



Welcome to July

July has been recognized as disability pride month! The Americans with Disability Act was passed on July 26, 1990, and signed by President George W. Bush.

How do we define a disability? The [CDC](#) defines a disability as "any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions)." According to the [World Health Organization](#), "An estimated 1.3 billion people experience significant disability, and persons with disabilities die earlier, have poorer health, and experience more limitations in everyday functioning than others."

From a public health perspective, we frame our work within social determinants of health, of which access to nature-rich space continues to play an important role in determining and maintaining our health. This is no less true for persons

experiencing a disability.

The United Nations, in its [SDG #11](#), Target 11.7 explicitly states that sustainable cities and communities "by 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities."

The following three published research studies highlight the role that nature or parks play in physical activity and health outcomes for people experiencing disabilities:

In a [survey research study](#) published in 2018 of 11,238 adult Danes, 383 reported mobility disabilities. Stigsdotter et al found that "respondents who reported mobility disabilities visited green spaces less often than respondents without mobility disabilities, and that the severity of the mobility disability was associated with the frequency of visits."

Saitta et al published a [systematic review](#) in 2019, comprising 446 participants (ranging in age from 7-91), reporting a disability. They found "health benefits from park use", including "limited, low level, preliminary evidence for short-term improvements in physical, psychological, and social health outcomes in children and older adults with disabilities as well as improvements in disability-related impairments".

[Ruopeng et al](#) used a National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) 2007-2008 and 2011-2012 representative sample of 113,000 children between the ages of 6-17 to compare children with and without special healthcare needs (SHCN), and found that "among young children with SHCN, neighborhood availability of a recreation center was associated with increased weekly physically active days by 0.23... and among adolescents with SHCN, neighborhood availability of parks/playgrounds was associated with increased weekly physically active days by 0.33."



Let's take the month of July to refocus our attention on vulnerable populations.

Let's take a moment to broadly define the word disability, as we redesign our cities and communities to best suit the needs of all persons, especially those with disabilities. For those of us providing direct healthcare services, including issuing nature prescriptions, being mindful of the special needs of our patients, clients, and families, will help us to provide better care and advice.

Upcoming Opportunity For Physicians



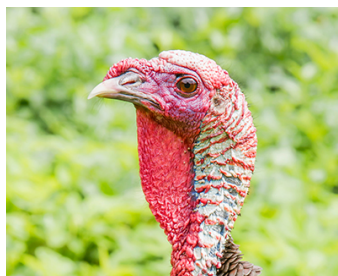
My nature and forest and therapy colleagues, Dr. Susan Abookire and Ronna Schneberger, will be holding a 3.5 day nature-based leadership and systems design retreat for physicians in Banff, Alberta from September 17-20, 2023.

For more information or to register: www.forestfix.ca/banff-retreat



Turkey and me

by Dr. Robert Zarr, MD, MPH



Waking up.
Sunlight.
Stillness.
Falling flowers.
Warmth on the right side of my face.



Turkey and me, standing, noticing who will be the first to move.

Distant voices, distant language, chitter chatter.

Absence of water, near.

Steady stream of water, far.

So many shades of green, gently moving, against a backdrop of the bluest of blues.

This is how I want to wake up, every day, for the rest of my life.

Keeping in mind the secondary trauma of caring for others, please take the time you need to recover and consider a dose of nature for yourself.

Robert Zarr, MD, MPH

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PRA *nature
prescribed*

Sent with

Brevo