

# **Know Your Numbers and Walking As A Physical Activity**

**Abstract:** For many Americans, chronic illnesses may be predicted by how a person lives his or her life. For example, the literature is replete with examples of how one's health condition, such as being overweight or obese, can lead to serious chronic health issues such as hypertension, depression and anxiety, diabetes, or some cancers. In many cases, older adults do not recognize the importance of taking charge of their health or the consequences of ignoring it. Our research indicates that presenting the information in simple terms through interactive formats makes the learning easy and increases the likelihood they will start and continue physical activity programs.

**Presentation Description:** Before older adults can take action to improve their health status, they must possess awareness and knowledge about four areas which indicate the quality of their overall health. Originally conceived by Retta Ward, former NM Secretary of Aging and Long Term Services Department, the Know Your Numbers program provides older adults with the basics of the “what” and the “why” for blood pressure, blood glucose, body mass index and waist circumference and why knowing them is so important to a person's health. The presentation delves into the “how” to improve the numbers by introducing a walking program as a low cost and effective manner to positively impact health and compress morbidity in older adults.

## **Learning Objectives:**

1. Attendees will explain the two New Mexico programs that encourage older adult participation through improvements in awareness and knowledge.
2. Attendees will define the numerous benefits of walking and why the Walking As A Physical Activity program is an ideal vehicle for use with older adults.
3. Attendees will defend why improving health status numbers is a continuous journey.