

Hawaii

Partnering to Extend the Reach of Activities to Promote the Health of Older Adults

Public Health Problem

Levels of physical activity decline with age in the United States. In fact, older adults are less active than any other age-group, and there is no current indication that activity levels among older adults are increasing. If this trend continues as the baby-boom generation ages, both chronic conditions and related costs for medical care will increase dramatically. Promoting regular physical activity is an effective way of reducing disease and disability and increasing both independence and quality of life for older adults. Regular physical activity reduces the risk for developing coronary heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and osteoporosis. Physical activity can also be an effective treatment for older adults who have already developed arthritis, who have fallen, or who are depressed.

Program Example

The Training and Encouragement for Senior Activity (TESA) project, developed by the American Association for Active Lifestyles and Fitness, reached more than 650 Hawaiians in partnership with AARP Hawaii. The workshops promoted physical activity for older adults aged 50 years or older and provided older adults with the knowledge and tools needed to begin a physical activity program. The workshops covered goal setting and motivation, heart-healthy activities, strength-building activities, and nutrition education. AARP will continue to use TESA's existing workshop materials and expertise in physical activity for older adults as part of a statewide physical activity campaign named Shape-Up Hawaii.

Implications and Impact

The invitation to bring TESA to Hawaii has spurred a number of activities in the state. For instance, AARP's donation of program materials, including pedometers, allowed TESA to reach more participants than in previous workshops. TESA has continued to seek partners when presenting the workshops to extend the program's reach in other communities. In addition, the TESA workshops provided the kick-off for a statewide physical activity program, Shape-Up Hawaii, which promoted a number of activities for older adults to earn points in completing a virtual journey across the state. AARP will track changes in behavior of the participants in the TESA workshops over a 4-month period during the Shape-Up Hawaii campaign and will share the results with the TESA program. The TESA workshops have provided an opportunity for CDC and the AARP office in Hawaii to work together at the state level to promote the health of older Hawaiians.