

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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The Arthritis Foundation partners with DHEC to offer their Walk with Ease Program

COLUMBIA, SC- Who needs a gym when you can be a part of the Walk With Ease Program? Take control of your health and make a change today! The Arthritis Foundation announced a partnership with DHEC and other worksites to offer its Walk With Ease program to help workers become more active. “Arthritis is not just an older person’s disease,” said Nick Turkas, Senior Vice-President of Community Development. Two-thirds of adults with arthritis are under age 65, and 45% of adults with arthritis have work limitations.”

Physical activity interventions, such as Walk With Ease, can help people maintain a healthy weight and prevent or manage arthritis and other chronic diseases, including obesity,” said Cora Plass, DHEC’s director of healthy aging and arthritis program manager. Walk With Ease is low-cost and easy to implement because it doesn’t require any special equipment and can be done anywhere. It is proven to help participants become and stay physically active.

“Walk With Ease is a safe and effective program that can benefit anyone who wants to become more physically active,” said Turkas. Participants walk three times each week for six weeks or 18 sessions. By the end the six weeks, they have gained confidence to keep walking. The program includes a guidebook with information and tools to help walkers customize a plan for setting and reaching their goals. Studies show that the program reduces pain, increases balance and strength, and improve overall health.

During the program kick off, more than 200 DHEC staffers signed up for Walk With Ease. The Arthritis Foundation and DHEC’s Arthritis Program are working together to develop partnerships with other worksite wellness programs, community partners, and faith-based organizations to get people moving. “The goal is to spread this and other evidence-based healthy living programs across the state to help people manage their weight, exercise safely, and improve their health and quality of life. We provide support and resources to help partners implement and sustain the programs through their organizations,” said Plass.

A variety of programs are being offered throughout South Carolina that can be easily adapted to community, health care, or workplace settings. For more information, call 1-866-899-3663 or visit the Arthritis Foundation website at www.arthritis.org/south-carolina or DHEC's arthritis website at <http://www.scdhec.gov/arthritis>.

Arthritis is unacceptable. It is a life changing disease and the most common cause of disability. The prevalence of arthritis or chronic joint symptoms is surging and affects approximately 52.5 million US adults. In the Mid Atlantic Region, 5.7 million adults are affected by doctor diagnosed arthritis and 4,000 children. In SC, nearly a million adults are affected.

About the Arthritis Foundation

The Arthritis Foundation is the leading health organization addressing the needs of some 52.5 million adults living with Arthritis, the nation's most common cause of disability. Founded in 1948, with headquarters in Atlanta, the Arthritis Foundation has many service points, including those located in the Mid Atlantic Region: Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

The Arthritis Foundation is the largest private, not-for-profit contributor to arthritis research in the world, funding more than \$400 million in research grants since 1948. The foundation helps individuals take control of arthritis by providing public health education; pursuing public policy and legislation; and conducting evidence-based programs to improve the quality of life for those living with arthritis.

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