

ALASKA IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE WITH ARTHRITIS

Parish nurses expand the reach of proven arthritis programs

Public Health Problem

- Arthritis is the most common cause of disability. It also may limit the ability of people to effectively manage other chronic diseases, such as diabetes.
- Proven, evidence-based programs can help people with arthritis function better, reducing pain and delaying disability.
- With limited funds to offer these proven programs, state arthritis programs must identify and work with partners able to reach people in need.

Program

- The Alaska Department of Health partnered with the Alaska Parish Nurse Resource Center at the Providence Medical Center to promote increased access to and use of *Living Well Alaska*, Alaska's name for the evidence-based Stanford Chronic Disease Self-management Program.
- Service-oriented parish nurses teach chronic disease self-management in the greater community as a way to extend their health ministry beyond church walls.
- The Department of Health provided opportunities for parish nurses to become master trainers & t-trainers; pays for the license required by the program developer, Stanford University; and provides course leader training manuals, data reports, and statewide listserv maintenance.
- The Parish Nurse Resource Center coordinates and provides leader training, assists with evaluation, collects and reports data, and supports parish nurse course leaders through workshop planning, marketing, follow-up and provision of workshop materials.
- Parish nurses teach each 6-week chronic disease self-management workshop, collect pre- and post-workshop data and individual follow-up data and provide follow-up and support to participants from their churches.

Impact

- This partnership promotes sustained access to a proven-effective arthritis intervention by embedding services within an existing delivery system.
- Parish nurses teach more workshops and participants in their classes are more likely to complete most sessions compared to other trained leaders in the state indicating a higher return on the investment of training and program resources.
- Alaska state residents with chronic diseases benefitted from over \$37,000 worth of donated parish nurse services (*based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data*).
- A parish nurse shared this comment about course participants, "It is amazing to see.....they are really learning how to reinterpret their symptoms and they 'get it!'....they are making positive changes in their life."

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