

TOPIC: Health Care Costs

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SAMPLE HEADLINE: A Healthier Me. A Healthier America.

Did you know that our nation spends \$600 billion annually on health care costs related to chronic illnesses including heart disease, colon cancer, type 2 diabetes, and conditions associated with obesity such as arthritis and stroke?¹

Routine moderate physical exercise helps stave off many of these chronic diseases and other conditions. Problem is, more than half of all adults do not engage in a basic amount of physical activity. As a nation, if adults over age 15 increased their daily activity, we could save as much as \$76.6 billion each year.²

Now, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas is providing our members with an easy way to walk to better health and at the same time control health care costs. And, with America spending more on health...every step counts.

WalkingWorks, the Blue Program for a Healthier America, is an initiative of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA), in partnership with the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

Why walking? Because while any amount of increased activity may improve health, brisk-paced walking is a great way for everyone to stay active, including those of us who are reluctant or unable to engage in more intense exercise. In fact, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports recommends at least 10,000 steps a day will produce the best long-term benefits for most people. It's safe, simple and cost-free. Best of all, walking doesn't take a lot of practice!

Take the *WalkingWorks Pledge!* Your doctor will help you develop and stick with a personal walking plan, that's based on your age, weight, overall health, and personal goals.

A regular walking program can help control weight, condition the heart and lungs, strengthen bones and help control the cost of health care. You can achieve this by making simple choices like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, walking to the store instead of driving, parking at the back of the parking lot instead of the front.

For more information on how you can participate in *WalkingWorks*, contact your workplace benefits manager or visit: www.bcbstx.com.

STEP-BY-STEP FACTS

- Overweight individuals spend 77 percent more on medications. Only aging has a greater affect.³
- When done briskly on a regular basis, walking can have many positive health impacts, including, helping to control weight, improving muscle tone and promoting an overall sense of wellness.
- Walking burns approximately the same amount of calories per mile as does running. For example, brisk walking one mile in 15 minutes burns about the same number of calories as jogging an equal distance in 8½ minutes.⁴

^{1,2}U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General," 1996

³Rand Health, "The Effects of Obesity, Smoking and Problem Drinking on Chronic Medical Problems and Health Care Costs," R. Strum, February 2002

⁴President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports