A Scalable Park Prescription Model

Our MISSION is to ease the burden of chronic disease, increase health and happiness, and foster environmental stewardship by encouraging doctors to routinely prescribe time in nature to patients.
DR ROBERT ZARR, PHD  
Founder and Medical Director

Dr. Robert Zarr is a board-certified pediatrician at Unity Health Care, located in Washington, DC, where he cares for low-income and immigrant populations. He previously served as advisor to the National Park Service on park prescriptions. You will often find him riding his recumbent trike on the Capital Crescent Trail.

JOHN HENDERSON  
Executive Director

John is a Certified Parks and Recreation Executive, city planner, public participation practitioner, arbitrator, and mediator. He is also an attorney licensed to practice law in Illinois and the District of Columbia. He enjoys hiking and biking and is passionate about finding opportunities to bring nature into city neighborhoods.

MATTHEW SCRIBNER  
Chief Technology Officer

Matthew is a DC native “full-stack” developer with knowledge in both front-end to back-end software development. He believes in coding for a cause and finding ways to make technology easy and accessible and has been developing custom web-based applications since 2001.

PATRICK LUNSFORD  
Director of Communications

Patrick manages public outreach and funding efforts. Previously, he was a public affairs manager for a financial regulatory agency and a journalist for more than a decade. His love of the outdoors and commitment to accessible public lands brought him to Park Rx America.
Healthy Parks Healthy People connects people to parks through health promotion by:

- **Forging new partnerships** that establish the health and medical care community’s use of parks as a healing tool and a vital component of healthy living;

- **Providing access** to parks and healthy visitor experiences;

- **Enhancing and protecting** park programs, facilities, and environments as places for people to have fun, learn something and derive health benefits;

- **Reaching diverse, multicultural audiences** and engaging the next generation of national park stewards;

- **Contributing to the advancement of science** by implementing the Healthy Parks Healthy People Science Plan.
Books on the Nature - Health Connection

1. **The Nature Principle**
   - Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder
   - Richard Louv

2. **The Biophilia Hypothesis**
   - Edited by Stephen R. Kellert and Edward O. Wilson

3. **The Nature Fix**
   - Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative
   - Florence Williams
Epidemic Levels of Chronic Disease

133 million Americans currently live with chronic disease

• 70 million American adults have high blood pressure.
• 29 million Americans live with diabetes.
• 10 million adults suffer from serious mental illness.

For every dollar spent on healthcare in the U.S., $0.86 is spent on patients with chronic disease.
12 million Children and 78 million Adults are Obese

People suffering from obesity are at increased risk of:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Type 2 diabetes
- Coronary heart disease
- Stroke
- Gallbladder disease
- Osteoarthritis
- Sleep apnea
- Cancer
- Mental illness
Health Benefits of Spending Time in Nature

• Spending time in nature is linked with decreased anxiety, rumination, and negative affect.

• **Green spaces are restorative** and boost attention, while viewing concrete inhibits attention during tasks.

• Walking in parks improved focus in children with attention deficits.

• Group walks in nature are associated with lower levels of stress and negative affect.
More Health Benefits...

- Forest environments are shown to decrease cortisol levels, blood pressure, and sympathetic nervous system activity.

- Access to parks reduces the risk of obesity.

- Living in a neighborhood with more opportunities for physical activity is associated with lower risks of Type 2 diabetes.

- Living near green spaces reduces mortality, even when adjusted for sociodemographic factors.

Photo credit: Claudia Cinquegrana
Even more Health Benefits!

- Physical activity in a natural environment is more beneficial on **mental wellbeing** than physical activity indoors.

- Nature helps to lessen the negative impact of **stressful life events**.

- Living near green spaces is associated with **lower rates of respiratory disease and asthma**.

- Forest bathing increases **Natural killer cell activity**; these cells kill tumors and virus-infected cells.

Photo credit: Dr. Jeff Gee
Prescribing parks increases park time and physical activity, and reduces stress

“Average weekly physical activity increased from 150 to 172 minutes, and number of days per month spent in a park for 30 or more minutes increased from 7 to 8 days.”


“Overall decrease in parental stress both overall and as a function of numbers of park visits per week. Paradoxically the park prescription without group park visits led to a greater increase in weekly park visits than the group visits.”

How a Park Prescription Works
Come to work **happy, rested, centered, and focused.**
Recognize one or more chronic disease factors in patient/family.
Review daily routine of your patient/family in terms of activity in green space, and assess Nature deficit.
Assess readiness and willingness of patient to spend more time in green space.
Discuss and agree on **frequency** of visits to park per week, **duration** of time to be spent in park, and **activities** to engage while at the park.
Document the specifics of the park prescription in the electronic health record.
Agree on **date and time** of next appointment.
33 results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports Facilities/Activities</th>
<th>General Park Amenities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Recreation/Fitness Center</td>
<td>- Playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gymnasium</td>
<td>- Restrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Baseball/Softball Field</td>
<td>- Drinking Fountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Football/Soccer Field</td>
<td>- Seating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cricket Field</td>
<td>- Picnic Tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mixed Use Field</td>
<td>- Grills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Open Space</td>
<td>- Food for Sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Trails</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Athletic Track</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Outdoor Basketball Court</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Outdoor Fitness Stations</td>
<td>- Indoor Pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tennis Court</td>
<td>- Outdoor Pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Outdoor Practice Wall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Indoor Racket Sports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Volleyball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pickleball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Four Square Courts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rollerskating</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ice Skating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inline Hockey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Skateboard Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Horse Stables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Equestrian Rings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Diving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fishing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Swimming

- Indoor Pool
- Outdoor Pool

Pets

- Allowed On-Leash
- Allowed Off-Leash
- Dog Park
- Bags Provided

Additional Features

- Community Gardens
- Ornamental Gardens
- Visitor Center
- Nature Center
- Historic Site

Narrow down results by choosing **activities**, **amenities**, and other **park services** that interest your patient.
### YOU ARE PRESCRIBING THE FOLLOWING PARKS:

**Marion Park**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>[FD84VX] Park Rx America - Marion Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAKE</td>
<td>Play at Playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREQUENCY</td>
<td>Q M, W, F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DURATION</td>
<td>30-60 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generate Prescription Text? ✔️

Send by Text  Send by Email

Patient Mobile Number

2025501740

Send to Patient
Kids in Parks has created the TRACK Rx program to help kids and families learn how spending time in nature improves their overall health. www.kidsinparks.com

Join us by attending a Walk near you (always free!) or by starting a healthcare provider led Walk of your own. www.walkwithadoc.org
Why is this Important for Cities?
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Economic Development

Environmental Sustainability

Human Health
Most people visit the parks closest to where they live.
Young people prefer **biophilic environments** where there are references to the outdoors indoors.
For many, exercise is solely an indoor activity.
You can still get **benefits** in the city
Programming can provide and incentive to get outside.
Activity outdoors is better than the same or a similar activity outdoors
Biophilia in the workplace
Questions??

Please write:
DocZarr@ParkRxAmerica.org

And Prescribe a Park today!