

TOPIC: Walking

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SAMPLE HEADLINE: Simple Steps to a Healthier America.

As millions of Americans search for ways to keep their families healthy, [EMPLOYER NAME] is hoping to show employees that what they're looking for is something they're already doing: walking.

Beginning this month, we'll begin recruiting staff to be a part of *WalkingWorks*, the Blue Program for a Healthier America. *WalkingWorks* is an initiative of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA). The goal of the campaign is to get the word out on the positive impact regular physical activity can have on health and health care costs.

Research shows that routine exercise can be an effective way to help prevent such chronic conditions as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, arthritis, and osteoporosis. Nationally, \$600 billion is spent on health care costs related to these conditions each year. Experts agree that increased activity is critical in the fight to help keep health care affordable for everyone. In fact, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that the country could save as much as \$76.6 billion if Americans over age 15 increased their regular moderate physical activity.¹

Why walking? Because while any amount of increased activity is healthy, 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 U.S. Surgeon General recommends that 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. Learn more about *WalkingWorks* and the connection between regular physical activity and healthcare costs at: www.bcbstx.com.

Your commitment to a "healthier you" can also mean a healthier America. That's why, as a *WalkingWorks* participant, you and your family are eligible to take the President's Challenge and receive a Presidential Active Lifestyle Award. This award is sponsored by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports to recognize Americans of all ages for committing to a program of regular physical activity, like *WalkingWorks*. Adults and children can achieve the award together – it's a great way for families to work together – everyone benefits! Log on to www.presidentschallenge.org to find out more about America's way to recognize your commitment and achievement.

And, as if improved long-term health wasn't enough incentive, participants who [commit to *WalkingWorks*/meet their personal goals] will receive [INCENTIVE].

For more information on how you can participate in *WalkingWorks*, contact [COMPANY COORDINATOR] at extension XXXX.

STEP-BY-STEP FACTS

- Physical inactivity can lead to chronic diseases and conditions like heart disease, stroke, colon cancer, diabetes, obesity, arthritis and osteoporosis
- According to the US Department of Health, more than 60 percent of adults in the United States do not engage in the recommended amount of physical activity, and approximately 25 percent of American adults are not active at all.²
- 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.³

¹U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Physical Activity Fundamental to Preventing Disease," 2002

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

³President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports