



ARTHRITIS

SUCCESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDING PROGRAM REACH AND IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

2011

Success Stories

New York: Expanding Arthritis Interventions by Partnering with Health Insurance Companies

Over 26% of New York's adult population—about 3.7 million people—report that they have doctor-diagnosed arthritis, and this percentage is expected to increase significantly over the next 20 years as the U.S. population ages. Although evidence-based interventions can reduce disability and improve the quality of life for people with arthritis, these programs are not reaching enough residents with arthritis in New York.

In 2009, the New York State Department of Health worked with one of the state's health insurance companies, Independent Health Association, to provide 24 courses of the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP), reaching 426 people. To initiate and expand access to this proven program, the health department continues to receive limited funding from the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD), with support from CDC, through a 3-year Arthritis Integrated Dissemination Project grant. This grant is designed to make arthritis interventions more available through existing chronic disease programs.

As part of this effort, a unique partnership was created between Independent Health Association and two other health insurance companies (Univera and Health Now) that serve an eight-county region of western New York. These companies are working together, along with a nonprofit organization, to promote the CDSMP to all of their members. The nonprofit P2 (Pursuing Perfection) Collaborative of Western New York coordinates local health plans and delivery of the program.

This collaboration has the potential to expand access to the CDSMP to anyone older than age 60 in this area of New York, regardless of their health plan coverage or affiliation.

Wisconsin: Coordinating Efforts to Promote Availability of Evidence-Based Interventions

Arthritis is a major public health problem in Wisconsin. About 25% of adults report having some form of the disease, and among those aged 65 or older, the prevalence is significantly higher (55%). In addition, people with arthritis often have other chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.

In Wisconsin, several organizations are sponsoring programs to improve the lives of people with arthritis and other chronic diseases. They include the CDC-funded Wisconsin Arthritis Program; the Arthritis Foundation, Wisconsin Chapter (AFWC); and the Division of Long Term Care of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. These organizations provide evidence-based interventions, sometimes to the same groups of people, but their efforts have not always been well-coordinated. To address this problem, they decided to work together to change policies to streamline their efforts and reach more people.

Staff members in the Wisconsin Arthritis Program proposed that all three organizations use the Information and Referral 1-800 number already being used by the AFWC. The AFWC agreed to include brochures with information on the CDSMP in every introductory packet sent to callers. The organizations also worked together to develop 30-second radio advertisements to promote the 1-800 number and interventions available in the state. Eight advertisements ran for a 3-week period in January 2010 on more than 70 radio stations.

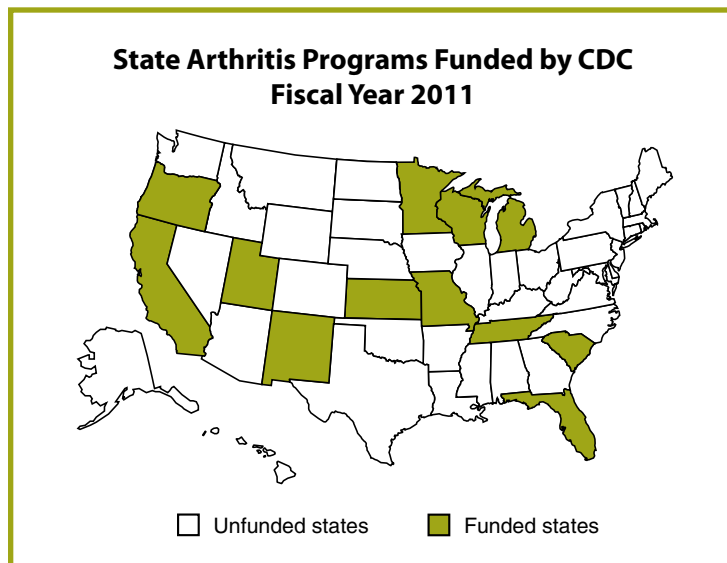
After the initial rollout, the percentage of calls for information about the CDSMP increased twentyfold, to 20%. Since then, 1 in every 8 callers asks about this intervention. This coordinated approach was an innovative way to promote interventions that are designed to reach populations with similar needs.



Utah: Working to Reach Underserved Populations with Arthritis

In Utah, 21% of adults are living with arthritis. Although Hispanics/Latinos make up only about 10% of the state's adult population and are less likely to have arthritis than other state residents, nearly half of Utah's Hispanic population (45.7%) do not have health insurance. Inadequate health care coverage can result in fewer visits to a health care provider, fewer health screenings to identify health conditions such as arthritis, and difficulty in managing chronic conditions such as arthritis.

Utah also has the largest Tongan population outside of the Kingdom of Tonga (a cluster of islands in the South Pacific Ocean). Programs to address arthritis among this minority population were implemented because obesity is a recognized risk factor for arthritis, and the obesity rate for Pacific Islanders in Utah is twice the overall state rate—49.2% versus 21.3%. Self-management education programs such as the CDSMP are known to help people with arthritis and other chronic conditions. With funding from CDC, the Utah Arthritis Program partnered with the National Tongan American Society (NTAS) and Alliance Community Services (ACS) to help Pacific Islanders and Hispanics/Latinos in Utah manage their arthritis. These organizations have embedded and taken ownership of the CDSMP by training their staff, community members, and workshop participants as program leaders.



The NTAS's ability to provide high-quality programs to Pacific Islanders with arthritis in Utah has made it a model for the state's partners in this area. It also has contributed to the growth and sustainability of the CDSMP in Utah. The ACS continues to be a trailblazer in linking Utah's Hispanic population to self-management education, implementing the state's first Spanish version of the CDSMP, called the *Tomando Control de Su Salud*.

CDC Partners with the Arthritis Foundation and Others to Better Serve the Public

The Arthritis Foundation uses resources from CDC and other partners to reach millions of people with arthritis each year. In 2010, the Arthritis Foundation worked with CDC to

- Launch *A National Public Health Agenda for Osteoarthritis*, a blueprint for action that sets forth 10 strategy recommendations to reduce the burden of osteoarthritis and better manage its symptoms.
- Partner with the National Alliance for Hispanic Health to develop and implement action plans with Hispanic community-based organizations in six states.
- Conduct research to find the best way to get public health messages to Spanish-speaking populations with arthritis.
- Offer two versions of the Arthritis Foundation Walk with Ease Program—one for individuals and one for groups. Both have been shown to increase physical activity, walking distance, and speed, as well as decrease pain and depression.
- Work with state legislators to host town hall meetings to teach people about the importance of regular physical activity for living with osteoarthritis.

The CDC also works with other organizations to expand the reach of proven interventions. For example,

- Working with the NACDD, a new CDC partnership with the YMCA allows the evidence-based arthritis intervention EnhanceFitness® to be offered to people with arthritis through YMCAs in eight states.
- CDC and the Directors of Health Promotion and Education have partnered with the National Education Association's Health Information Network to test marketing strategies and offer the self-study Arthritis Toolkit to its 3.2 million members.