

## By the Numbers:

**73%**

of people believe parks and trails are an essential part of the healthcare system.

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE REPORTS - 2017

**50%**

People who live near parks and trails are 50 percent more likely to be physically active.

BLUE CROSS & BLUE SHIELD OF MN - 2015

**43%**

of Minnesotans say they would walk or bike more if they had better access to trails.

MN FOR HEALTHY KIDS - 2014

**21%**

of Minnesotans meet physical activity guidelines.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION - 2014

## DOCTOR'S ORDERS: TAKE A HIKE

More and more doctors are telling their patients to visit parks and trails. Parks and trails get people outside, active, and in the fresh air. The research is clear: Physical activity is one of the easiest, effective, safest, and inexpensive ways of improving people's health.

Despite the well-known benefits of outdoor activity, too many Minnesotans don't get enough exercise. Getting more Minnesotans outside and active is critical not just for our health, but also for our pocketbooks. Minnesota's health costs are staggering: Annual health care spending in Minnesota totals nearly \$41 billion, consuming nearly half of our public spending, and yet more than a third of Minnesotans still live with chronic diseases.<sup>1-2</sup>

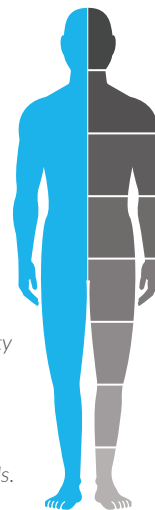
### The trail to better health

Trails encourage healthy lifestyles. Studies show that trails can get inactive people to become active and encourage already active people to increase their activity. For many people, their only exercise happens on trails.<sup>3</sup>

**60%** Trail users who say they exercise more often because of trails.

**47%** Trail users who meet physical activity guidelines entirely by using trails.

**23%** Trail users who say they didn't exercise until they started using trails.



### Outdoor activity is recommended for:<sup>4</sup>

-  Improved mental health
-  Lower risk of cardiovascular disease
-  Lower risk of type 2 diabetes
-  Improved weight control
-  Reduced risk of some cancers
-  Strong bones and muscles
-  Increased longevity
-  Preventing falls

<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Department of Health; Health Economics Program. "Minnesota Health Care Markets Chartbook." 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Department of Health. "Chronic Conditions in Minnesota: New Estimates of Prevalence, Cost and Geographic Variation for Insured Minnesotans, 2012." 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Journal of Park and Recreation Administration. "Assessing the Cost Effectiveness of a Community Rail-Trail in Achieving Physical Activity Gains." 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Physical Activity and Health." 2017.

\* Graphics created by Freepik

