



## NEWS RELEASE



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### **Walk to Health Walking Program Starts April 2nd**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department's 14th annual **Walk to Health** program kicks off Sunday, April 2nd. This free program will last for 12 weeks and is open to residents of all ages in the SWNPHD nine-county service area.

"We are excited for another year of Walk to Health," states Myra Stoney, Director of Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD). "This program was created by our staff to encourage residents to become more active and sustain a higher level of activity. We have seen excellent results of weight loss and increased exercise with Walk to Health."

Through a grant provided by Community Hospital Health Foundation (CHHF), Walk to Health will have its own website for registration, tracking, recognition and encouragement. "We are very pleased to partner with Community Hospital and CHHF to make our Walk to Health program more compatible with technology," shares Stoney.

To register, go to <http://walk.fitthumb.com> and join the Walk to Health challenge. You can register as an individual or part of a team. You will be able to enter your daily exercise on the website or download directly from your fitness tech device. Weight loss can also be tracked on the site. All activities can be converted to steps online. Instructions are on the website and can also be connected through SWNPHD website: [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov).

A new level of recognition will be added to the Walk to Health program: Million Step Club. Those participants reaching one million steps within the 12 weeks will receive additional recognition from Community Hospital of McCook. Health assessments are and weekly motivational tips are included to provide education and encouragement to participants.

If you do not have internet access, you may register by calling 308-345-4223 or stop in at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department 404 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook or 503 Broadway (Moreland Building 5<sup>th</sup> Street entrance) in Imperial. You can also fax your information to 308-345-4269 or email: [info@swhealth.ne.gov](mailto:info@swhealth.ne.gov).

"After 12 weeks, participants will complete an ending evaluation," explains Stoney. "For those participants without internet access, they can mail, email, fax or bring your evaluation form and step journal to the SWNPHD office in McCook to receive a free

Walk to Health t-shirt. We want to hear about your success through walking.” To compete for weight loss prizes, you can track your progress online. For those without internet you can turn in your health check form with your step journal and completed evaluation.

The benefits of being physically active are numerous. Major benefits include preventing heart disease and stroke. Walking is one way that you can get the blood flowing and your heart pumping, making the heart stronger. Be sure to check with your family physician prior to starting any new exercise program.

You can also follow us on [Facebook.com/swnphd](https://www.facebook.com/swnphd) and [Twitter@swpublichealth](https://twitter.com/swpublichealth). Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties.

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