



The Health for All Challenge



Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) is planning to stage the first edition in New York of its Walk the Talk: The Health for All Challenge event on Sunday 22 September 2019.

WHO has received approval from the New York City Mayor's Office to stage this unique health promotion and partnership event in Central Park (102nd East transverse – see map), the day before the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High-level Meeting on universal health coverage, which is being held on 23 September 2019.

The WHO Walk the Talk: The Health for All Challenge was first held in Geneva in 2018, and repeated in 2019. More than 10 other editions of the event have been held around the world, from Dakar to Khartoum, Astana to Baghdad and Trinidad and Tobago.

The event brings together partners and the public to promote healthy lifestyles and highlight the need for access to health for all people around the world. www.who.int/walk-the-talk-2019-Geneva The events held to date have, combined, attracted tens of thousands of participants, including heads of state, world champion athletes, Nobel prize winners, government delegations, health organizations and the general public.

In 2019, WHO is using the Geneva and New York editions of the event to send a powerful call on the importance of promoting “health for all” and provide a positive and healthy kick-off to the UNGA meeting on UHC and UNGA High-level week more broadly. It will provide a call to action to strengthen capacities and systems in all countries to deliver the wide range of health services needed to ensure all people receive the health care and protection needed.

It will also serve to promote the importance of, and interlinkages between, multiple related areas, including physical activity, mental health, healthy cities and climate change.

New York event features

The 22 September walk/run in Central Park, NY, is being held on the eve of the high-level segment of the UNGA. It would be open to UNGA delegates, UN staff, country missions, members of the international health and development community, civil society and all New Yorkers.

The approx. 4 mile (6.5 km) event will be a non-competitive and free-of-charge walk/jog held in Central Park. It will be open to people of all ages and abilities and could attract several thousand participants.

The atmosphere will be celebratory, energetic and collaborative. It will involve a series of activities and interactive events at a number of points along the route to promote key health and development themes and the contributions of partners. The start-end point and podium will offer prominent identities and advocates of health and development the chance to address participants in person, while warm-up activities, music and displays on the importance of health would energize the crowd.

Progress to date

Preparations:

WHO staff in New York and Geneva are collaborating with the New York City Mayor's office on preparations for the event. A Mayor's office agent has been appointed to assist WHO in the range of logistical issues needing to be addressed.

WHO is also engaging a leading NY-based running event company to organize the event.

Supporters:

In addition to the City of New York, other high-level supporters include the President of the General Assembly, the United Nations system and the First Lady of New York City.

A range of potential co-sponsors have been identified, including governmental authorities, Member States and Permanent Missions to the UN in New York and UN agencies, philanthropies and private sector groups. By reaching out to a wide range of stakeholders, the event would highlight the importance of collaboration and multisectoral action on advancing "health for all" and implementation of the WHO-led SDG3 Action Plan.

Moving forward:

Resources:

WHO is presently seeking partners to support the staging of the event through financial and in-kind resources.

WHO will recognize all financial and in-kind contributions by partners via event signage, onsite booth opportunities and digital communications platforms (website, social media, newsletter, etc).

Preparations:

Preparatory activities to date have been carried out by WHO in New York and Geneva, including event application, planning with NYC stakeholders and scoping out event and partner needs. An event organizing firm and additional support is scheduled to be in place by early July 2019, responsible for event preparation and staging, providing volunteers, promotion, registration, programming and identifying high-level participants and speakers.

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