



**June/July 2012 Health Note**  
**~ Evidence-Based Programs for Women as They Age ~**

One of the buzz words we hear a lot lately is “evidence-based programs.” What exactly are they and why are they important? How will they help women as they age?

**Evidence-Based Programs**

Programs that are called ‘evidence-based’ or ‘evidence-based health promotion’ have been extensively studied and shown to be effective in reducing disease, disability, and injury. In 2003, the HHS Administration on Aging (AoA) began its Evidence-Based Prevention Program to identify effective interventions and increase seniors’ access to these interventions. The AoA supports the dissemination of evidence-based programs by awarding grants to states.<sup>i</sup>

Two established national expert panels - the United States Preventive Services Task Force and the Community Preventive Services Task Force - specifically recommend evidence-based preventive strategies in clinical and community settings in order to reduce the preventable burden of disease.<sup>ii</sup>

**The Burden of Chronic Disease**

Chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes are among the most common, costly, and preventable of all health problems. Seven of every 10 U.S. residents who die each year die of a chronic disease.<sup>iii</sup>

**Los Angeles County Women and Chronic Disease**

In Los Angeles County, the percent of adult women with depression, diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol, and hypertension increases with age:<sup>iv</sup>

- 36% of women under 50 reported being diagnosed with 1 or more chronic diseases
- 72% of women ages 50-64 reported being diagnosed with 1 or more chronic diseases
- 83% of women age 65+ reported being diagnosed with 1 or more chronic diseases
  - 53% of women age 65+ reported being diagnosed with 2-5 of these conditions.

In 2010, over 612,000 women in L.A. County were 65 years or older.<sup>v</sup> By 2030, that number is expected to nearly double.<sup>vi</sup> An aging population experiencing more chronic disease will have a significant impact on the healthcare system. Implementing effective interventions are critical to improving health and quality of life.

**Why Choose Evidence-Based Programs?**

Evidence-based programs (EBPs) are effective, research-based interventions to improve the health and well-being of participants.<sup>vii</sup> EBPs can mitigate the negative impact of chronic diseases and injuries such as falls by providing the education and tools designed to empower participants with self-confidence in their ability to manage their health conditions.<sup>viii</sup> Funders are increasingly demanding evidence-based programs.

The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, also known as *Healthier Living* in Los Angeles and California, is a good example of an evidence-based program. The program, developed at Stanford School of Medicine, consists of a series of two and a half hour highly interactive workshops given once a week for six weeks in a community setting such as a senior center,

church, library or hospital. Workshops are facilitated by a pair of leaders, one or both of whom are non-health professionals with a chronic disease themselves. The focus is on coping strategies applicable to all chronic diseases.

To evaluate the program, over 1,000 people with heart disease, lung disease, stroke or arthritis participated in a randomized, controlled test and were followed for up to 3 years. Participants demonstrated significant improvements in exercise, cognitive symptom management, and communication with physicians. In addition, their self-reported general health, health distress, fatigue, disability, and social/role activities limitations also showed significant improvement. During the first 6 months of the program, participants spent fewer days in the hospital than in the previous 6 months, and there was a trend toward fewer outpatient visits and hospitalizations.<sup>x</sup>

### **Evidence-Based Health Promotion Programs for Older Adults**

Although chronic diseases increase with age, the good news is that we have a growing number of tools enabling us to minimize the impact of chronic diseases on everyday life and to slow or stop their progression! EBPs have been shown to be effective at helping participants adopt healthy behaviors, improve their health status, and reduce their use of hospital services and emergency room visits.<sup>x</sup> Evidence-based health promotion programs for older adults are available on a wide range of topics including Chronic Disease, Caregiving, Medication Management, Emotional Health, and Fall Prevention.

### **Resources for Evidence-Based Programs for Older Adults**

- Partners in Care Foundation: [http://www.picf.org/landing\\_pages/110,3.html](http://www.picf.org/landing_pages/110,3.html)  
A non-profit organization designated as the California Department of Aging's State Program Office to provide statewide coordination, leadership, technical assistance, and evaluations for EBPs. Partners in Care collaborates with organizations, families, and community leaders to disseminate programs. Contact them to learn more about evidence-based programs and how you can implement them in your area.
- LA County Community & Senior Services Department: <http://www.css.lacounty.gov>  
or call the Area Agency on Aging for information: 1-800-510-2020
- The City of Los Angeles Department of Aging: For Information, call 213-252-4030  
<http://aging.lacity.org/pdf/LADOA%20Approved%20Evidenced-Based%20Programs.pdf>
- HHS Administration on Aging:  
[http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/HPW/Title\\_IIID/index.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HPW/Title_IIID/index.aspx)
- National Council on Aging: Center for Healthy Aging: <http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/center-for-healthy-aging/>

#### **LA County Workshop - How to Implement an Evidence-Based Program**

The Office of Women's Health and the Healthy Aging Collaborative is convening a workshop for CBOs on how to implement evidence-based programs for women as they age.

To find out more and how to participate, please contact Elizabeth Stillwell, RN.  
([estillwell@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:estillwell@ph.lacounty.gov))

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<sup>i</sup> HHS Administration on Aging: [http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/HPW/Evidence\\_Based/index.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HPW/Evidence_Based/index.aspx)

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf07/methods/tfmethods.htm>

<sup>iii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/>

<sup>iv</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. LA HEALTH: *Healthy Women: Wellness Across the Life Span*, October 2010.

<sup>v</sup> 2010 U.S. Census

<sup>vi</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. *Healthy Aging: A Guide to Important Health Topics Among Older Women in Los Angeles County*, 2010.

<sup>vii</sup> National Council on Aging: Center for Healthy Aging: [http://www.nasuad.org/documentation/policy\\_priorities/UsingtheEvidenceBasetoPromoteHealthyAging.pdf](http://www.nasuad.org/documentation/policy_priorities/UsingtheEvidenceBasetoPromoteHealthyAging.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> HHS Administration on Aging: [http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/HPW/Title\\_IIID/index.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HPW/Title_IIID/index.aspx)

<sup>ix</sup> Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, Stanford School of Medicine, Patient Education <http://patienteducation.stanford.edu/programs/cdsmp.html>

<sup>x</sup> HHS Administration on Aging: [http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/HPW/Title\\_IIID/index.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HPW/Title_IIID/index.aspx)