



GUIDE TO GETTING STARTED

How to start a Walk with a Doc program in your community.



WALK WITH a DOC



WHAT IS WALK WITH A DOC?

Walk with a Doc is a nonprofit organization that inspires communities through movement and conversation. With an aim to make health and happiness accessible to all, Walk with a Doc offers a simple, sustainable solution to address social determinants of health. Healthcare providers ditch their white coats in favor of a t-shirt and sneakers, and connect with their patients in a way that is altering the healthcare landscape.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A WALK?

Each month, the event starts with a brief health discussion from a local healthcare provider on a relevant health topic. Then participants spend the rest of the hour enjoying a walk at their own pace and distance. During the walk, participants are encouraged to ask health questions in a relaxed setting and get to know their fellow community members. Walkers and rollers of all ages, fitness levels, and backgrounds are welcome to attend these free community events!

HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

Our team has been implementing Walk with a Doc programs around the world since 2005. Our turnkey program is designed to be both simple and sustainable to help you, the Walk Champion, hit the ground ~~running~~ walking! This guide contains some initial tips as you start the planning process. Once you complete the “housekeeping items” to register your chapter, we'll share additional resources and best practices to help you plan for a successful kick-off event. We're here to support you every **STEP** of the way!



WALK PLANNING TIPS

1

BUILD YOUR TEAM

- **WALK CHAMPION:** Walk with a Doc is a versatile program that can be implemented by a single healthcare provider, a large hospital system or anyone in between!
- **PARTNERS:** You can make it a community-wide initiative by inviting various organizations to join the fun (i.e. senior center, YMCA, parks department, health department, medical society, and local businesses).
- **SPEAKERS:** Walks can be led by the same healthcare provider each time, or you can rotate through a variety of speakers each month (more details on the next page)



2

CHOOSE YOUR LOCATION

- **ROUTE:** People with a variety of fitness abilities will attend your events. Choosing a park with a short loop will allow people to walk as short or as long of a distance as they'd like without losing sight of one another. Alternatively, you could choose a larger park that has several routes with various distances available.



- **ACCESSIBILITY:** Consider participants with limited mobility. Are surfaces paved to allow for wheelchairs and walkers? Are there benches to rest on along the way?
- **PARKING/TRANSPORTATION:** Is there ample parking? Is it free? For those without a vehicle, is it on a bus route?
- **INCLEMENT WEATHER:** Will you walk all year round? Do you have a backup location if there's inclement weather? Indoor examples include shopping malls, recreation centers, and school gyms. Note: prior approval may be needed.

3

SET YOUR SCHEDULE

- **FREQUENCY:** We want to establish an ongoing presence in the communities that we serve with the hope of building relationships and inspiring participants to live healthier lifestyles. Therefore, we ask that all groups aim to host walks **at least once per month**.
- **DAY/TIME:** Most groups find success on **weekend mornings**. Those who walk on weekdays often partner with organizations that have people who are available during the day (i.e. senior centers) or use the walks as part of an employee wellness program.
- **CONSISTENCY IS KEY:** Choosing a consistent schedule (i.e. 1st Saturday of every month at 9:00 AM at Central Park) will make your marketing efforts much easier. You'll be able to promote the program as a whole, rather than each event individually.

WALK LEADERS

Each walk event must be led by at least one licensed healthcare provider. It can be the same person each month, or rotate between a group of providers. We offer three “branches” of the program depending on who is going to be leading:

walk WITH a DOC

Led by physicians and professionals with advanced medical degrees

walk WITH a DOC ^{future}

Led by medical students and physicians

justwalk
Powered by Walk with a Doc

Led by other licensed healthcare providers



FINDING WALK LEADERS

If you're a community organization in need of a Walk Leader, here are some ideas of who to reach out to:

- Private practice clinic or local hospital (often the marketing or community relations team)
- Medical school or residency program
- Medical Society (city, county, or state)
- Health Department (city, county, or state)
- Popular specialties include family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, lifestyle medicine, obesity medicine, sports medicine, physical therapy, and more.



Use the resources below to help spread the word to local healthcare providers in your area. Walk with a Doc HQ is happy to chat with anyone who's interested or has questions!

[CLICK HERE FOR SHARING TOOLS](#)

[OR VISIT WALKWITHADOC.ORG/SHARE](https://www.walkwithadoc.org/share)

HOW TO SIGN UP

When you're ready to get started, complete the housekeeping items to register your chapter. Once those items are complete, we'll be in touch with step-by-step instructions and resources to help you plan for your 1st walk.

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP](#)

OR VISIT WALKWITHADOC.ORG/SIGNUP



Membership Includes



Ongoing
Support



Liability
Insurance
(USA & CANADA)



Marketing
Materials



Webpage
Development



Merchandise
Package

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

OR VISIT WALKWITHADOC.ORG/TOOLS

WHY PARTNER WITH WALK WITH A DOC?

There's no need to reinvent the wheel! We've successfully implemented hundreds of walking programs around the world, and we'll make it easy to bring the MOVEMENT to your community too.

Whether you're leading Walk with a Doc as a single practitioner or a large health system, you'll be seen as a role model in the community. It's a great resource for both staff & patients!



BENEFITS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- 1 Brand Recognition
- 2 Community Engagement
- 3 Attract New Patients
- 4 Boost Employee Morale & Camaraderie
- 5 Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Benefit \$

BENEFITS FOR WALK LEADERS

- 1 Reduce Burnout
- 2 Enhance Provider-Patient Relationships
- 3 Share Important Health Education
- 4 Build Community Connections
- 5 Personal Fitness Accountability

BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS

