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'Walk with a Doc' Program Launches in Missoula

MISSOULA – Community members are invited to trek a 2-mile expanse of the Milwaukee Trail, as part of Community Cancer Care and Prevention Center's Missoula Walk with a Doc program. The program launches at noon Tuesday, Feb. 14, and will continue every Tuesday through May.

"Doc," in this case, stands for doctor. Each week, a different local doctor will provide a 15-minute presentation on a current health topic and will participate in the walk addressing any questions posed by walkers.

Walk with a Doc is a national program started in 2005 by Dr. David Sabgir, a cardiologist in Columbus, Ohio. Frustrated with his inability to affect behavior change in the clinical setting, Sabgir invited his patients to go for a walk with him in a local park on a spring Saturday morning. To his surprise, over 100 people showed up, energized and ready to move. Walk with a Doc has grown as a grassroots effort with a model based on sustainability and simplicity.

According to Susan Rick, director of the Cancer Care and Prevention Center, currently several cancers are associated with obesity. In a landmark 2003 study, American Cancer Society researchers analyzed data on obesity and cancer from a group of 900,000 American adults they had monitored for 16 years. The researchers found that the most obese women had a 62 percent increase in their risk of dying from cancer than women of normal weight; for obese men, the increase was 52 percent. The wide range of tumor types included colorectal, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, esophageal, kidney, prostate, breast, uterine, endometrial and ovarian cancers. The researchers concluded that above-normal weight was associated with almost 20 percent of all cancer deaths in the United States. People should understand that they can

decrease the risk for developing cancer and improving overall survivorship, by keeping their weight below obesity thresholds. According to the National Cancer Institute, as many as 84,000 cancer diagnoses each year are linked to obesity.

The 2017 Missoula Walk with a Doc program is a collaborative effort of Community Cancer Care and Prevention Center; the Western Montana Area Health Education Center at the University of Montana; Missoula Parks and Recreation; and the Missoula City-County Health Dept. Let's Move! Missoula.

"Physical activity is one of the best preventative medicines," said Ryan Yearous, recreation specialist with Missoula Parks and Recreation. "Walking with moderate to vigorous intensity 30 minutes or more per day can lead to a wealth of health benefits. Walk with a Doc is the perfect way to get outside, be active and explore your local parks and trails, while connecting with a community of like-minded individuals."

Interested participants are encouraged to meet north of Third Street, at the Milwaukee Trail, on Catlin. For a map and more information, visit <http://walkwithadoc.org/our-locations/missoula-montana/>, or call UM Walk with a Doc program intern Jamie Hewitt, at 267-374-0727.

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