

Walking as a Practice Case Study Walk with a Doc

The field of "Walking as a Practice" includes organizations that promote preventive health through a focused walking lens. Walk With a Doc identifies the national disease of sedentary lifestyles and responds with a prescription for making walking compelling. The model thrives because of their growing community of caring physicians, trip leaders and volunteers who radiate, in their words, "camaraderie and fun."



Walk With a Doc currently supports 158 walking chapters across the U.S.A. with about 50 new sites being established each year. With 2-3 volunteer walking trip leaders in each chapter and an estimated 101,000 participants in 2015, the organization is operated by just two full-time staff members. Founder, Dr. David Sabgir, MD, who has been walking the talk every Saturday morning for 10 years, is a full-time practicing cardiologist.

The program provides strong levels of direct support through an updated leader portal on their new website - including liability coverage, promotional materials, a variety of educational resources, and a lot of time and energy invested in volunteer leaders. The requirements for starting a chapter are one board-certified physician, a safe place to walk, and a facilitated talk for 3-5 minutes at the beginning of each walk.

The Denver chapter of Walk With a Doc was founded in 2010. Five Doctor Leaders and a handful of volunteer leaders organize about 60 events each year, shared among five different Denver metro area walking routes. Participation can range from 10-150 depending on the type of event. Denver chapter founder and Doctor Leader, Andrew Freeman, M.D. notes, "We've created Walk with a Doc Denver so there's an easy, welcoming, automatic way to improve your health and prevent disease. There's almost no disease out there that doesn't improve with regular exercise. If you combine that with a healthy diet and stress relief, you've got nature's most potent cure - better than any medicine I could prescribe. The thing that motivates me the most is seeing people getting well ... seeing success."

Walk with a Doc hopes to have 300 sites by the end of 2015. With rewards and incentives for renewing membership, reaching milestones of involvement, and generating various benchmarks within the chapter, Walk With a Doc is a leading voice in helping our communities directly tackle the all-consuming crisis around sedentary lifestyles.

Action Item: Join a Walk With a Doc event near you and help us bring WWAD to your area by emailing contact@walkwithadoc.org today!

- Founded: 2005
- Headquarters: Westerville, OH
- Website: www.walkwithadoc.org
- Mission: The Walk With a Doc mission is to encourage healthy physical activity in people of all ages, and reverse the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle in order to improve the health and well-being of the country.
- Walking as a Practice typology: Personal Health and Connection