

# Arthritis



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visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/arthritis/index.htm>

# Alabama



## Reaching People With Arthritis in a Rural Community: Arthritis Self-Help Course

### Public Health Problem

Arthritis is one of the most common health problems in the United States, with 49 million adults having doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001—nearly 1 of every 4 adults. An additional 21 million Americans reported chronic joint symptoms. In Alabama, 1 million adults reported doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001, and another 345,000 adults reported chronic joint symptoms. About 46% of these 1.3 million adults have household incomes of less than \$20,000, and 50% have less than a high school education. In addition, limited access to health care continues to be a problem outside of the major metropolitan area of Birmingham.

### Program Example

Research has shown that pain and disability from arthritis can be minimized when the disease is diagnosed and treated early and when people know how to manage the disease and its effects, research has shown. The Arthritis Self-Help Course, developed at Stanford University, teaches people how to manage their arthritis and minimize its effects. This course, taught in a group setting, has been shown to reduce arthritis pain by 20% and physician visits by 40%. Alabama launched a project to improve quality of life for people with arthritis in Pine Apple, an underserved, rural, African American community. An existing program of community health advisors was used to deliver the Arthritis Self-Help Course. These advisors—lay people from the community trained to give health advice—actively encourage people with arthritis to attend the self-help course. When necessary, the advisors also provide assistance to make it easier for adults with arthritis to attend the group classes. Before this community project was launched, no citizens of Pine Apple had taken the self-help course. As a result of the efforts of the Alabama Arthritis Program and the community, 10 instructors have been trained in the 2-county area, and 80 people have taken the self-help course. The success in the Pine Apple area has also been reflected statewide. The number of Arthritis Self-Help Course leaders has increased 10-fold (more than 70 instructors), and there has been a 6-fold increase in the number of people who have taken the course (275 people with arthritis).

### Implications and Impact

Nationwide, the Arthritis Self-Help Course has reached less than 1% of the population who could benefit from it. More widespread use of this course would save money and reduce the burden of arthritis. This project demonstrates the importance of identifying and using strategies to increase the use of this self-help course in rural, underserved communities. Community-based projects like the Pine Apple project are more likely than traditional public health projects to be responsive to the needs and culture of the community and can serve as a model for reaching underserved populations in other states as well.

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## Promoting Physical Activity to Reduce the Burden of Arthritis in Rural and Underserved Populations

### Public Health Problem

Arthritis is one of the most common health problems in the United States, with 49 million adults having doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001—nearly 1 of every 4 adults. An additional 21 million Americans reported chronic joint symptoms. Arthritis limits everyday activities for more than 8 million U.S. citizens, making it the leading cause of disability in the United States. In Illinois, 2.1 million adults had doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001, and an additional 940,000 adults reported chronic joint symptoms. Arthritis is more common in rural areas of Illinois, where 33% of adults have arthritis, compared with 24% in Chicago and 29% in other urban areas of the state.

### Program Example

Illinois is increasing its efforts to reduce the burden of arthritis by offering more physical activity programs targeted to people with arthritis in five counties, representing rural and underserved populations. The programs—offered in partnership with county health departments and reaching more than 700 new participants—include the Arthritis Foundation's People With Arthritis Can Exercise (PACE<sup>®</sup>) program, aquatics physical activity programs, and the Arthritis Self-Help Course. Project coordinators in each county report that demand for the programs has exceeded expectations. To meet this demand, project coordinators are recruiting more course leaders and are looking for additional venues to offer these programs, which have been proven effective in reducing the effects of arthritis.

### Implications and Impact

These programs are proven effective in reducing the impact of arthritis and chronic joint symptoms by improving people's function and reducing their pain and need for physician visits. Yet these programs are rarely offered in rural and underserved areas, where arthritis is more prevalent than in urban areas. This state's strategy to expand these community-based programs can be a model for other states that want to offer similar programs in rural and underserved areas. This program suggests that working through local health departments might be an efficient way to provide effective interventions to people with arthritis in rural and underserved areas.

# Maryland

## Improving Quality of Life for People With Arthritis, Partnering With a Faith-Based Organization

### Public Health Problem

Arthritis is one of the most common health problems in the United States, with 49 million adults having doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001—nearly 1 of every 4 adults. An additional 21 million Americans reported chronic joint symptoms. In Maryland, 865,000 adults reported doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001, and an additional 326,000 adults reported chronic joint symptoms.

### Program Example

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is partnering with the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church (BWCUMC) and the Maryland Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation to improve quality of life for people with arthritis. The BWCUMC has 210,000 members in 702 churches in Maryland, the District of Columbia, and West Virginia. The three organizations aim to make people more aware of arthritis and improve their access to effective physical activity and self-management interventions in communities. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene had an exhibit at the BWCUMC's annual convention, where more than 2,000 members attended in June 2003. The *United Methodist Connection*, a newspaper of the BWCUMC, is publishing articles to increase people's awareness and knowledge about arthritis. In addition, the Maryland Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation is providing speakers for a series of workshops to increase public awareness and knowledge of available programs and services to help people with arthritis become active partners in the management of their disease. The workshops will be promoted through *E-Connection*, an e-mail communication to BWCUMC members that provides news, notices, and reminders. To meet anticipated demand for these arthritis programs and services, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Arthritis Foundation, Maryland Chapter will train leaders for two programs: People with Arthritis Can Exercise (PACE<sup>®</sup>) and the Arthritis Self-Help Course. Both programs are proven effective in reducing the effects of arthritis.

### Implications and Impact

In Maryland, only 13% of adults with arthritis have participated in arthritis education, self-help courses, or physical activity programs. More widespread use of these proven interventions could improve quality of life for people with arthritis and reduce both direct and indirect medical costs. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has partnered with a faith-based organization to expand the reach of these programs. This partnership can serve as a model for other states wanting to expand programs to reach people with arthritis, especially minority populations.

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## **Using the Media to Reach People With Arthritis: *Physical Activity. The Arthritis Pain Reliever Campaign***

### **Public Health Problem**

Arthritis is one of the most common health problems in the United States, with 49 million adults having doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001—nearly 1 of every 4 adults. An additional 21 million Americans reported chronic joint symptoms. In Oregon, 567,000 adults had doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001, and an additional 365,000 reported chronic joint symptoms.

### **Program Example**

The Arthritis Program of the Oregon Department of Human Services pilot-tested the CDC-developed health communications campaign, *Physical Activity. The Arthritis Pain Reliever*, in Bend, Oregon (population 52,000). About 39% of adults in Bend have arthritis. The campaign used broadcast and print media: 258 radio spots were run; 2,300 brochures were mailed to Medicare enrollees of the local health plan; and 3,900 brochures were mailed to Medicaid enrollees. In addition, articles about arthritis and People With Arthritis Can Exercise (PACE®) were published in the health system newsletter. Two newspapers and one bulletin used the drop-in articles, resulting in nearly 40,000 print media impressions. Finally, a local morning TV talk show featured an interview with the Arthritis Program's manager, who discussed arthritis and the benefits of physical activity.

### **Implications and Impact**

Oregon's campaign reached its targeted audience—people aged 45–64 years with low-socioeconomic status, both white and African American. After the campaign, a survey of 300 adults with arthritis revealed that 56% reported hearing a message about the health benefits of physical activity for arthritis. Of those who heard the message, 24% recalled the campaign theme, *Physical Activity. The Arthritis Pain Reliever*, and 71% recalled the message that “physical activity is good for arthritis.” About 14% of people in the campaign target group reported increasing their physical activity in response to something they read or heard. Oregon's experiences are a model for other states wanting to conduct the *Physical Activity. The Arthritis Pain Reliever* campaign.



## **Increasing Participation in Arthritis Self-Management Programs, Partnering With Health Care Organizations**

### **Public Health Problem**

Arthritis is one of the most common health problems in the United States, with 49 million adults having doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001—nearly 1 of every 4 adults. An additional 21 million Americans reported chronic joint symptoms. Arthritis limits everyday activities for more than 8 million U.S. citizens, making it the leading cause of disability in the United States. In Utah, 291,000 adults had doctor-diagnosed arthritis in 2001, and an additional 180,000 adults reported chronic joint symptoms. Self-management programs, such as physical activity and self-management education, can reduce the pain and disability of arthritis, yet less than 1% of people with arthritis have participated in such programs.

### **Program Example**

Utah has increased the number of people who participate in arthritis self-management programs by working with health care providers to increase public awareness of the importance of self-management and the availability of self-management programs. The Utah Arthritis Program and The Orthopedic Specialty Hospital partnered to deliver free arthritis education seminars in communities. At these seminars, participants receive basic information about arthritis and self-management techniques as well as an opportunity to evaluate their own arthritis-related needs. Participants are then referred to arthritis programs, including the 6-week Arthritis Self-Help Course, the Arthritis Foundation's People with Arthritis Can Exercise (PACE<sup>®</sup>) program, and aquatics physical activity programs. Of the more than 300 people attending these seminars, 20% have taken another step to better manage their arthritis by enrolling in a physical activity or arthritis self-management education program. The Utah Arthritis Program has been approached by other clinical providers wanting to launch similar efforts.

### **Implications and Impact**

Utah's efforts show how a successful partnership can increase participation in arthritis self-management programs that have been proven to improve quality of life for people with arthritis. Free community seminars increased people's awareness and use of physical activity and self-management education resources. Utah's experiences can be a model for other states wanting to improve quality of life for people with arthritis by increasing participation in these effective arthritis interventions.

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