



Walk Across Texas! is an eight week program to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. Walk Across Texas is recognized as a Best Practice Physical Activity Program by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The Issue

- ◆ 26 percent of Texas adults are obese.
- ◆ 19 percent of Texas children are obese.
- ◆ Only 25 percent of adults and 27 percent of high school students get regular, moderate exercise.
- ◆ 29 percent of American adults are not physically active at all.

Background

- ◆ Regular physical activity is associated with a longer, healthier life.
- ◆ Regular physical activity and controlling weight can significantly reduce the incidence and impact of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and depression.
- ◆ Regular physical activity is also associated with fewer hospitalizations, physician visits, and medications.
- ◆ Chronic diseases account for 70 percent of deaths and 75 percent of U.S. health-care costs each year.
- ◆ Estimated direct costs of obesity and inactivity together account for approximately 9.4 percent of U.S. health expenditures.
- ◆ With regular physical activity, 58 percent of people with pre-diabetes were able to temporarily or permanently delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.
- ◆ Community-wide programs like Walk Across Texas! have been strongly associated with significant increases in physical activity.

Severity of the Problem

- ◆ Texas ranks 8th in the nation as the most physically inactive state.
- ◆ Texas ranks 12th as the state with the highest adult obesity rates.
- ◆ Texas ranks 6th as the state with the highest childhood overweight rates.

The Educational Program

Teams of eight people, school classes, or individuals walk 830 miles for eight weeks across a map of Texas.

- ◆ Visit <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>.
- ◆ The program begins by an Extension agent forming a community task force with members from targeted groups such as schools, worksites, churches, etc.
- ◆ Plan Kick-Off, Half-Way, and Recognition activities.
- ◆ Train site managers, captains, teachers, and other volunteer helpers.
- ◆ Register participants.
- ◆ Walk for eight weeks.
- ◆ Enter mileage.
- ◆ Provide recognition for the team walking the most miles and the team reaching the “destination” (830 miles) first.

Impact of Walk Across Texas!

This program significantly increases participant physical activity.

- ◆ 116 Texas counties participated in 2007.
- ◆ 16,551 people registered statewide in 2007.
- ◆ _____ people in our county registered and participated in teams of eight.
- ◆ _____ people in our county completed the eight week program.
- ◆ Participants’ average daily mileage in our county on week one was _____ miles; this amount increased to _____ miles for those finishing week eight.
- ◆ _____ of youth in our county participated in the school version for _____ weeks.

Success Stories

Economic Impact to the County

- ◆ If the participants completing the eight-week program continue walking at the same level as during Walk Across Texas!, they have the potential to save a collective \$ in future health care costs by avoiding type 2 diabetes and by reducing work absences.



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