

# Adults Need More Physical Activity

## Communities can help

Fact sheet to support the article: **Physical Inactivity Among Adults 50 Years and Older — United States, 2014. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2016; Vol 65, No 36.**

Regular physical activity is vital for healthy aging. It can help delay, prevent, or manage many costly chronic diseases faced by adults 50 years or older. Physical activity can also reduce the risk of premature death. Despite these benefits, 31 million adults age 50 or older are inactive. Adults who cannot meet *Physical Activity Guidelines* (i.e., 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week) should be as active as their abilities or conditions allow.

Getting any amount of physical activity still offers some health benefits. Some is better than none. Helping inactive people become more active is an important step towards better health. Communities that offer design enhancements and healthy lifestyle programs can create a culture that supports physical activity.

State and local officials can:

- Design communities that make it safe and easy for people of all ages and abilities to be active.
- Open and promote places in communities for adults age 50 or older to be active such as schools, parks or malls.
- Provide evidence-based community programs that help adults, including those with chronic conditions, start and continue to be physically active.
- Work with health professionals to link their adult patients to community resources for physical activity.



**\$860 billion**  
Amount spent by non-institutionalized\* adults 50 years or older on health care



**4 in 5**  
Number of most costly conditions among adults 50+ that can be prevented or managed with physical activity



**28%**  
Percent of adults 50 years or older who are inactive\*\*

\* Civilian non-institutionalized adults do not live in institutions such as correctional facilities, long-term care hospitals, or nursing homes and who are not on active duty in the Armed Forces.

\*\* Inactivity means not getting any physical activity beyond basic movement from daily life activities.





# THE 3 D's: DESIGN. DEVELOP. DELIVER.

## A Prescription for Physically Active Communities

People need safe, convenient places to be physically active.



1

### **DESIGN** communities and streets that make being physically active safe and easy for people of all ages and abilities.

Examples include: Improved street lighting; continuity and connectivity of sidewalks and streets; projects to increase safety; consideration of proximity of residential areas to stores, jobs, schools, or similar locations.



### **DEVELOP** or enhance access to places for physical activity.

Examples include: Create walking trails; provide access to new or existing nearby facilities.

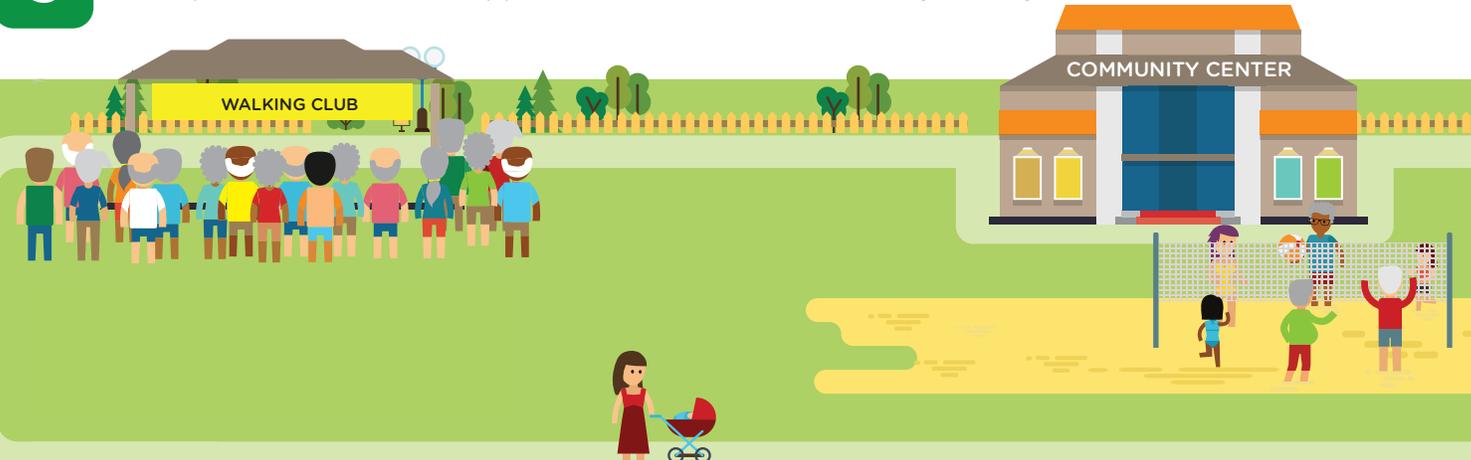
2



3

### **DELIVER** community programs that help adults be physically active.

Examples include: Social support interventions in community settings; health education classes.



## What Can Be Done?

### The Federal government is

- Providing key stakeholders with training and technical assistance to implement Step it Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities.
- Partnering with transportation organizations to develop and adopt environmental and policy supports for active transportation.
- Working with partners to develop a best-practices community planning model.
- Gathering and disseminating physical activity, walking and walkability data to help build the case for active communities.

### State and local officials can

- Design communities that make it safe and easy for people of all ages and abilities to be active.
- Open and promote places in communities for adults age 50 or older to be active such as schools, parks or malls.
- Provide evidence-based community programs that help adults, including those with chronic conditions, start and continue to be active.
- Work with health professionals to link their adult patients to community programs and resources for physical activity.

### Transportation engineers and community planning professionals can

- Locate schools, worksites, businesses, parks, recreational facilities, and other destinations within walkable distance of each other.
- Adopt community planning, land use, development, and zoning policies and plans that support physical activity for people of all ages and abilities.
- Support safe, efficient, and pedestrian-friendly public transit systems and transit-oriented development.
- Create and improve walking trails and parks.

### Community organizations can

- Provide safe and convenient access to community locations that support physical activity for all users, such as parks, malls, and senior centers.
- Offer physical activity programs that help people to be as active as their abilities or conditions allow.
- Set up walking groups, buddy systems, and other forms of social support for physical activity.
- Promote the availability of safe, convenient, and well-designed community locations and programs that promote physical activity.

### Everyone can

- Be physically active with friends, family, and work colleagues on a regular basis.
- Make walking to the store, the office, or the bus part of your daily routine.
- Try a recreational program designed for your age group or mobility level.
- Participate in local planning efforts that support safe and convenient places to be active.



Keeping Americans Healthy at Every Stage of Life

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