

Chronic Disease Disparity Programs

Cardiovascular Health Programs. Cardiovascular disease prevention research encourages implementation of multi-faceted approaches to the prevention and control of heart disease. Lifestyle improvements beginning at young ages include not smoking, healthy diets, and regular physical activity. Improved access to care can increase early detection and control diagnosed risk factor conditions such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol. These behaviors can have a large public health impact. In addition, the environment in which a person lives influences exposure to heart disease risk factors such as available choices for smoke-free space, nutritious food, physical activity, and psychological stress. Policy-related or environmental changes can encourage smoke-free environments and improve access to nutritious food.

Wisconsin's Cardiovascular Health (CVH) Program in the Division of Public Health works in partnership with citizens, advocacy groups, health organizations, health professionals, local health departments, and other governmental agencies to decrease risk factors for heart disease and stroke. The CVH Program also conducts surveillance to identify trends and emerging issues in the state related to heart disease. An example of such reporting is the Wisconsin Cardiovascular Disease Surveillance Summary, which provides detailed information about cardiovascular disease in Wisconsin.

A number of CVH Program activities focus specifically on reducing risk factors for heart disease and stroke in racial/ethnic minority groups. One example is support for the American Heart Association's "Search Your Heart" program, which currently operates in seven Wisconsin counties to provide faith-based programming to decrease risk factors for heart disease and stroke. Programs such as "Stroke Sunday" work with churches to provide culturally relevant programs that aim to decrease the incidence of stroke through reduction of risk factors and to lessen the effects of a stroke through early identification and appropriate responses to a stroke. The CVH Program also works with the African American Health Network of Dane County to provide awareness, education, and screening to promote healthy lifestyles and identify and reduce risks for cardiovascular disease among African Americans.

Diabetes Prevention and Control Program. The Wisconsin Diabetes Prevention and Control Program (DPCP) in the Division of Public Health focuses on improving diabetes care in Wisconsin through active partnerships representing providers, consumers, private citizens, policy makers, and others from both the private and public sectors. The DPCP has a strong history of working with various partners to reduce health disparities.

The Wisconsin Diabetes Advisory Group, established in 1997, includes partners from over 60 key stakeholders involved in diabetes care and education in Wisconsin; activities of the group include developing culturally-specific resource materials that are meaningful in appearance and content to persons in racial/ethnic minority groups. The Advisory Group recently completed work on the Wisconsin Diabetes Strategic Plan. In the Plan, a section is devoted to reducing diabetes health disparities in Wisconsin. The section includes working to enhance cultural

competence of health care professionals and identifying and implementing culturally appropriate and effective prevention strategies to identify and reduce diabetes-related health disparities.

In addition, DPCP partners with the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association and federally supported health centers to improve care for individuals with diabetes. Many of the patients at these centers are racial/ethnic minorities and medically underserved individuals. The health centers established diabetes registries and are monitoring care for individuals with diabetes. The DPCP also works with the Great Lakes Intertribal Council to provide assistance to Wisconsin tribes.

Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Control Program. The Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Control (CCC) Program is an integrated and coordinated approach to reducing cancer incidence, morbidity, and mortality through prevention, early detection, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliation. CCC is achieved through a broad partnership of public and private stakeholders whose shared mission is to reduce the overall burden of cancer in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan 2005-2010 has recently been developed. The plan addresses crosscutting issues that encompass the continuum of cancer care, including the crosscutting issue of disparities. Priorities and strategies developed in the Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan work to eliminate health disparities. These include differences in cancer incidence, mortality, and related adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups.

Wisconsin Well Woman Program. The Wisconsin Well Woman Program (WWWP) provides preventive health screening services to low-income, uninsured or underinsured women ages 35-64 in all 72 counties and 11 tribes. Since 1994, the WWWP has provided breast and cervical cancer screening services as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. Since 1998, the State of Wisconsin has also provided funding for screening and diagnostic tests related to depression, domestic abuse, high blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol levels and osteoporosis.

Approximately 12,000 women receive WWWP screening services annually. Of the 8,000 women who receive mammograms through this program annually, approximately 15% are African American women primarily from southeastern Wisconsin. In an effort to increase screening rates among Native American women who have never or rarely been screened for cervical cancer, the WWWP is working with the American Cancer Society to recruit and enroll more women living on reservations throughout Wisconsin. The WWWP is also working with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee House of Peace Community Nursing Program to increase breast and cervical cancer screening rates among Southeast Asian women in Milwaukee.

Arthritis Program. The Arthritis Program collaborated with the Arthritis Foundation-Wisconsin Chapter to write an action plan, including a component to promote physical activity as an arthritis pain reliever and an Arthritis Self-Management Training in Spanish for Latina health workers.