

EXPANDING THE REACH OF EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS FOR PEOPLE WITH ARTHRITIS

Health and aging agencies partnered to establish programs within the aging services system

Public Health Problem

- Almost two thirds of Alabama adults with arthritis are over sixty-five years old.
- Half of Alabama residents with arthritis report that the condition limits their daily activities.
- The demonstrated benefits of the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program are improved functional ability, decreased depression and increased confidence in participants' ability to exercise.
- Finding a way to embed programs with demonstrated benefits in an existing delivery system sustains the programs and often promotes greater geographic availability.

Program

- The Alabama Arthritis Program identified adult nutrition and senior center sites as ideal for the implementation of proven arthritis control programs because they are an existing network of gathering places for older adults and provide an opportunity to reach a significant portion of the target population for arthritis programs.
- Through a partnership with the Alabama Department of Senior Services, the Arthritis Program is working with the Alabama Area Agencies on Aging to establish and sustain programs in each of their thirteen regions.
- Leader trainings were held in five locations throughout the state in order to train leaders for a wider geographic area.
- The number of trained program leaders has increased ten-fold and the number of certified trainers has doubled. Certified trainers are needed for continuous training of program leaders, both to increase the supply and to replace those retiring.

Impact

- Program leaders report that participants say they have less pain and symptoms of depression; increased flexibility, improved sleep and increased independence as a result of the arthritis exercise programs.
- In the most recent calendar year, the number of programs offered to Alabama residents and the number of participants in proven programs doubled from the prior year, significantly improving the control of arthritis symptoms for many state residents.

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