

Governor Quinn Launches New Year's Challenge: "Walk Across Illinois"

Written by Nafia Khan

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Encourages Illinoisans to Walk 167 Miles in One Year for Better Health

CHICAGO – January 6, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn today announced the "Walk Across Illinois Challenge," an initiative to help improve the health and wellness of Illinois residents. The Governor walked 167 miles across Illinois 10 years ago to advocate on behalf of decent healthcare for all people. Today the Governor called on state residents to walk 167 miles during 2012 to improve their own health.

"As the New Year gets underway, many Illinois residents are already making the commitment to get fit and live healthier," Governor Quinn said. "Together, we can make 2012 a year of fitness by accepting the challenge to add a half-mile of walking to each day."

Former Chicago Bears and Chicago Bulls players, schoolteachers and students joined Governor Quinn to launch the program, which is designed to help Illinois residents get healthier by adding a half-mile of walking to their daily routines, which is roughly the distance across Illinois from Rock Island on the Mississippi River to Chicago on Lake Michigan. Residents can accept the "Walk Across Illinois Challenge" by visiting www.WalkAcrossIllinois.org, where they can register and log their miles.

As part of his broader effort to improve the well-being of residents, Governor Quinn also announced the creation of the Governor's Council on Health and Fitness to develop practical ideas to help residents embrace healthier lifestyles. Sandy Noel, a Golden Apple award-winning teacher and physical fitness instructor, will co-chair the Governor's Council with former Chicago

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Bear and Super Bowl champion Otis Wilson.

"Adding a little exercise to your daily agenda can make a big difference in your quality of life," Otis Wilson said. "I'm proud to stand with the Governor in encouraging Illinois residents to live healthier in 2012."

Governor Quinn initially launched "Walk Across Illinois" 10 years ago to bring attention to the need for access to decent healthcare. The Governor has converted it into a fitness challenge for 2012 to bolster efforts to improve the health of Illinois residents. Participants who complete the challenge within the year will receive a certificate from the Governor honoring their achievement.

Obesity, high blood pressure and a lack of exercise are growing community health problems across the nation. Illinois came in as the 23rd most obese state in the country, according to a recent report from the Trust for America's Health (TFAH) and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). By encouraging Illinois residents to include just one half-mile of walking into their daily routines, the "Walk Across Illinois Challenge" can help boost the health, life expectancy and well-being of all Illinois residents, no matter whether they run, walk or use a wheelchair.

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