

KANSAS AGENCIES PARTNER ON ARTHRITIS SELF-MANAGEMENT

Local health departments and Area Agencies on Aging recruit leaders for arthritis course

Public Health Problem

- One-fourth of Kansas adults have been diagnosed with arthritis by a doctor.
- Nearly half of the state's residents aged 65 and older have arthritis.
- Very few people with arthritis have ever taken a class to learn how to manage problems with their condition, such as joint pain and disability.
- Research shows that people with arthritis who attend evidence-based classes experience less pain, fewer doctor visits and improved quality of life.

Program

- The Kansas Arthritis Program of the Department of Health and Environment, partnered with the Kansas Department on Aging to implement the Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program through Area Agencies on Aging and local health departments.
- This proven, evidence-based program is a series of behavior change classes that teach individuals how to manage arthritis pain.
- The partners educated attendees at the Governor's Conference on Aging on the benefits of this self-help program.
- Regional staff of the partner agencies, community volunteers and local health care providers was trained as Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program leaders, the first step in providing the classes to state residents with arthritis.
- Each partner provides resources to make the classes available in the community. The Kansas Arthritis Program funds leader trainings and course materials; the Arthritis Foundation assists with class logistics and data collection; and community organizations provide in-kind support such as donated classroom space and staff time to serve as leaders.

Impact

- Participants reported decreased pain and fatigue, increased levels of physical activity, and improved ability to perform activities of daily living according to evaluation surveys.
- The number of trained leaders has increased from just two to a current roster of 21 trained leaders in eight counties. Three additional counties intend to implement the program shortly.
- In 2005, 14 classes were offered, with 147 participants completing the course.

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