

SPREADING THE WORD: *PHYSICAL ACTIVITY. ARTHRITIS PAIN RELIEVER*

Urban, rural, and minority populations across the state learn how to improve quality of life for those with arthritis

Public Health Problem

- Arthritis is a leading cause of disability and its prevalence is expected to increase.
- Close to a third of Wisconsin adults with arthritis have work limitations due to their condition. Many are also obese, a modifiable risk factor for a number of chronic diseases.
- People with arthritis may not know that physical activity is important in helping them improve physical function, reduce pain, lessen disability and maintain a healthy weight.

Program

- The Wisconsin Arthritis Program, with CDC funding support, implemented arthritis public awareness campaigns throughout the state (final regional implementation to occur in 2008), basing campaign messages on those CDC developed: *Physical Activity. The Arthritis Pain Reliever* and *Buenos Dias Arthritis*, a Spanish-language campaign.
- Using a social marketing approach in partnership with local communities these communication campaigns promote the benefits of physical activity for people with arthritis through print and radio messages, community events, seminars, and changes in the built environment to make places for physical activity more accessible.
- Reaching out to African American communities, the Latino community in urban Milwaukee and rural Oneida and Chippewa Counties and engaging local healthcare professionals, clinics, fitness and recreation facilities, parks, and others with a menu of local options allowed the adaptation of activities and messages to local community needs.

Impact

- The campaign achieved over six million media impressions, letting residents know that being physically active and creating a community environment to support physical activity helps those with arthritis and other chronic diseases. A media impression is an estimate of exposure to the messages of the campaign.
- The Wisconsin Arthritis Program, working with partners, developed systems for improving availability of evidence-based self management proven to reduce the disability of arthritis as well as access to physical activity. The Oneida County Health Department, for example, worked for city approval to create five new bike routes linking schools, the town center and paths from outlying towns, using CDC funds to purchase route markers and to create road stripping.

Contact

Anne Kissack
Wisconsin Area Health Education Center
414-344-0675
akissack@milahec.org

