



# 2025

## WALK WITH A DOC - CENTRAL OHIO *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

### **Compiled By:**

Sophia Leonetti: Program Intern, *Walk with a Doc Central Ohio*

Bryan Romey: Program Manager, *Walk with a Doc*

## Program Overview

**Walk with a Doc (WWAD)** is a community-based health program that hosts free walking clubs led by local healthcare professionals. The program is based on four key aspects of health: physical activity, health education, social connection, and time in nature. In 2025, Walk with a Doc engaged community members across multiple locations throughout Central Ohio, providing regular opportunities to move, learn, and connect in a supportive and welcoming environment.

Founded in 2005 by Dr. David Sabgir, Walk with a Doc celebrated its 20th anniversary this year and now reaches more than 650 communities across 48 states and 38 countries. The program has proven to be a replicable, scalable community-health model that strengthens relationships between healthcare providers and the communities they serve.



## Walk Structure

Walks took place at 13 locations in Central Ohio on an ongoing basis, either weekly, biweekly, or monthly. Each event is free, open to the public, and lasts for approximately one hour.

### Overview of a Typical Walk:

1. **Welcome & Check-In:** Participants arrive at the park and are greeted by volunteers and physicians at the designated meeting spot. Each participant is asked to sign-in, and participants who have attended 5 or more walks earn a free t-shirt.
2. **Health Talk:** The doctor leads a brief 5-8 minute discussion on a topic such as chronic disease prevention, nutrition, physical activity, stress reduction, or other wellness topic.
3. **Group Walk:** Participants break into groups and walk together at their own pace and distance along a designated route. A majority of chosen paths are paved and have benches to ensure accessibility for all levels of mobility.
4. **Conversation & Connection:** During the walk, participants can ask questions and socialize with the physician and fellow walkers. Walks are often attended by Community Liaison Officers from the Columbus Police Department, ensuring safety and building relationships within the community.
5. **Optional Food & Resources:** When available, healthy snacks and drinks are provided.

This format not only encourages regular physical activity but also allows participants to ask questions and learn in a supportive, low-pressure setting. By combining movement with health education, Walk with a Doc helps participants build sustainable, healthy habits while increasing confidence and accessibility to local healthcare professionals.

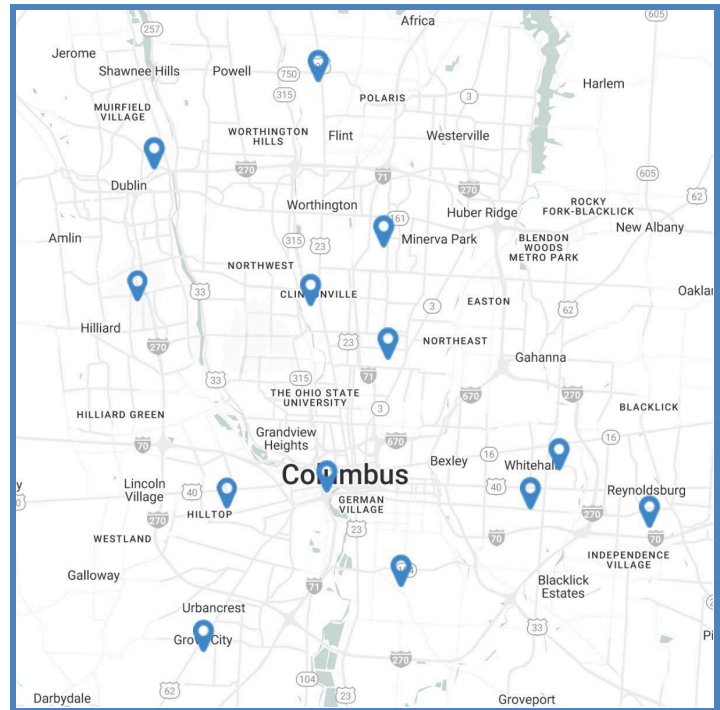


## Walk Events & Locations

Throughout 2025, ongoing walks were hosted at a variety of parks throughout Central Ohio. By offering consistent walks in a variety of locations, the program was able to reach a diverse group of participants, including older adults, families, and individuals new to the area.

### 2025 Summary:

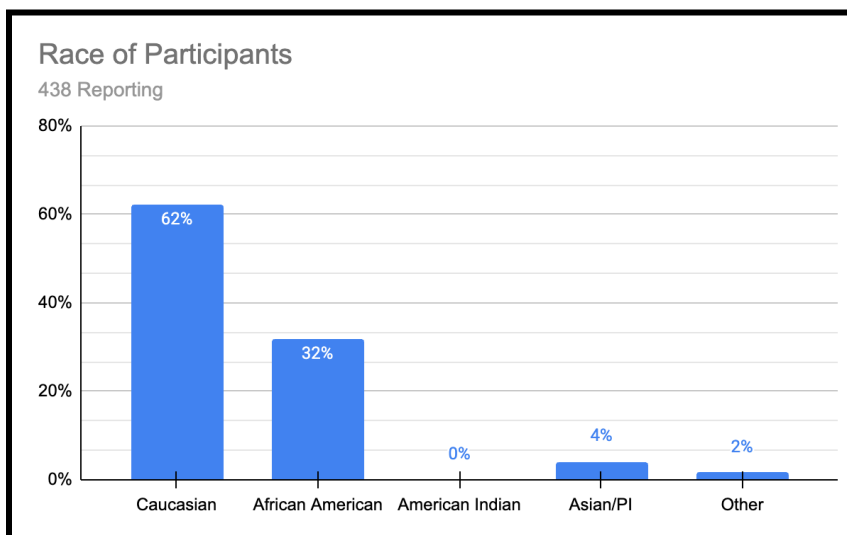
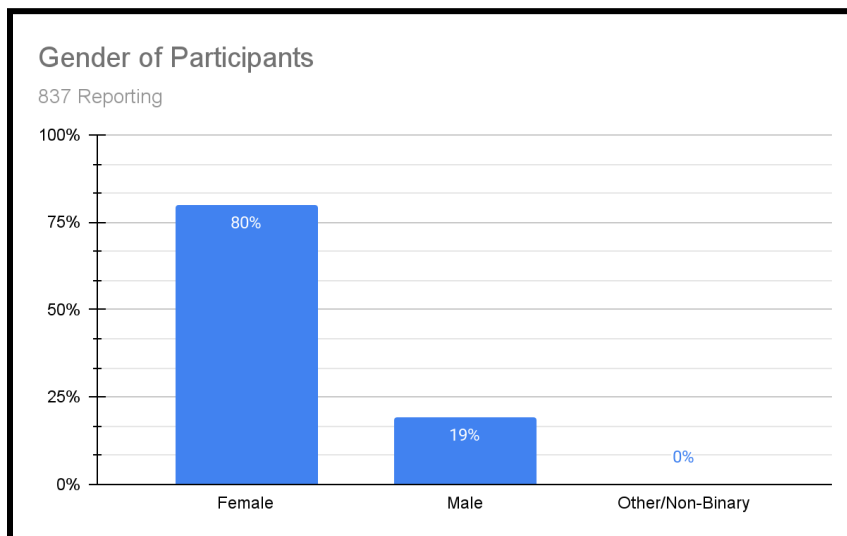
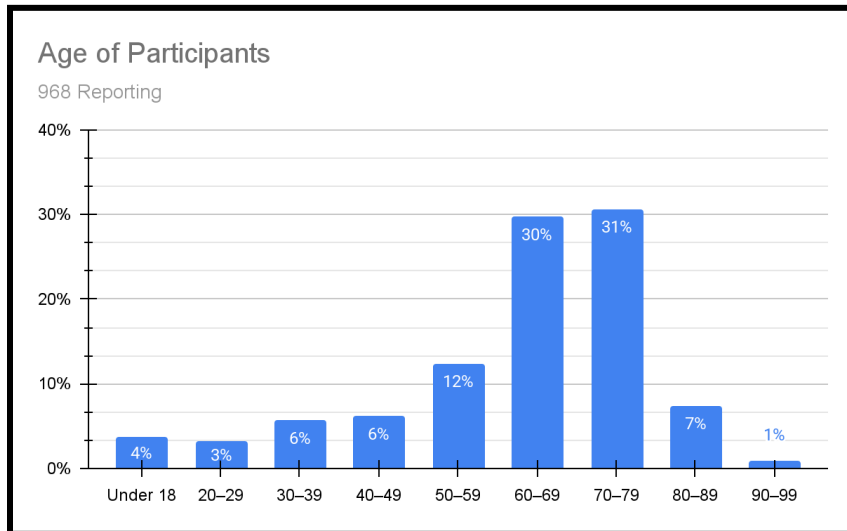
- **13** Ongoing Walk Locations
- **3** new locations in 2025\*
- **217** Walks Hosted
- **3,928** total walker visits
- **1,081** unique participants
- Average of **16** participants per walk (excluding special events)
- **50** volunteer healthcare providers



Walk Location	Community	# Walks	Average # Participants	Total Walker Visits
Blacklick Woods Metro Park	Reynoldsburg	5	24	118
<b>Park of Roses*</b>	Clintonville	13	14	177
Big Walnut	Columbus: Far East	14	15	205
Highbanks Metro Park	Lewis Center	52	19	1008
Linden Park	Columbus: North	9	12	104
Westgate Park	Columbus: West	5	11	42
Woodward Park	Columbus: North	14	41	571
Marion Franklin	Columbus: South	14	21	291
Dodge Park	Columbus: West	14	21	287
Coffman Park	Dublin	52	8	402
<b>Fryer &amp; Windsor Parks*</b>	Grove City	9	7	59
<b>Verena at Hilliard*</b>	Hilliard	5	14	71
Whitehall Senior Center	Whitehall	8	9	65
Special Events	Various	3	176	527

\*Designates a new WWAD location in 2025

## Participant Demographics



## 2025 Special Events

Walk with a Doc hosted several special events in addition to the regularly scheduled walks throughout the year. These events offered opportunities to expand our audience and engage participants in additional activities.

### Healthy Aging Expo (July 29, 2025)

Dr. Phil Berger hosted a WWAD event with the Ohio Department of Aging during Senior Day at the Ohio State Fair (*pictured top right*). 15 participants attended the event along with ODA staff.



### Westerville Farmers Market (July 12, 2025)

Sophia Leonetti hosted a pop-up walk at the Westerville Farmers Market. Participants completed a one-mile walk along Westerville South High School and Hanby Park before the market opened, followed by community outreach at a WWAD info booth during the market.

### Senior Wellness Jamboree (October 3, 2025)

Dr. Phil Berger hosted a WWAD event to kick off Columbus Recreation and Park's annual Senior Wellness Jamboree at Schiller Park. 323 participants attended the event.

### Read with a Doc (July-November, 2025)

Dr. David Sabgir hosted three successful pilots of "Read with a Doc" in Westerville. In collaboration with the Columbus Medical Association Alliance, Westerville Public Library, and Westerville Senior Center, this new initiative focused on providing education and social connection while discussing a health and wellness book. Over 100 participants attended the pilot events.



### Other Community Events

WWAD was also represented at various health fairs and events throughout the year, including the Arthritis Foundation Walk, OhioHealth Farmers Market, Clintonville Farmers Market, Otterbein University's Lifelong Learning Community, For the Love of Hilliard, BMI Federal Credit Union Health Day (*pictured bottom right*), and Franklin County Community Days at the Columbus Zoo. These events provided valuable opportunities to connect with the community and promote the upcoming walks.

### Annual WWAD Celebration (November 1, 2025)

All participants, physicians, and volunteers were invited to our Annual Celebration at Franklin Park in Columbus. This year's event featured a catered breakfast, raffle prizes, giveaways, a healthy snack demo from Columbus Recreation & Parks, a Hands-Only CPR Demo from the American Heart Association, and a walk around the park. 183 participants attended this event.



## Feedback & Metrics

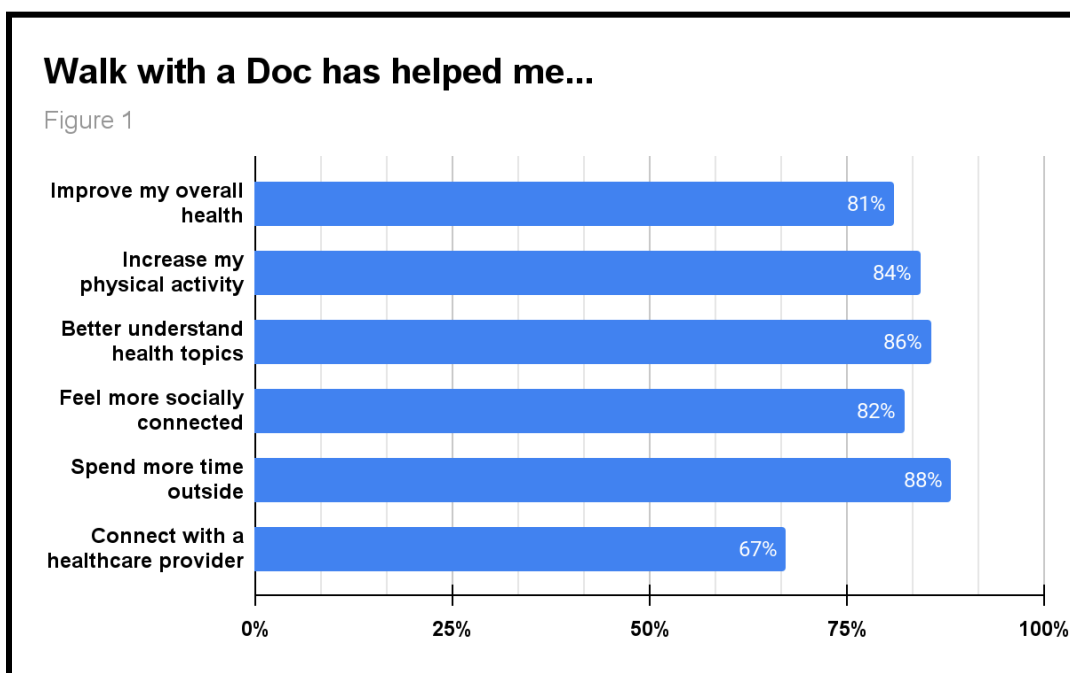
Insights from our end-of-year survey show strong satisfaction and sustained engagement throughout the year. Many participants met or exceeded the recommended weekly physical activity levels through Walk with a Doc and reported positive impacts on motivation, accountability, overall health, social connection, and confidence engaging with healthcare professionals. Beyond physical activity, participants valued physician involvement and practical health education delivered in an informal, welcoming setting.



Among the **153 survey respondents**:

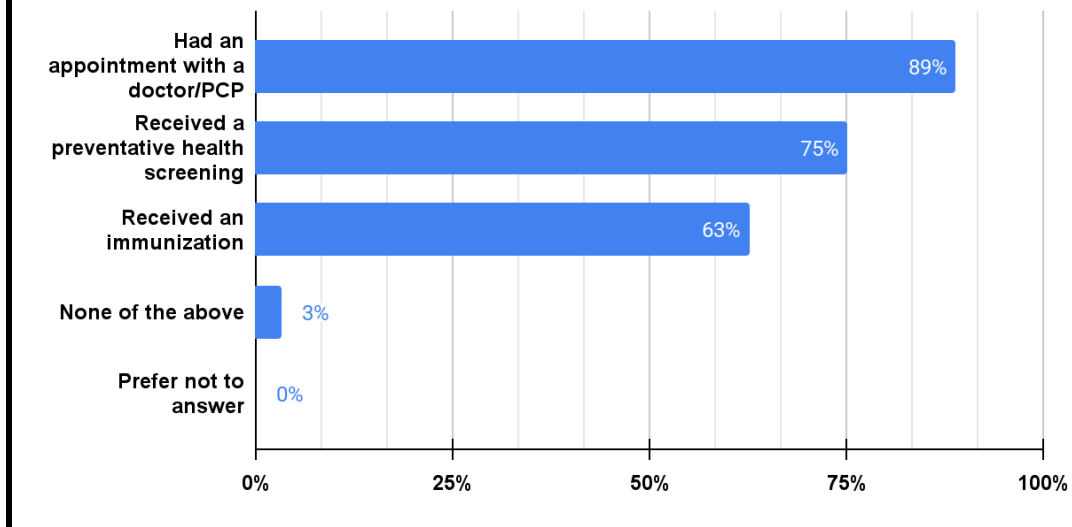
- **55%** reported achieving national physical activity guidelines of at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activity.
- **Over 80%** reported improvements in overall health, physical activity levels, understanding of health topics, social connection, and time spent outdoors (*Figure 1*).
- **67%** reported better connections with healthcare providers (*Figure 1*).
- **90%** reported taking a preventive health action (*Figure 2*).

Participant feedback highlights the program's holistic impact, with many emphasizing increased endurance, accountability, and long-term healthy routines alongside meaningful social benefits. Walks fostered friendships, reduced isolation, and created welcoming community spaces, which participants frequently identified as reasons for continued participation.



## Preventive Health Action:

Figure 2



### Sampling of answers to *“What did you enjoy most about Walk with a Walk in 2025?”*

- “The welcoming kindness and encouragement from fellow walkers”
- “Exploring all the parks as I am new to the city, and meeting new community members”
- “Getting out in a beautiful setting, making friends, and getting active!”
- “Getting out and socializing”
- “New friendships!”
- “Great doctors and camaraderie”
- “Fun meeting new people and hearing new experiences”
- “The doctor is great at sharing information!”
- “Talks by the doctors, interaction with other participants, and walking in nature!”



## Physician & Volunteer Engagement

In 2025, walks were led by 50 different volunteer healthcare providers from OhioHealth, The Ohio State University, Mount Carmel Health System, Nationwide Children's Hospital, and several private practices. Many providers are "regulars," attending multiple walks and developing relationships with community members. Participating healthcare providers represented a range of specialties and played an active role in delivering health education, answering questions, and fostering trust with community members. Their presence helped bridge the gap between clinical care and everyday health behaviors by meeting participants where they are, both literally and figuratively.

Volunteer community members also helped support program logistics and participant engagement, ensuring the walks are welcoming, organized, and accessible.

Together, physicians and volunteers helped create a consistent, supportive experience that participants identified as a key strength of the program.



## Community Partnerships

WWAD Central Ohio's impact in 2025 was strengthened through partnerships with various organizations, including the Franklin County Office On Aging, Columbus Recreation & Parks, OhioHealth, the YMCA of Central Ohio, and many other organizations and city departments. These collaborations expanded the program's reach while reinforcing its mission to promote holistic health through movement, education, and community connection.

## 2026 Goals & Priorities

Guided by participant feedback and program outcomes from 2025, we've identified the following priorities for 2026:

- Launch at least two new WWAD chapters in Central Ohio.
- Develop an incentive plan that encourages healthy activity outside of scheduled events.
- Expand marketing efforts to increase average attendance from 16 to 20 participants.
- Enhance nutrition education and food offerings at the walks.
- Identify new strategic partners and sponsors for program growth and sustainability.
- Improve program logistics, participant experience, and consistency of physician participation across sites.

## Thank You

Walk with a Doc Central Ohio extends sincere gratitude to the physicians, volunteers, partners, and participants who made the 2025 program possible. Their commitment, time, and enthusiasm continue to drive the program's success and positive impact across the community. We're excited to continue having an impact in Central Ohio in 2026!



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