



Partnering With Federally Qualified Health Centers to Prevent Heart Attacks and Strokes

Public Health Problem

Missouri has one of the nation's highest rates of cardiovascular disease, mainly heart disease and stroke. It ranks second in the nation in deaths from coronary heart disease. Heart disease and stroke claimed 174,640 lives in Missouri between 1990 and 1997, and cardiovascular disease accounted for nearly 41% of all deaths in 1998. Nearly 211,000 hospitalizations in Missouri were attributed to heart disease and stroke in 2000, and direct medical costs exceeded \$3 billion.

Program Example

The Missouri Cardiovascular Health Program is partnering with the Missouri Diabetes Prevention and Control Program and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to administer and evaluate a comprehensive approach to improving standards of care for patients with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hypertension. The partners are using a registry of clinical data on patients, thus making it possible to aggressively follow up on and monitor patients. The FQHCs offer a unique opportunity to reach Missouri's high-risk minority and low-income residents, many of whom live in rural areas. Nearly 185,000 Missourians used FQHCs as their source of primary health care in 2001. In addition, the Missouri Cardiovascular Health Program has partnered with the Missouri Patient Care Review Foundation, the American Heart Association, and the Missouri Hospital Association to promote the American Heart Association's guidelines for the primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease. Together, these partners are working with health care systems, including FQHCs, medical schools, and insurance organizations.

Implications and Impact

This intervention shows how people benefit when state heart disease and stroke prevention programs provide leadership and partner with organizations that provide, monitor, and pay for primary and secondary prevention services. The state's participation in this collaborative with FQHCs is enhancing efforts to aggressively prevent heart disease and stroke, eliminate disparities, and increase people's access to quality care in these health care settings.