

Tahoe's assemblyman accused of not living in district

By Joe Hart, KRNV-TV

Nevada Republican Assemblyman Jim Wheeler is the target of an official complaint filed with Nevada Secretary of State's office and the Assembly Ethics Committee.

The complaint says Wheeler, a Republican from Douglas County, does not live in the district he was elected to represent.

Wheeler, who represents Lake Tahoe in the Assembly, lists his official residence with the Secretary of State's office as 965 Tillman Lane in Gardnerville.



Jim Wheeler

The house on Tillman is owned by Jim DeGraffenreid, the newly elected vice chair of the Nevada Republican party, and a friend of Wheeler's.

News 4 contacted DeGraffenreid and asked him how often Wheeler stays at his house.

DeGraffenreid told us, "I can't say for sure. Maybe one or two nights a week."

We asked Stephanie Kearney who lives right next door at 963 Tillman Lane if Wheeler lives next door.

“Not to my knowledge, no,” Kearney told us.

Read the whole story

No offers for KMS; DCSD enrollment stabilizing

By Kathryn Reed

ZEPHYR COVE – While people have expressed interest in buying the former Kingsbury Middle School site, no one has put in an offer. And that has the Douglas County school board worried.

Even sitting vacant, the 36,000-square-feet of building space is costing DCSD more than \$10,000 a month.

The Douglas County School District board first voted to put the 10-acre site on the market in January 2012. It comes with a cafeteria-commercial kitchen, full-size gymnasium, locker room and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency required BMPs.

At the next meeting the board will have a discussion about whether the \$4 million asking price should be changed. That conversation did not happen at the Oct. 8 meeting because board members Cindy Trigg and Ross Chichester were absent.

In the meantime, Superintendent Lisa Noonan will also contact the two companies that appraised the site to see if they would say the asking price is above or below the current market rate. It was appraised at \$4 million.

Noonan told the board on Tuesday that she has met with one group multiple times.

“My sense is they are serious,” she said.

Declining enrollment forced the district’s hand to close the school. It was fall 2008 that the district went to two schools at the lake.

And student numbers continue to go down, but not as dramatically as years past.

“This is the first year we have not had a true or significant decline in enrollment,” CFO Holly Luna said.

Districtwide enrollment is down four students this year from last year or 0.1 percent. However, at Lake Tahoe there are 32 fewer students for a 7.7 percent drop from 2012-13. The decline at the lake is the highest since 2008-09.

Northstar may take over Martis Valley water service

By Rocklin and Roseville Today

OLYMPIC VALLEY – Water utility service in Martis Valley near Truckee would be transferred to the Northstar Community Services District under a plan discussed last week by the Placer County Water Agency Board of Directors.

The proposed transfer was reviewed as part of the PCWA board’s annual eastern Placer County meeting, which was held at the Squaw Valley Public Service District office. PCWA is a countywide water resource agency that is headquartered and normally meets in Auburn.

PCWA operates groundwater wells to serve about 1,000 water

customers in the Lahontan, Martis Camp and Schaffer's Mill communities in Martis Valley. The area is known as Zone 4 and is one of five service zones operated by PCWA. The other four are in western Placer County.

Read the whole story

S.F. man accused of robbing 2 Tahoe banks

A Bay Area man wanted in connection with two Lake Tahoe bank robberies was apprehended in Reno on Oct. 7.



James Patrick
Harnett

James Patrick Harnett, 49, of San Francisco was arrested at 5pm Tuesday at the Reno Transit Center on East 4th Street. Harnett was considered armed and dangerous, as well as a flight risk.

Harnett is suspected of robbing the Bank of the West in Kings Beach on Aug. 23, as well as the El Dorado Savings Bank two days earlier in South Lake Tahoe.

Placer County sheriff's detectives received information that the suspected bank robber was in the downtown Reno area and a

warrant for his arrest had been issued. A Washoe County sheriff's detective initially contacted the suspect while he was attempting to make a call from a payphone inside the transit center. The suspect was taken into custody without incident.

Harnett was in custody in Reno awaiting extradition to Placer County on a \$100,000 arrest warrant.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Man impersonating cop accosts woman

A man posing as a police officer attacked a woman Sunday in Alpine County.

The woman was driving west on Highway 88 near Woodfords about 9pm Oct. 8 when she noticed a truck following her. The single red light made her believe it was a law enforcement vehicle pulling her over.

The man was wearing dark clothing and a badge. He asked for her ID and then told her to get out of her vehicle.

According to Alpine County sheriff's deputies, the suspect then threw the woman to the ground. She was able to fight back and escape to her vehicle.

The white male is described as 40 to 50 years old, 6-feet-2, 225 pounds, dark hair, and bushy mustache. It's possible he sustained injuries in the fight.

He was driving a newer full size white diesel pickup, with possible custom rims.

Anyone with information should call Alpine County Sheriff's Office at (530) 694.2231.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Rim Trail hurt by shutdown, some Tahoe operators OK

While it's still possible to hike the 165-mile Tahoe Rim Trail, work on it and guided hikes have stopped.

Mary Bennington, executive director of the Tahoe Rim Trail Association, sent an email saying, "... due to the government shutdown all TRTA activities on USDA Forest Service are postponed until further notice. This impacts our trail construction and maintenance, guided hikes, ambassador programs and our trailhead outreach/Where's McCleod? Trail Challenge Give Away Days. Stay tuned for additional updates."

U.S. Forest Service campgrounds are closed, however some South Shore concessionaires are operating.

“USFS properties at Lake Tahoe that are operated by private concessionaires, such as Round Hill Pines, Zephyr Cove and Camp Richardson, were open through last weekend and continue to be open indefinitely until further notice. The private concessionaires were originally slated to be closed, but we worked with the USFS and other local agencies to keep them open,” Steve Mokrohisky, Douglas County manager, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

This means weddings can continue, rum runners will flow and the Dixie will churn.

The Tahoe Tallac Association has been told it’s OK to have weddings at least through this weekend. Officials there expect another update from the Forest Service next Monday, assuming one is needed, in regards to what can happen the following weekend.

A beneficiary of the shutdown is state parks. California and Nevada state parks are reporting an influx of visitors because of the shutdown.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Recreation, transit unite South Shore politicians

By Kathryn Reed

Multiple jurisdictions providing the same services in a small geographical area. That’s a huge problem in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Some of the bravado and territorial issues that have existed

between South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County and Douglas County went by the wayside on Monday when the elected officials from each of those areas met at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel.

A simple way to show solidarity is to eliminate the out-of-state fee that is charged at city and county recreation facilities – at least for those in the area.

Recreation and transportation dominated the discussion. And while South Tahoe Mayor Tom Davis, who was chairing the Oct. 7 meeting, at first tried to stifle conversation for the sake of time, ultimately he was convinced by his peers that they had no problem turning what was supposed to be a two-hour meeting into four hours.



South Tahoe, El Dorado and Douglas electeds convene for the first time on Oct. 7.
Photo/LTN

Many said that while everyone was gathered it was best to get things out on the table instead of waiting for who knows how long. After all, this was the first time these three bodies had ever met together.

(El Dorado County Supervisor Ron Briggs went home sick after lunch and South Lake Tahoe Councilman Hal Cole was in Placerville meeting with county staff.)

No action items were on the agenda. But the group decided that

two members (to be named later) from each elected body would be named to an ad hoc committee to work on South Shore issues. Future meetings between all of the electeds are possible.

The three entities are already working in partnership to devise a recreation master plan. An economist is on the consulting team to analyze return on investment. This is being created as a to-do manual, not a theoretical document.

City Manager Nancy Kerry revealed some of the results of a recreation survey that was taken this year that is part of the master plan. People love Lakeview Commons, want more bike trails and definitely want signature events.

Part of the problem with having any kind of substantial athletic tournament here is the various entities to deal with, which equates to time and money for the organizer.

“Chaos happens” is how Scott Morgan, Douglas County community services director, described the process for someone wanting to schedule a tournament or special event here.

Depending on the event the organizer may have to deal with the three jurisdictions, possibly three school entities, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, and maybe two state departments of transportation. And each of those usually has a fee they want to charge and permits – aka paperwork – to secure. When people learn this, many start calling other places with less cumbersome processes.

And then there is the issue of getting people to and from the various locations. BlueGo, the public bus system on the South Shore, doesn't go to Meyers or Zephyr Cove Park. And it doesn't go to Lake Tahoe Community College on Sundays.

Carl Hasty, executive director of Tahoe Transportation District, said to provide the current bus service for free it would take \$700,000. That is what is collected each year in fares. It doesn't include the money private and public

agencies contribute.

“Successful resort communities have free transit,” Hasty said. He also pointed out how when TTD has received money to have free bus days the number of riders doubles.

TTD is also tied to recreation. It is the lead agency for the Stateline-to-Stateline bike trail. The second mile that links Rabe Meadow to Round Hill Pines will be finished this month.

Hasty said the problem on the South Shore is there are no dedicated transit funds. On the North Shore, Placer County uses part of the hotel tax for transportation. South Shore relies on state and federal dollars.

Personal info can easily be used against you

By G.W. Schulz and Daniel Zwerdling, Center for Investigative Reporting

For some, revelations that the National Security Agency has been collecting vast amounts of personal information on U.S. citizens might seem as far removed as the city of Moscow.

But it's not just an ultrasecret spy agency that can create a dossier on you.

Many Americans would be surprised by how easily local law enforcement, IRS investigators, the FBI and private attorneys can reach into the vast pool of personal information about their lives with little more than a subpoena, which no judge

needs to review.

And it's not just for selling you more products or services. It can be wielded against you.

"We used to have to rely on private investigators," said Lee Rosen, a divorce attorney in North Carolina whose office averages dozens of subpoenas each month. "Now everything we need is more or less on the other side of the keyboard."

Often, a simple form is all that's required to access prescription histories, credit card purchases, monthly banking statements, ATM withdrawals, wire transfers, tax returns and, perhaps most importantly, the rich digital portraits we keep on our smartphones.

Law enforcement can create a map or timeline of a person's whereabouts by accessing data from license-plate scanners, toll-bridge crossings and mobile phone carriers and, without much trouble, access records on your power consumption, purchasing habits and even snail mail.

The more we leave heaps of digital detritus behind, privacy advocates say, the more we may have to answer for it to someone with an ax to grind, an investigation to close or a client to represent.

"The digital world has suddenly given us a wealth of information like we never had before," Rosen said. "The floodgates of data have opened up."

To illustrate this, the Center for Investigative Reporting teamed up with NPR to craft a typical day in the life of personal information. Along the way, we'll explain how it is amassed and how it can be vacuumed up.

First, consider your IP address, a unique identifier used to connect your phone or laptop to the Web. Perusing the Internet before you shower in the morning, you might not know that the

government or a private lawyer can start with your IP address and determine your name. Or, starting with your name, the government can determine your IP address.

Although precision can be limited, private lawyers have used IP addresses to unmask alleged movie and music pirates.

Voltage Pictures, makers of "The Hurt Locker," subpoenaed the IP address of a 69-year-old woman believing it linked her to Internet downloads that infringed on the movie's copyright. She and numerous others targeted in the suit said they weren't guilty of piracy accusations. The lawsuit eventually died.

Say, however, you're streaming Internet radio as you move about the house, listening to a shock jock or political talk show host considered obnoxious by some. Smartphone apps like TuneIn and Pandora will store data on their servers on the talk shows and music you enjoy.

If you're like millions of other Americans, you might use dating sites like JDate.com or OkCupid.com to find romantic matches. Many users rely on pseudonyms until they're comfortable giving out more personal information to a potential date, but digital anonymity is often an illusion.

In 2011, Google acquired facial recognition software company PittPatt, which has been used by researchers to link dating profiles with full identities on other social media sites. Google already uses "computer vision technology" to power its image searches, Picasa photo platform and Google Goggles.

"Any attempt to set up a dating profile – even if you're using a pseudonym and even if you're not uploading photos you put in other places – can result in (someone being able) to find you," said Rainey Reitman, activism director at the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

OkCupid's privacy policy says personal information could be disclosed "in response to a subpoena or similar investigative

demand, a court order, or a request for cooperation from a law enforcement or other government agency.”

Little-known third-party advertisers and marketers can observe your dating activity, too. Software privacy specialist Ashkan Soltani offered a recent demonstration using a tool called Collusion, which visualizes the array of companies that monitor our activity online, watching as we click from one place to the next in order to better understand consumer behavior.

Collusion can be downloaded to your browser – Firefox, Chrome or Safari. Clicking on an icon while visiting a site will display an interconnected web of bubbles that represent companies collecting information about your activities. The companies have names like Lotame and Criteo. The tracking is largely invisible without an add-on like Collusion.

Soltani offers this metaphor: a phone call in which you dial OkCupid.

“In responding to my phone call or connection to OkCupid, (the site) brought all of its friends on to listen to my phone call,” Soltani said. “I’m on speakerphone at OkCupid, and all of these other people are also listening to my conversation.”

While many tracking companies insist they don’t need personally identifying information in order for the data to be useful, Soltani and others say trackers know enough about your behavior from pseudonymous “cookies” to profile you and make decisions about you online, such as how to target ads or special deals.

Reading the network traffic – the language that exists behind Internet activity – Soltani showed how answers to sensitive profile questions on OkCupid’s site covering drug use, religious beliefs and more were transmitted to the data tracking company Lotame, along with the user’s IP address.

When you log in with a username and password to sites like Gmail, Amazon or OkCupid, your behavior can be linked to your real name or email address. Soltani said personally identifying information also can unintentionally “leak” to third parties, even if companies say they have no need for such data, and it’s not clear what happens to the information once it falls into their hands.

Stanford University’s Center for Internet and Society showed in a 2012 paper how usernames or IDs leaked to third parties on 113 popular websites out of 185 tested.

Jonathan Mayer, a graduate student at Stanford who worked on the study, offered another demonstration. He first logged in to the video-sharing site Dailymotion with the username “jonathanmayer” and showed how a unique ID number assigned to him by the data tracker Criteo followed him to another site about sexually transmitted diseases.

Even a generic name like “stanfordguy” used to log in on multiple sites could be used to determine one’s real identity and theoretically be exploited by law enforcement, Soltani and Mayer said.

Officials with OkCupid declined an interview, and Lotame did not respond to phone calls and emails.

Alexandra Pelissero, a spokeswoman for Criteo, said the company wouldn’t know that “jonathanmayer” or “stanfordguy” correspond to the same technology researcher at Stanford. She also said Criteo does not store IP addresses.

“Criteo’s cookie-based technology recognizes events, i.e., products viewed, and does not create individual user profiles based on them,” Pelissero wrote. “It assigns Criteo IDs, which are based on a user’s interests, i.e., online browsing behavior, and (doesn’t) allow us to identify the individual user, so that we can serve more personalized ads that correspond to those interests.”

Jules Polonetsky, executive director of the Future of Privacy Forum, said many such companies have good intentions and wish only to better-tailor advertising for products consumers want.

The forum bills itself as a “think tank that seeks to advance responsible data practices” and is supported by Amazon, Facebook, Netflix, Bank of America and a host of other major companies.

“I think companies haven’t figured out how to talk to people about data or privacy,” Polonetsky said. “ ... There’s nothing to be ashamed of if what they’re doing is fair and honest.”

Accessing personal information

Logs of seemingly innocuous everyday activities – like your power usage – can be obtained and used against you.

There are typically three ways the government and civil attorneys can try to access personal information. A search warrant is the toughest standard and requires the government to convince a judge there’s probable cause of a crime. Next is a court order, and the easiest to obtain is a subpoena.

“A subpoena, unlike a warrant, doesn’t come from a court,” said Kevin Bankston, senior counsel at the Center for Democracy & Technology, a nonprofit organization that advocates for Internet freedoms. “No one has to go to court. No one has to make a showing to a judge. A subpoena in the criminal context is issued directly by a prosecutor.”

Bankston said all investigators must do for a subpoena is state that the information is relevant to an ongoing investigation.

Law enforcement agencies often argue all they need is a subpoena. Drug agents issued a subpoena in 2010 demanding that the Golden Valley Electric Association turn over the power consumption records, customer names, telephone numbers and

credit card numbers for three addresses. For drug investigators, big power surges in a private house could mean the resident is cultivating marijuana with grow lights.

But the Alaska energy cooperative balked at the subpoena, citing its customer privacy policy. A federal court decision overruled the company's position and directed it to give up the records.

"It's kind of like looking at you through an open window and seeing what you do in your home," said Cory Borgeson, president of the company. Borgeson said that if the government wants your power records, it should have to show probable cause of a crime and get a search warrant.

When you head to work, your data portrait will continue expanding. Surveillance cameras in subway stations and on city buses watch you board and depart.

Chicago police for the first time successfully nabbed a suspect in May using facial recognition software known as NeoFace that connected a surveillance image of the man from the city's train system to a massive database of booking photos.

To automatically identify celebrities and regular customers when they enter a store, some retailers reportedly are using another facial recognition technology originally developed in the U.K. for spotting terrorists and criminals.

Meanwhile, smart cards log when and where you travel using public transportation.

Police departments in the Bay Area and elsewhere around the country have used license-plate scanners to identify stolen cars and outstanding warrants. But the devices are designed to photograph vehicles and record the location, date and time of everyone who passes by without discriminating between criminals and innocent people.

The American Civil Liberties Union recently found that departments have widely ranging guidelines for how long they'll store this data, from 48 hours to five years to indefinitely.

Toll records remember when you crossed a bridge or used a particular interstate, and divorce attorneys are fond of them for that reason.

E-ZPass records, for example, will tell divorce attorney Jacalyn Barnett when someone has driven from the island of Manhattan, and paying cash makes her more suspicious that a spouse has something to hide. Another sign is odd departures from routine.

"People are very, very ritualistic," Barnett said. "Most people go to the same bank (branch) to do their transactions. If all of a sudden they're going to a different area, that tells you something."

Gray area around technology

One of the most powerful sources of information is your mobile device, which creates a rough approximation of your whereabouts by checking in with nearby cell towers or a more precise pinpoint when the GPS function is enabled.

The government doesn't believe it needs a warrant for historical tracking with a mobile device. Instead, investigators have said the law requires only a court order, which is slightly more demanding than a subpoena but still less protection than the Constitution affords under a warrant.

Judges so far have handed down a patchwork of rulings on locational privacy, and the issue is far from resolved. In a Baltimore case that has civil liberties groups worried, police were able to obtain more than seven months' worth of location data without a warrant from two cellphones belonging to robbery suspects. Most people would applaud catching robbers,

but the advocacy groups argue that such prolonged tracking violates a reasonable expectation of privacy.

By the time you reach work, a mound of unopened emails awaits. Those, too, are part of a fierce debate over what requires a warrant. As its name suggests, the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986 was designed to protect Americans who at the time were using the Internet increasingly to communicate. But the government has interpreted the law to mean that once your emails are opened or older than 180 days, no warrant is required.

Even if an investigator faces some hurdles with your inbox, such as Google insisting on a warrant, email is not entirely protected. With a court order that doesn't reach probable cause, Google will give up your name, IP address, the dates and times you're signing in and out, and with whom you're exchanging emails.

Google said in a statement: "We are committed to keeping people's information safe and helping them control their personal data. Google Dashboard shows what's stored in your Google Account. From one central location, you can easily view and update your settings for services such as Blogger, Calendar, Docs, Gmail, Google+ and more."

Email nevertheless is at the center of a long-simmering legal dispute between environmentalists and Chevron over drilling in Ecuador. A federal judge this year granted Chevron's subpoena seeking metadata from Microsoft email accounts of activists, including names, dates and possible locations. The company also has requested access to accounts on Google and Yahoo.

Last year, Twitter fought a subpoena from prosecutors in New York who were seeking information about a user charged with disorderly conduct among hundreds arrested by police during Occupy Wall Street protests in 2011. A judge threatened Twitter with fines if it didn't give up the information, and

the company handed over the data.

Digging into medical records

While many Americans are under the impression that their medical records are protected by privacy laws, investigators and private attorneys enjoy special access there, too.

The USA Patriot Act, passed shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, hijackings, prohibits medical professionals from telling you if the FBI seeks your medical records as part of a national security or intelligence-related probe.

In some states like North Carolina, attorneys are considered officers of the court and issue subpoenas on their own as long as the information is connected to an ongoing dispute.

Divorce attorney Rosen tells the story of one client in a child custody case. The woman suspected that the father had mental health problems, so a subpoena was issued directing his psychiatrist to turn over notes about the man's treatment, relationship with his child and prescription medications.

"Medical records are very private and need to be protected, but there's a balance," Rosen said. "Sometimes, your medical records need to be made public in order to do what's best for a child."

Credit card purchases are similarly illuminating. Rosen calls them a "table of contents" for your life. Your financial records enjoy some amount of protection that requires the government to notify you when it seeks information about your purchasing habits.

That is, unless the FBI uses a so-called national security letter – which the Congressional Research Service calls "roughly comparable to administrative subpoenas" – to demand details about your financial transactions. Then the bank is barred from notifying you.

The FBI's authority to issue such letters was expanded by the Patriot Act, and the letters' use has exploded to the tens of thousands each year, targeting telephone billing records, bank transactions, credit reports, names of employers and more.

Perspective on privacy

Many Americans still might ask why they should care, following the recent news of NSA snooping. After all, asks Paul Rosenzweig, a former deputy assistant secretary at the Department of Homeland Security, why would we fear giving personal information to the government if we're willing to give police the power to kill and arrest?

"I tend to think that this is a manageable problem along the lines of cops with guns," he said. "Anybody who denies the U.S. government has made mistakes in the past is a moron. My own sense, however, is that our system is wonderfully self-correcting."

Former President Richard Nixon and former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover were known for their widely documented eavesdropping abuses. But even Nixon became angry when his daughters' privacy was violated, according to John Dean, a lawyer for the former president.

"If Richard Nixon were alive today, I'd have a lot of concern about the data that's being collected, because I don't think Nixon would have any reservations about going into anything that was available to pursue his enemies," Dean said.

One such "enemy" of Nixon was Morton Halperin, a senior policy official in the administrations of Nixon, Bill Clinton and Lyndon B. Johnson. Halperin eventually fell out of favor with the Nixon White House, so much so that his phone was bugged for two years.

During a recent interview, transcripts and summaries of the intercepted calls rested on a table in front of Halperin. But

all these years later, he still was reluctant to read aloud from the personal communications.

“There were many conversations between me and my then-wife,” Halperin said, “none of which I would have wanted to be made public and some of which would have been a little embarrassing.”

G.W. Schulz works for the Center for Investigative Reporting and Daniel Zwerdling is a correspondent for NPR's Investigations Unit.

Retailers tightening return policies

By Cotten Timberlake, Bloomberg Businessweek

High-end retailers such as Bloomingdale's are always happy to sell a glitzy party or bridesmaid dress that can cost hundreds of dollars. The return of a pricey frock after it's been worn is a less jubilant event.

If a garment comes back obviously used – sweat-stained, for example – a retailer can refuse to refund it, but that conversation can be “awkward,” says Richard Mellor, vice president of loss prevention at the National Retail Federation. So some retailers simply look the other way.

Many merchants have long lived by the mantra that the customer is always right, adopting liberal return policies in hopes of winning the loyalty of free-spending shoppers. But with a recent increase in the wearing and subsequent return of expensive clothes – a practice merchants call wardrobing –

many retailers are taking a stronger stand against the industry's \$8.8 billion-a-year return fraud problem.

Bloomingdale's, a unit of Macy's, in February started placing 3-inch black plastic tags in highly visible places, such as the front bottom hemline, on dresses costing more than \$150 as they are being purchased. The clothes can be tried on at home without disturbing the special tag. But once a customer snaps it off to wear in public, the garment can't be returned.

The department-store chain isn't alone in trying to outwit some unscrupulous customers. Electronics retailers have turned to hefty restocking fees to discourage short-term use of expensive electronics to watch events such as the Super Bowl. Some Victoria's Secret stores are compiling lists of serial returners. And high-end outdoor goods retailer REI recently announced it's ending its lifetime return policy after customers took advantage of its lenient rules.

Read the whole story

Study: Exercise as good as drugs to fight heart disease

By Makiko Kitamura, Bloomberg

Physical activity may be as effective as drugs in treating heart disease and should be included as a comparison in the development of new medicines, according to a review published this month in the British Medical Journal.

No statistically detectable differences were evident between exercise and drug treatment for patients with coronary heart

disease or prediabetes, and exercise was more effective among patients recovering from a stroke, according to a review of 16 meta-analyses that included 305 studies involving 339,274 participants. The review was conducted by researchers at Harvard University and Stanford University.

The analysis adds to evidence showing the benefit of non-medical approaches to disease through behavior and lifestyle changes. Given the cost of drug treatment, regulators should consider requiring pharmaceutical companies to include exercise as a comparator in clinical trials of new medicines, according to authors Huseyin Naci of Harvard and John Ioannidis of Stanford.

“In cases where drug options provide only modest benefit, patients deserve to understand the relative impact that physical activity have on their condition,” Naci and Ioannidis said in the published paper. In the meantime, “exercise interventions should therefore be considered as a viable alternative to, or, alongside, drug therapy.”

Read the whole story