

At 70, California Naturopathic Doctor Begins Final 760 Miles of 5-Year Walk Across America to Make Health Equity Visible

Walk USA for Health Equity launches Aug 24 in Bozeman and culminates Sept 24 at Seattle's Pier 62 for a historic public gathering for health equity.

BOZEMAN, MT, UNITED STATES, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Three days after celebrating his 70th birthday, California-licensed Naturopathic Doctor Dennis Godby, ND, MA, will begin the final 760-mile leg of a five-year, 3,450-mile walk across America to make health equity visible.



At 8:00 a.m. on Monday, August 24, Godby and retired firefighter Rich Saalsaa will depart from Bozeman City Hall, beginning the final chapter of Walk USA for Health Equity, a growing grassroots movement dedicated to inspiring a future in which people live, the color of their skin, or the size of their paycheck no longer determines their opportunity to live a healthy life.

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No child should live a shorter life simply because of the neighborhood they were born into.”

Dr. Dennis Godby, Founder of Walk USA for Health Equity

The public kickoff will include a press conference at the front of Bozeman City Hall, bringing together healthcare professionals, community leaders, faith leaders, students, supporters, and members of the media to launch the final leg of the journey and reaffirm a shared commitment to making health equity visible.

The month-long walk will travel through Montana, Idaho, and Washington, inviting healthcare professionals, students, faith communities, civic leaders, patients, and residents to participate before culminating in Seattle on September 24.

The journey comes at a time when Americans continue to experience profound differences in

health and life expectancy based on race, income, neighborhood, environmental conditions, and access to healthcare. Across the United States, life expectancy can differ by more than a decade between neighborhoods only a few miles apart, illustrating how profoundly ZIP code can influence health.

Rather than simply speaking about health inequities from conference podiums or classrooms, Godby has spent the past five years walking through communities affected by them, meeting people where they live, listening to their stories, and inviting them to become part of the solution.

"The issues of health equity are literally matters of life and death," Godby said. "Walking from town to town has shown me something statistics alone never could: behind every number is a family, a neighborhood, and a human story. Real change begins when we stop seeing health inequity as someone else's problem and recognize that healthier communities benefit every one of us."

Since launching in September 2022, Walk USA for Health Equity has covered more than 2,700 miles, generating thousands of conversations with healthcare professionals, civic leaders, faith communities, students, patients, and residents about the social, economic, and environmental conditions that shape health.

The movement has drawn support from healthcare leaders across the country, including internationally recognized Seattle travel author, broadcaster, and public television personality Rick Steves, who recorded a public video endorsement of the walk.

"I am so inspired by Dennis Godby's Walk USA for Health Equity. Good health should not depend on your ZIP code or your income. This walk is a powerful call to action for all of us to stand up for health justice and community care." — Rick Steves, Travel Author and Broadcaster

Godby recently served as the closing keynote speaker for the 2026 American Association of Naturopathic Physicians Annual Convention, where he challenged healthcare professionals to move beyond clinic walls and become visible advocates for healthier communities.

"For five years, I've been walking across America because I believe where you live, the color of your skin, or the size of your paycheck should never determine whether you have the opportunity to live a healthy life. History has always been changed when ordinary people decide to walk together. This has never been about one person walking across America, it has always been about inviting others to take the next step. Health equity will never be achieved by one profession, one organization, or one individual. It will happen only when we choose to walk together." — Dennis Godby, ND, MA

Licensed clinical psychologist Shacunda Rodgers, Ph.D., described Godby as an advocate who has transformed his convictions into action.

"Dennis Godby is more than a thought leader; he is a doer. By walking across America, he is transforming his commitment to health equity into action and challenging all of us to reconsider who has the opportunity to live a healthy life. His compassion, perseverance, and care for humanity are deeply inspiring." — Shacunda Rodgers, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist

The final route will pass through Helena, Missoula, Coeur d'Alene, Spokane, Moses Lake, and Ellensburg before culminating in Seattle on September 24.

Organizers hope the Seattle finale at Pier 62 will become one of the nation's largest public gatherings dedicated to health equity, bringing together hundreds of healthcare professionals wearing white coats alongside community leaders, students, faith organizations, elected officials, patients, and residents in a visible demonstration that every person deserves a fair opportunity to live a healthy life.

More than the finish of a five-year walk, organizers hope the Seattle gathering will mark the beginning of a lasting national movement that continues making health equity visible in communities across America.

Residents, healthcare professionals, elected officials, community leaders, faith leaders, students, and members of the media are invited to attend the public kickoff and press conference at Bozeman City Hall on Monday, August 24, at 8:00 a.m. The public is also encouraged to join portions of the walk as it travels across Montana, Idaho, and Washington or to participate in the Seattle finale on September 24.

ABOUT WALK USA FOR HEALTH EQUITY

Founded in 2022, Walk USA for Health Equity is a grassroots movement dedicated to making health equity visible through public education, community engagement, and long-distance walks across America.

Its mission is to inspire a future in which ZIP codes, race, income, and other social and economic conditions no longer determine who has the opportunity to live a healthy life. By bringing together healthcare professionals, educators, faith communities, civic leaders, students, and everyday citizens, the movement seeks to transform awareness into lasting action.

As the walk reaches Seattle, organizers emphasize that the finish line is not the end of the journey, it is the beginning of a larger movement dedicated to making health equity visible and ensuring every American has a fair opportunity to live a healthy life. They hope the Seattle gathering will inspire communities across the nation to continue advancing health equity long after the final mile has been walked.

"Walking was never the goal. Making health equity visible, and inspiring people to act, has always

been the destination." — Dennis Godby, ND, MA

For more information, to walk, volunteer, donate, or follow the journey, visit www.WalkUSAforHealthEquity.org.

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