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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Orange County Health Department Staff Walks the Walk for Health by Embarking on Symbolic Cross Country Walking Challenge**

**Orange County, NC (March 20, 2015)** – Staff members from the Orange County Health Department in North Carolina are putting their feet where their mouth is. As a way to improve employee health, spread the message about the importance of physical activity, and promote [National Public Health Week](#) (which is April 6-12), staff members have begun tracking their steps every day using a variety of health monitors from Fitbits to pedometers. Their goal is to reach six million steps in eight weeks. These six million collective steps are enough to have had them walk the approximately 3,000 miles it takes to reach California.

The health department created a [graphic representation](#) of their journey to help track their progress and connect with a variety of communities along the way. Each week, the team calculates their individual steps, adds them together, and identifies how many miles they have achieved. As the health department staff travels across the country they will highlight health departments along the way. The interactive map will link to health highlights from those locations on their journey and the local health departments will be tagged to encourage interaction on social media.

“We are very excited to embark on this health journey as a staff. It is a great way for us to practice what we preach every day and raise awareness of public health,” stated Dr. Colleen Bridger, Orange County Health Director.

The target destination is Orange County, California. The interactive map will be displayed on the health department’s [website](#) as well as in weekly updates on their [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

**Health Benefits of Walking**

The American Heart Association lists the following as benefits of walking and/or moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes a day:

- Reducing the risk of coronary heart disease
- Improving blood pressure and blood sugar levels
- Improving blood lipid profile

- Maintaining body weight and lowering the risk of obesity
- Enhancing mental well being
- Reducing the risk of osteoporosis
- Reducing the risk of breast and colon cancer
- Reducing the risk of non-insulin dependent (type 2) diabetes

Source: [http://www.startwalkingnow.org/whystart\\_benefits\\_walking.jsp](http://www.startwalkingnow.org/whystart_benefits_walking.jsp)

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