



# CHRONIC DISEASE BURDEN UPDATE

■ October 9<sup>th</sup> is Walk to School Day. This brief highlights the benefits of walking or biking to school and how to identify and plan safe routes to school.

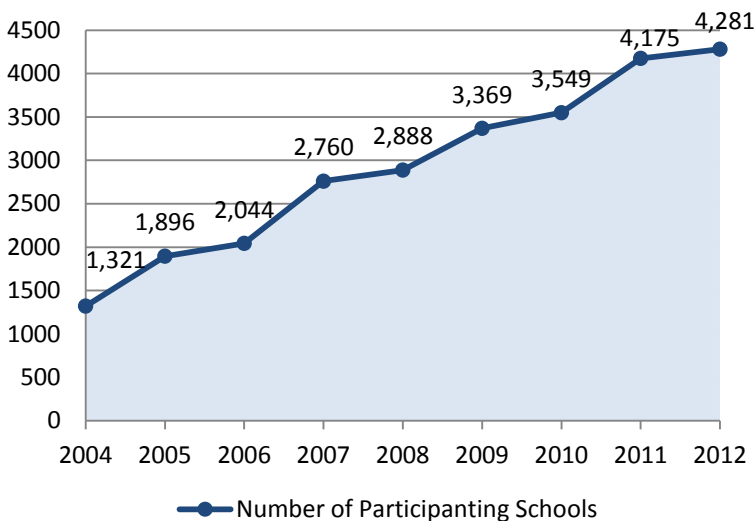
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends children and adolescents get one hour or more of physical activity each day. Research suggests physically active kids are more likely to become healthy, physically active adults. Walking and bicycling to school enables children to incorporate the regular physical activity they need each day, while also forming healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

Identifying safe routes to school is important in the safe implementation of walk or bike to school initiatives in communities. Complete Streets are defined by the National Complete Streets Coalition as streets designed and operated to enable safe access along and across the street for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities (<http://www.completestreets.org>). Information about complete streets initiatives in your community can be found at the complete streets website above. Area's where complete streets initiatives have been implemented offer safe route options.

## WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

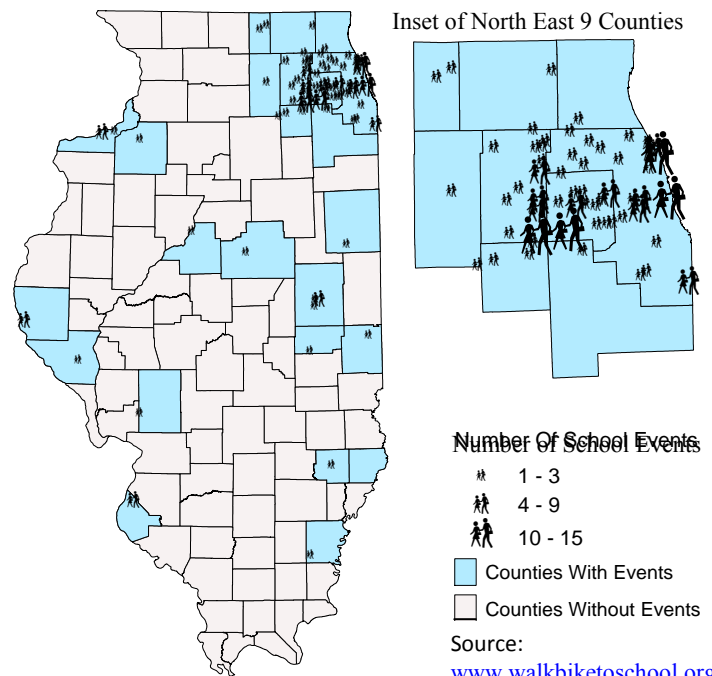
International Walk to School Day is an annual global event where residents from more than 40 countries walk and bike to school on a single day. Figure 1 shows there has been an increase of 2,960 participating schools in the United States for this event from 1,321 in 2004 to 4,281 in 2012. In 2012, Illinois had 207 Walk to School Day events occur across 77 cities. Map 1 shows the distribution of school-sponsored walk to school events in Illinois.

**Figure 1** Walk to School Event Participation, United States, 2004-2012



Source: [www.walkbiketoschool.org](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org)

**Map 1** Walk to School Participation, Illinois, 2012



Source: [www.walkbiketoschool.org](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org)

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

In 2012, Illinois received \$7 million in federal grant funds to assist with the planning and development of safe routes to schools in communities all over Illinois. Information about the Safe Routes to School initiatives in Illinois can be found at <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org>. To participate in Walk to School Day this year, registration and safe walk/bike to school ideas are available at [www.walkbiketoschool.org](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org).

