

NCCDPHP Success Story

Expanding EnhanceFitness to Improve Arthritis Outcomes



At A Glance

In New York State (NYS), 1 in 4 adults has arthritis. Increased physical activity can relieve pain and stiffness associated with arthritis and improve overall quality of life. Lifestyle management programs like EnhanceFitness can help adults get, and stay, active. Beginning in 2015, the NYS Arthritis Program collaborated with the New York State YMCA Foundation, Inc. (the Foundation) to deliver EnhanceFitness to adults. Because of these efforts, the program is available at 40 locations in 22 counties.

By Celeste Roeller Harp

Public Health Challenge

The prevalence of arthritis is highest among older adults in New York. In fact, 51% of New Yorkers aged 65 or older have doctor-diagnosed arthritis, which is expected to increase as the population ages. Arthritis is also more common among people living in rural areas. Studies have shown that physical activity can improve arthritis symptoms. However, adults with arthritis are less likely to get physical activity than those without arthritis (21% vs. 31%). Lifestyle management programs like EnhanceFitness can help adults with arthritis get active and feel better. The NYS Arthritis Program teamed up with the Foundation with locations across the state, with a focus on reaching older adults and adults in rural areas.

Approach

With 130 locations statewide and a history of quality evidence-based programming, the Foundation and its network of YMCAs was a perfect fit to offer EnhanceFitness at the community level. Local YMCAs are strategic partners with local credibility. By offering this program on site and in other community settings, they are better able to serve older adults in both rural and urban areas. Starting in 2015 and over the next 3 years, startup funds were provided to three cohorts of YMCA Association, the entity that owns and operates YMCA branches, to offset initial costs of program delivery, such as training, equipment costs, and marketing.

“When I began the program, my knee was so painful, most of my activity was limited. I now have less pain and I now am able to climb stairs in the normal way! I recommend this program to everyone, old or young.”

- Mark K.

Results

When the project started in July 2015, 11 YMCAs delivered EnhanceFitness. By 2018, 14 YMCAs were offering the program in diverse areas across the state. Since those initial efforts, 113 EnhanceFitness instructors and 5 faculty-level trainers were trained, and 120 YMCA staff were selected to complete the Certified Inclusive Fitness Training program to better accommodate older adults and those with mobility limitations. This increase in capacity resulted in increased program delivery. In 2015, 150 people participated in EnhanceFitness. As of May 2018, participation in the program had increased, reaching over 700 ongoing participants. The number of sites delivering the program had increased to 40.

What's Next

The NYS Arthritis Program and the Foundation continue to support the delivery of EnhanceFitness throughout the state and to expand the program to other YMCAs and community locations. Ongoing technical assistance is provided to help YMCAs embed these programs into routine operations. Quarterly calls and webinars are held to improve and expand delivery. The NYS Arthritis Program and the Foundation will continue to recruit and support strategic YMCAs to deliver the program to adults of all ages.

Find Out More

Local coalitions and networks are great partners to get the word out or host EnhanceFitness. Licensing costs are \$3,000 for the first year and \$50 every year after. For more information on costs or to offer the program, contact Paige Hughes at phughes@ymcanys.org. To support other arthritis programs in your community, please contact the NYS Arthritis Program: ebsmp@health.ny.gov. This project was supported by CDC cooperative agreement DP12-1210 and continues with DP18-1803.

Contact

Celeste Roeller Harp

New York State Department of Health
The Riverview Center
150 Broadway, Suite 350
Albany, NY 12204
Phone: 518-408-5142

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Web site

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

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<https://wwwn.cdc.gov/dcs/ContactUs/Form>

The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

