

## COMMUNICATING THE IMPACT OF ARTHRITIS: FACT SHEET SERIES

*Easily customized and regularly updated, fact sheets help raise awareness*

### **Public Health Problem**

- Over one fifth of California adults have arthritis, the leading cause of disability in the U.S.
- Effective prevention and control methods such as increased physical activity and self-management programs will be more likely to be implemented if people are aware of the need and benefits.
- Raising awareness about the burden of arthritis on state residents requires sound, up-to-date information in an easily-distributed format.

### **Program**

- The goal of the California Arthritis Partnership Program is to improve the quality of life of Californians affected by arthritis and other rheumatic conditions through increased awareness of the importance of physical activity and self-management, and increased access to evidence-based interventions.
- The Program supports the inclusion of arthritis burden questions on a statewide telephone survey which is part of the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. This system quantifies and compares the prevalence of arthritis and burden of disease in California as well as other states and territories.
- In order to disseminate regularly updated arthritis burden information more effectively, the Program developed a series of arthritis fact sheets. Fact sheets include burden and impact, public health message, public health strategies, Healthy People 2010 objectives, and personal stories. The series includes *Arthritis in California*, *Arthritis and Physical Activity*, *Arthritis and Self-Management*, *Arthritis and Work*, and *Arthritis and Weight*.
- Partners were asked to provide input in the development of the fact sheets. To encourage use, each fact sheet has an open area for partner customization.

### **Impact**

- Widespread dissemination of the fact sheets occurs through press releases, newsletter articles, flyers, and information packets going to decision makers, systems partners, policymakers, board members, county health departments, potential partners, legislative aides and legislators, and health fair events. Nonprofit partners use fact sheet information in grant proposals and in responding to media inquires, widening the public's exposure to the information.
- Partners, funders, and other state chronic disease and arthritis programs are overwhelmingly positive about the fact sheet series describing it as "*a valuable and complementary resource*" and "*very helpful with partners; well-received.*"

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