

Marshall University Center for Rural Health A Success Story for Chronic Disease Self-Management

Problem: In 2007, West Virginia had the fourth highest prevalence rate (10.8%) of diabetes in all 59 states and territories. Rates of other chronic diseases such as cardiovascular, obesity, arthritis and asthma are also higher than the national average. Due to the increased longevity of our population, there are greater numbers of people living with chronic conditions. These chronic illnesses require increased complexity of care with a focus on management versus short term treatment. In the past, people with chronic conditions have become accustomed to episodic as opposed to continuous care with a focus on the provider as the primary decision-maker. Traditional chronic disease education provides disease-specific knowledge, but does not provide self-management skills training. We must recognize that most chronic care management occurs outside the clinic in the home and community environment and people often struggle to incorporate chronic disease management into their daily lives.

Program: The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) is an evidence-based program developed at Stanford University. This highly participatory skill-based program teaches people how to deal with the symptoms and emotions of living with chronic conditions. West Virginia has adopted CDSMP and calls it "Help Yourself". The 6-week "Help Yourself" program is co-led by the WV Diabetes Prevention and Control partners, clinic staff, and community/lay leaders.

Traditionally Master Training is only provided at Stanford University, however in November 2007, Stanford University approved Marshall University to sponsor a *CDSMP Master Training* in Charleston WV. This unique opportunity allowed 16 new partnerships to join the effort to disseminate the program with a considerable savings of both time and fiscal resources. The new master trainers are certified by Stanford to lead workshops and train leaders who will help spread the evidence based program. New strategic partners included: The WV Bureau of Senior Services, WVU Center on Aging, Thomas Memorial Hospital, Boone County Health Department, Bluestone Health Association, WV Primary Care Association, WV Office of Health Service Research/Diabetes Prevention and Control, Change Incorporated, Family Medical Care, and Senior Services of Virginia.

Impact: Of the 16 newly trained master trainers, 15 have completed at least 2 workshop series and are involved in conducting leader trainings to help spread the program statewide. Since November, partner progress includes:

- 17 Help Yourself workshops (6 weeks) completed with a total of 154 participants.
- 3 leader trainings are planned for fall, 2008 in Charleston, Welch, and Morgantown.
- All 16 newly trained Master Trainers are creatively integrating self management language and goal setting into their work and promoting self management skills and tools statewide.

A *Help Yourself Toolkit for Rural Communities* has been developed to support leaders to conduct the 6-week workshops. The toolkit was developed based on the results of interviews with 76 trained leaders. The interviews gathered information about individuals' experiences, barriers and fears faced, and useful resources. Qualitative data analysis was used to identify themes and strategies to inform the development of the toolkit and guide leaders through the process of implementing a course in their own communities. The toolkit contains the following components: basic concepts of chronic disease self-management; description of the course, promotion and recruitment, course logistics, facilitation guide, and course evaluation.

A *Help Yourself webpage* – www.wvhelpyourself.org has been posted with a system for tracking use of program and sharing resources.