

Expression of Interest

Heart Foundation Walking Groups in General Practice

Heart Foundation Walking is Australia's largest free walking network. As part of the Western Sydney Diabetes Initiative, the Western Sydney Primary Health Network (WSPHN) is seeking expressions of interest from general practices to establish Walking Groups. This initiative is part of WSPHN's commitment to addressing chronic disease prevention and management.

Being active on a regular basis is an important part of a healthy lifestyle, helping individuals manage their weight, blood pressure and cholesterol. Walking is a fantastic way to lower blood glucose levels and mitigate the risks of both diabetes and heart disease. It also helps to reduce stress levels and make people feel stronger, more energetic and happier, improving their overall quality and enjoyment of life. By walking in a group people feel safer while exercising and are more likely to exercise as they are accountable to other walkers and enjoy the social contact. By establishing Heart Foundation Walking Groups in General Practice, health professionals can directly empower patients to increase physical activity within a supportive and safe environment, regardless of age and fitness level.

The Role of the Practice

The general practice will appoint a staff member into the role of Walk Organiser who will be responsible for establishing the program, determining the route, time and meeting point and leading the walk. They will also assist with registration, record attendance and support, encourage and motivate the group. General practitioners and practice staff will identify eligible patients to attend the program, providing them with information about the benefits of joining the Walking Group, program details and enrolment information. Once the group is well established, the role of the Walk Organiser can be reappointed to a member of the Walking Group. The practice is encouraged to continue to refer patients and support the new Walk Organiser where necessary. All Walk Organisers are covered by the Heart Foundation's volunteer insurance policy following online training and registration.

The Role of the WSPHN

A staff member from the WSPHN will act as the Local Coordinator to support Walk Organisers. The Local Coordinator can assist practices with registering Walk Organisers online, identifying eligible patients using the PenCat Tool, providing information and support for walkers and Walk Organisers in the local area.

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If you would like to find out more about running a Heart Foundation Walking Group in your practice, please contact the WentWest Helpdesk and speak with the Walking Group Local Coordinator on (02) 8811 7117 or support@wentwest.com.au.

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Heart Foundation Walking Groups in General Practice

Name			
Practice name			
Role in practice			
Email address			
Telephone			
Signature		Date	

Please return your expression of interest form to the Local Coordinator on the WentWest Helpdesk at support@wentwest.com.au.