

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Kara Titus
Phone: 785-291-3684
Kara.Titus@ks.gov

CDC acknowledges Kansas arthritis management efforts

TOPEKA, Kan. – In honor of World Arthritis Day on October 12, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) highlighted the efforts of several states across the nation who are working to help those in rural and underserved communities to manage their chronic health conditions better. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Kansas Arthritis Program was highlighted for their work with community partners offering Chronic Disease Self-Management Program workshops in rural areas, especially those most impacted by arthritis.

Approximately 1 in 4 Kansas adults are living with an arthritic disease. Some of the most common of these are conditions like osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, and gout. Co-occurring chronic conditions are common in individuals with arthritis. About 53% of adults with arthritis have hypertension and 20% have diabetes. This is not just a burden on the health of our population, but also a financial burden. The CDC estimated that during 2013, the annual medical cost of arthritis in the U.S. was \$140 billion and the cost of lost wages was \$164 billion, adding up to \$304 billion spent on this disease.

While these numbers are staggering, there are evidence-based programs available across the state to help individuals living with a chronic disease to more effectively manage their health. The Stanford-developed Chronic Disease Self-Management Program is a 6-week workshop led by trained leaders. The workshops teach techniques for managing the physical and emotional issues those with a chronic condition may experience and help to improve participants' communication with their caregivers and health providers. Physical activity programs are also available. Walk with Ease is a 6-week walking class developed by the Arthritis Foundation which provides education on the disease and increases participants' ability to be active. It can either be led by a certified leader in a group setting or completed individually with a workbook. EnhanceFitness is an exercise class for all levels held on an ongoing basis by certified leaders at YMCA locations across the state. For more information and to find out how to locate any of these CDC-recommended programs near you, please visit www.ToolsForBetterHealthKS.org.

To read the CDC's feature on Kansas' work to support those living with chronic conditions in rural areas, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/rural-arthritis-help/index.html>.

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