November is Alpha-1 Awareness Month

Alpha-1 awareness and education are the big focus, each year, in November.

Miami, Nov. 1, 2019 – The month of November has been declared as Alpha-1 Awareness Month, by the Alpha-1 Foundation, to raise awareness about Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency (Alpha-1) throughout the United States.

During November, several activities take place around the country, designed to increase knowledge and spread awareness about this condition that affects an estimated 120,000 people in the United States, yet only six percent have been accurately diagnosed.

Spreading awareness about Alpha-1 is a year-round endeavor, but Alpha-1 Awareness Month provides 30 days of awareness-focused activities and initiatives, in which those affected by Alpha-1 share their stories, their challenges and successes of living with the condition, and the importance of Alpha-1 research and early detection.

The Alpha-1 Virtual Walks allow Alphas, their families and everyone touched by this condition, to increase awareness and raise funds for Alpha-1 research and related programs in their own time, with their own style, and at their own pace.

The 2019 Virtual Walk guide provides complete information on how to get involved and host a virtual walk, anywhere in the U.S. If you have not already signed up, click here to find a walk or to start a walk in your area.

Throughout the month, the Foundation shares facts about Alpha-1 on its website and social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), so keep your eyes (and devices) open for Alpha-1 Awareness Month updates with the hashtag #Alpha1Awareness and Virtual Walk updates with the hashtag #VW19.

Alpha-1 is a genetic condition – it is passed on from parents to their children through genes, that may result in serious lung disease in adults and/or liver disease at any age. It is the most commonly known genetic risk factor for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

“Our goal is to raise awareness and help fund research. Every step in November, at the virtual walks, moves us one step closer to the cure,” said Angela McBride, director of corporate relations of the Alpha-1 Foundation.
An inspiring awareness story is Jonathan Maidment’s thru-hike of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), a seven-month journey that started on April 4th and ended on October 16th, raising awareness and funds for Alpha-1.

Holding up his Alpha Angels flag to honor those that have lost their battle to this condition, Maidment, a 24-year-old from Connecticut, took each of the 2,650 miles of this long-distance trail for the Alpha-1 community. He is an Alpha who was diagnosed at age 10. As Alpha-1 is a genetic condition, his father, Dave, is also an Alpha and his mother, Karen, is a carrier.

Maidment kept the Alpha-1 community and his followers updated throughout his journey via his official Facebook page, facebook.com/hiking4acure, using the hashtags #HikingForACure and #Alpha1Awareness. His followers were also able to leave him encouraging messages along the way. Facebook fans followed him each step of the way to celebrate and cheer him on while hiking.

You can join our efforts! To help you get started, the Foundation has created free downloadable materials to print, share on social media, and email. To learn more about Alpha-1 Awareness Month and to access the Foundation Digital Awareness Toolkit section with images, banners, email signatures, and the 2019 Virtual Walk guide, among other materials, go to www.alpha1.org/awareness

Let’s increase Alpha-1 awareness together!

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**About the Alpha-1 Foundation**

The Alpha-1 Foundation, founded in 1995, is committed to finding a cure for Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency (Alpha-1) and to improving the lives of people affected by the condition worldwide. The Foundation has invested over $76 million to support Alpha-1 research and programs at 116 institutions in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Australia.

For more information, visit www.alpha1.org

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