us by phone at 864-250-0607.

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## **New Webpage Content (Under “About” Tab): About HIV**

*Target public for webpage: Members of the community (including loved ones of AID Upstate patients) who are unaware of what HIV is and how it is spread as well as recently-diagnosed AID Upstate patients.*

### **What is HIV and is it the same thing as AIDS?**

Per [hiv.org](http://hiv.org), “HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks cells that help the body fight infection, making a person more vulnerable to other infections and diseases.” Common symptoms (as listed by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)) can include mouth ulcers, fatigue, swelling of the lymph nodes, fever and chills, among many others. HIV is a different condition than AIDS. AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) develops as a result of untreated HIV (per the [CDC](http://CDC)).

### **When should I get tested?**

You should seek testing if you have had unprotected sex, shared needles with other people, recently been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection or are worried that you might have HIV. AID Upstate provides free HIV testing to members of our community at facilities in Greenville and Anderson. To learn more about our testing procedures, visit our [HIV Testing](#) page. To make an appointment, call us at 864-232-2310.

### **How can AID Upstate help?**

AID Upstate provides a variety of services to prevent the spread of and treat HIV in our community. These include testing, assistance with insurance premiums and copays, medical case management and counseling. We also offer rent and housing assistance, transportation assistance and a food pantry for our patients. To learn more and access our full list of services, visit [this page](#) or contact us at 864-250-0607.

### **Where can I learn more about HIV?**

There are many resources available for you to learn more about HIV. First and foremost, you are always welcome to contact our office at 864-250-0607 with any questions you may have. You can also fill out [this form](#) to ask questions about living with HIV or HIV treatment. Other reputable web resources include [hiv.gov](http://hiv.gov), the [CDC](http://CDC) and the [World Health Organization](http://World Health Organization).