



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WALKING TO SAVE LIMBS: STEPPING OUT FOR FOOT HEALTH RETURNS NOVEMBER 2

Matawa Health Co-operative and St. Joseph's Foundation aim to raise \$10,000 to prevent diabetes-related amputations in Northwestern Ontario

THUNDER BAY, ON – The Matawa Health Co-operative (MHC) and St. Joseph's Foundation of Thunder Bay (SJFTB) are inviting the community to lace up their shoes and step toward a healthier future at the 2025 Stepping Out for Foot Health Walk on Sunday, November 2, 2025, from 1:00–4:00 p.m. at Intercity Shopping Centre.

Now in its fourth year, the event shines a light on the often-overlooked issue of foot health for people living with diabetes. Proceeds help provide access to proper footwear—an essential but sometimes unaffordable form of prevention that can make the difference between mobility and amputation.

Last year's event raised \$7,003, funding hundreds of pairs of protective shoes for people across Northwestern Ontario. This year, organizers hope to reach a new goal of \$10,000 to help even more people walk safely and comfortably.

"Every step we take helps prevent needless suffering," says Nick Kwiatkowski, acting Clinical Director with the Matawa Health Co-operative. "In Northwestern Ontario, amputation rates are among the highest in the province, and for Indigenous people, they're up to seven times higher. Yet we know that most amputations—around 85 percent—are preventable with early care, wound monitoring, and appropriate footwear."

People living with diabetes often experience poor circulation and nerve damage in their feet, meaning small injuries can go unnoticed and quickly lead to infection. Access to fitted footwear and regular foot checks can dramatically reduce the risk of ulcers and amputations, but many people still lack the resources to access these simple interventions.

"In Thunder Bay and across Northwestern Ontario, we've seen how compassion in action changes lives," says Steve McAuley, Chair of St. Joseph's Foundation of Thunder Bay. "The funds raised through this walk directly help people stay mobile, stay active, and stay connected to the life they love."

Organized by MHC, SJFTB, St. Joseph's Care Group, and Knights of Columbus Bishop Norman Gallagher Council 7332, and presented by BioPed, the walk welcomes individuals, families, and teams to participate, donate, or sponsor. To register or contribute, visit www.sjftb.net/walk