

# *Every Body* WALK!

Vice Admiral Jerome M. Adams, M.D., M.P.H  
Office of the Surgeon General of the United States  
Tower Building  
Plaza Level 1, Room 100  
1101 Wootton Parkway  
Rockville MD 20852

Dear Dr. Adams,

The partners of the Every Body Walk! Collaborative would like to congratulate you on the commitment you made to your health and fitness by completing the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Annual Physical Fitness Test in December. The leadership it demonstrated to the Commissioned Corps as well as the public was inspiring and we were pleased to see walking included as a way to meet fitness goals.

The Every Body Walk! Collaborative knows well the role walking and regular physical activity can play on an individual's health. As a network of over a hundred organizations, we are collectively committed to promoting walking and walkable communities in a variety of sectors including health, transit, parks and recreation, and community development. Since 2013, we have worked to document and promote the many benefits of walking and physical activity. That is why we are writing you today to encourage you to consider the recent fitness test as a first step in promoting all the benefits that walking and rolling bring to the health and wellbeing of a community and its members.

As the US Surgeon General, you are in a unique position to advise and promote the health of the United States. For many, walking is a simple behavior that can strengthen many dimensions of health, including improving physical and mental wellbeing, preventing and mitigating the symptoms of chronic disease, and increasing engagement. As has been documented, walking can:

- *Improve the health and strength of our nation:* Despite the fact that physical activity such as walking is well-documented to have health benefits, only 50% of US adults report meeting the recommended guidelines for physical activity. Regular physical activity helps prevent risk factors for disease and protects against multiple chronic diseases. For the 117 million people living with chronic disease, walking can help lessen symptoms and prevent progression. Most everyone can walk regardless of age, ability, income, or location, and the activity can be a powerful tool used to close the equity gap in physical activity.
- *Build relationships and connections within communities:* Walking together builds connections and bridges divides. Now more than ever, communities across the US could benefit from coming together on a path to share conversation, explore each

other's neighborhoods, and build relationships. You can use your platform to encourage people to do just that to create a stronger future.

- *Improve productivity and increase business opportunities:* Walking is good for the bottom line. Not only do walkable communities see increased economic activity and vibrant downtowns, individual businesses will see higher productivity, lower health care costs, and overall improvements with employees who enjoy regular physical activity.
- *Serve transportation needs:* Walking is the original form of transportation. You can use your voice as the nation's doctor to encourage elected officials at the local, state, and national level to support policies and programs that support active transportation as a viable transportation alternative for communities.
- *Address existing disparities:* Since 2015, the Every Body Walk! Collaborative has extensively documented the fact that some of our communities are far more dangerous for walking than others across the US. A lack of investment in walking facilities leads to less physical activity and higher injury and fatality rates, worsening related disparities of income, education, and opportunity. You can bring attention to the need to address these disparities and create walkable communities for everyone.

We hope that you will consider using your influence to continue to promote these multiple benefits of walking. You have a powerful platform and the Every Body Walk! Collaborative looks forward to working with you to find new ways to use that platform to support the nation's health and prosperity. **We would like to follow up on our earlier invitation to have you join us on our call on March 20, 2018 at 12p Eastern to speak with partners and discuss ways to work together.**

Sincerely,

America Walks  
American Heart Association  
California Walks  
City University of New York School of Medicine  
GirlTrek  
Hartford HealthCare Central Region  
MyWalkingCoach.com  
National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD)  
National Recreation and Park Association  
Project for Public Spaces  
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership  
Vision Zero Network  
WalkBoston  
WalkingSpree