

Colorado

Arthritis Programs Improve Quality of Life

Producing Results

BRFSS data indicated that one out of every four adults in Colorado suffers from arthritis and that only 21% of people with arthritis receive treatment. These baseline measures established the need for an arthritis program in Colorado, which is now offering self-management, physical activity, and education interventions to people with arthritis.

Public Health Problem

By examining BRFSS data, health officials in Colorado learned that arthritis affects nearly one out of every four adults in their state. These arthritis sufferers are more likely than people without arthritis to be obese and have high cholesterol. They also report twice as many days of poor physical or mental health and twice as many unhealthy days. However, only 21% of people with arthritis reported having their disease treated.

Taking Action

BRFSS data were the catalyst for Colorado to create a statewide arthritis program and indicated areas in which such a program could improve quality of life for people living with arthritis. In collaboration with numerous partners, the Colorado Arthritis Program was developed to offer evidence-based self-management, physical activity, and education intervention. Interventions offered through the program include the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program, which allows trained instructors to choose from 72 exercises and to use a host of endurance-building activities, games, relaxation techniques, and health education topics; the Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program, which involves gentle physical activity performed in warm water; and the Chronic Disease Self Management Program, which includes information on self-help principles, the disease process, exercise and fitness, pain management, relaxation, depression, fear, nutrition, doctor-patient relationships, medication, and nontraditional treatments.

Implications and Impact

Without reliable state data, Colorado health officials would have been unaware of the burden of arthritis and the inadequate treatment of people with arthritis. Due to the availability of this data, Colorado's arthritis program provided evidence-based interventions to nearly 10,000 people with arthritis in 2007.