

## **COLORADO PROGRAMS JOIN FORCES TO FIGHT CHRONIC DISEASE**

*Forming a single, unified epidemiology and evaluation branch makes programs work better*

### **Public Health Problem**

- Monitoring health status and evaluating public health interventions are essential public health services because they help public health practitioners understand patterns of disease and risk factors, plan effective programs, put services where they're needed, use resources wisely and evaluate progress toward creating a healthy state.
- When programs collaborate to perform these functions the combined capacity is enhanced, communication among programs improves, and effective public health practice follows.

### **Program**

- Each state chronic disease program in Colorado - cancer, cardiovascular disease and stroke, diabetes, asthma, tobacco and obesity - employed staff to provide data and evaluation services. In a step toward better coordination they jointly created a comprehensive state report on all the listed chronic diseases and their health risk factors which was based on chronic disease indicators identified by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Later, the Prevention Services Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment reorganized staff into functional groups to increase program integration and enhance infrastructure and organizational capacity among chronic disease programs and other Division programs in health promotion, maternal and child health, and nutrition.
- Epidemiology and evaluation staff throughout the Division became part of a single Epidemiology, Planning and Evaluation Branch.

### **Impact**

- Creating a single branch to provide monitoring and evaluation services for many programs enables a wider range of services and depth of expertise for individual programs while realizing greater efficiencies.
- The comprehensive chronic disease report clarifies for policymakers, residents and health care practitioners the actions that can be taken to improve the health of Colorado residents by rating state progress to date as 'encouraging,' 'cautious' or 'of concern.'  
([www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/chronicdisease](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/chronicdisease))
- Strengths and skills of the combined staff are being assessed to assure that a full complement of data and evaluation services are available to meet program needs.

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