Several DCMS physicians are helping improve community health by leading “Walk With a Doc” chapters in Dallas County. The program is part of a national grassroots movement — begun by a physician — devoted to encouraging healthy physical activity. The physicians are joined by their patients, friends, colleagues, and other community members.

Since 2013 when the first WWAD took off in Texas, sponsored by the TMA, the program has encouraged healthy physical activity and fostered relationships. WWAD Texas strengthens bonds between patients and physicians, within families, and in the greater community.

“Friendships among walkers develop quickly,” says Rachael Habash, chief operating officer of Walk With a Doc. “The rapport-building is pretty incredible.”

DCMS physicians lead six active WWAD chapters, plus one Walk and Roll chapter, sponsored by the Baylor Institute of Rehabilitation. In the Kessler Park area, Sarah Helfand, MD, has been leading walks for years; Cynthia Ball, DO, led her first walk in June. Both are enthusiastic about the program and the good it does for participants.

Dr. Ball specializes in occupational medicine and is a cochair of the Deep Ellum Urban Garden. She sees the walking program as complementary to her work with the garden. She promotes the program at the neighborhood activity center. “Most walkers just happen to be in the (Exall) park when we start,” she says. “Others learn about it through word of mouth.”

Chapters are required to host at least 12 walks each year. At each of the 300 chapters across the globe, the walk begins after a physician gives a five-minute talk about a health issue. Members walk two to three miles at their own pace, completing the route in 45 minutes or so. WWAD enthusiasts in Texas have walked more than 10,000 miles since the program began. That’s two round trips from New York to LA, plus a few hundred miles into the Pacific Ocean. Texas averages 40 walk sites each year, and, with many chapters walking weekly, the total number of miles could be much higher.

WWAD also builds community within the local medical family. The DCMS Alliance Foundation walking group is led by Robert Gunby, MD, a DCMS and TMA past president who is in the midst of his tenure as DCMS Alliance president. He became involved in the program to encourage people to have a healthy lifestyle.

“Walking is more fun with a group of your friends and colleagues,” he says. “And having a group waiting for you makes you more likely to go when you don’t want to."
Dr. Gunby doesn’t limit his recruiting efforts to his patients. “I tell neighbors, friends, patients, everybody, always.”

Maxine Theriot, MD (center), organizes a monthly walk at White Rock Lake.
Join one of these walks, or start your own!

**FREQUENCY** | **LEADER** | **SITE** | **TIME**
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Saturdays | Sarah Helfand, MD | Meet at corner of Oak Knoll & Kessler Pkwy, Dallas | 7:30 a.m.
1st Saturday | Robert Gunby, MD | White Rock Lake or Katy Trail | 9:30 a.m.
2 Saturdays/month | Cynthia Ball, DO | Exall Park, 1355 Adair St., Dallas | 7:30 a.m.
2 Saturdays/month | Namrata Babaria, MD | Farmer’s Branch area | 8:30 a.m.
1st Tuesday | Rita Hamilton, DO/Baylor Institute of Rehabilitation | Baylor Tom Landry Fitness Ctr | 1–2 p.m.
3rd Wednesday | Lydia R. Best, MD/Baylor Scott & White Health | Juanita J. Craft Rec Ctr. 4500 Spring Ave., Dallas | 9 a.m.
4th Saturday | Maxine Theriot, MD | White Rock Lake Spillway @ corner of Garland Road and Winstead | 9 a.m.

DCMS Alliance members and their families at a spring “Walk With a Doc” walk include Henry and Gregory Nettune, MD; Anne Frances and Rachal Nettune; Elizabeth Benson and son; Barbara Bradfield; Sheri and Mark Miller, MD; Gianna Nettune; Cynthia Spigel; and Dan Benson, MD, and daughter.

Sarah Helfand, MD (bottom right), is a long-time leader of the Walk With a Doc program in Dallas’ Kessler Park.

**Walk With a Doc Texas** is funded by a grant from TMAF with generous support from the TMA Insurance Trust, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas, and Prudential. WWAD is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to encourage healthy physical activity in people of all ages, and reverse the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle to improve the health and well-being of the country. David Sabgir, MD, a board-certified cardiologist in Columbus, Ohio, started WWAD in 2005.