

## **GET UP AND GET MOVING! WITH *PRESCRIPTION TRAILS***

*Encouraging physical activity with health care provider “prescriptions” and trail guides*

### **Public Health Problem**

- Rates of obesity and related chronic diseases such as diabetes are high in New Mexico.
- Physical activity helps people stay at a healthy weight or lose weight slowly, if needed. It also helps people with diabetes keep their blood sugar in a normal range.
- People comply more readily with a physical activity recommendation if it comes from their health care provider; mapping trail and walking routes is also likely to increase their use.

### **Program**

- A group of partners developed the Albuquerque Prescription Trails Pilot Program which provides a prescription tool on walking and wheelchair rolling for health care practitioners to give to patients along with a guide to suggested routes in the local community. Partners include the Albuquerque Alliance for Active Living, New Mexico Health Care Takes On Diabetes, New Mexico Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, City of Albuquerque, National Park Service, PRISM Evaluation, and a number of health plans.
- The program is partially funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as substantial in-kind support from the partners. Information about existing trails can be found at: <http://www.cabq.gov/parks/prescription-trails>
- Several Albuquerque clinics piloted the program. An evaluation of the providers in the pilot showed they needed more information on risk factors and physical activity guidelines and motivational techniques to use with patients. Patients wanted more trails to easily access, bad weather activity options, safety information and a Spanish language version of the trail guide.

### **Impact**

- Providers are now able to give specific recommendations about the benefits of walking and can guide patients to available walking routes, making it more likely that ‘prescriptions’ will be followed.
- The partners are seeking funding to expand the program to the City of Santa Fe, continue the program in the Albuquerque area, do a comprehensive evaluation of both the provider and patient outcomes and revise Prescription Trails based on pilot evaluation results.
- As one provider describes the benefit, “I can give you medicine that will treat one condition and cost money or I can give you a prescription for physical activity that will help prevent a whole range of diseases, is free, and will last a lifetime.”

### **Contact**

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