



# Living Well with Chronic Conditions *Program Fact Sheet*

## ***Why are chronic conditions a concern?***

Chronic illness is classified as an illness that recurs or persists for a long period and may last for a person's entire life. Examples of such conditions include arthritis, asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic pain, anxiety, stroke, chronic pulmonary disease, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, obesity and side effects from cancer treatment. Such conditions are the principal cause of disability and the major reason for seeking health care. Chronic disease accounts for over 70% of all health care expenditures. Nearly 1 in 2 Americans suffer from a chronic condition. Sixty percent of persons with a chronic condition are between the ages of 18 and 64. Ninety percent of seniors have at least one chronic illness, and 77% have two or more conditions. However, those with these conditions are not the only ones affected. Family members and friends are affected as well. For people who have one or more chronic illnesses 65% are living in pain, 65% are stressed and 50% are depressed. The present medical model ignores the issues of fear, pain, anger and fatigue, which all interfere with people's lives. Without improving the health of persons with chronic conditions, the cost of health care will continue to skyrocket.

## ***What is the Living Well with Chronic Conditions program?***

Developed by Stanford University, this evidence-based program is a six-week group education workshop that meets once a week for two hours for individuals with chronic diseases. This program teaches people to be self-managers of their disease. Through weekly sessions, the workshop provides support for continuing normal daily activities and dealing with the emotions that arise from having a chronic health condition.



Workshops are fun and interactive. Participants share their successes and build a common source of support. The workshop builds confidence around managing health, staying active and enjoying life. Family and friends are also welcome to attend the workshop. Each participant who completes the workshop receives a copy of the book, *Living a Healthy Life With Chronic Conditions*, and a relaxation CD.

Living Well with Chronic Conditions Program can help people with chronic conditions make the most of their medical care and communicate more effectively with their health care providers. The workshop content complements ongoing programs or medical treatment. It is designed to enhance regular medical treatment and disease-specific education. For people with more than one health problem, this program is especially useful because it teaches skills that help them address the challenges of living with multiple health problems.

## ***Can self-care programs make a difference?***

Yes. Too often overlooked in the discussions about drugs and surgeries, people with chronic diseases themselves are critical to managing their disease. Most of their care is self-care,

taking place in homes and communities, rather than clinics and hospitals. Self-management programs are among the most effective and cost-effective tools to assist people with becoming effective self-managers. They lead to better clinical outcomes by helping individuals gain the confidence to manage their symptoms, and in many cases, the progression of their illness.



### ***How was the program developed?***

Living Well with Chronic Conditions is the same as the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) developed by Stanford University. For more information about this program, visit the Stanford Patient Education Research Center website at <http://patienteducation.stanford.edu/programs/>. The program utilizes educational strategies that focus on building program participants' self-efficacy (confidence one has that he or she can master a new skill or affect one's own health). The content of the workshop was the result of focus groups with people with chronic disease, in which the participants discussed which content areas were the most important to them.

### ***What are the benefits of the program?***

Living Well with Chronic Conditions has a strong research base of a variety of randomized control trials, which have consistently demonstrated that the program results in improved quality of life among participants that endure for up to two years. This program has proven beneficial through participants' demonstrated improvements in exercise, cognitive symptom management, and communication with physicians. Additional benefits include improvements in self-reported general health through decreased health distress, fatigue, disability, and social/role activities limitations. These improvements in health have directly led to trends of fewer outpatient visits and hospitalizations, which have the economic advantages of a cost to savings ratio of approximately 1:10. Many studies have shown a decrease in number of hospitalizations and length of hospital stay. Within the Kaiser Permanente System, the saving far outstripped the cost of the program. Furthermore, the data has shown positive results of the program to persist for as long as three years.

### ***Why is this program unique and effective?***

It is the processes used to teach the program that make it so effective. Classes are highly participative, where mutual support and success build the participants' confidence (self-efficacy) in their ability to manage their health and maintain active and fulfilling lives. Such processes include action planning, brainstorming, feedback and problem-solving. The leaders

teaching the program are highly qualified. They must be certified by completing a four-day training and teaching the program once.

### ***Does the program replace existing programs or treatments?***



This program will not conflict with existing programs or treatment. It is designed to enhance regular treatment and disease-specific education such as Better Breathers, cardiac rehabilitation, or diabetes instruction. In addition, many people have more than one chronic condition. The program is especially helpful for these people, as it gives them the skills to coordinate all the things needed to manage their health, as well as to help them keep active in their lives.

### ***What topics are covered?***

Topics covered include: 1) techniques to deal with problems experienced by persons dealing with one or more chronic conditions such as frustration, fatigue, anger, pain and isolation, 2) appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility, and endurance, 3) appropriate use of medications, 4) communicating effectively with family, friends, and health professionals, 5) healthy eating, and 6) managing stress and relaxation.

### ***Who should attend this program?***

Individuals with a chronic condition, caregivers and family members are encouraged to attend this program.

### ***How many participants can one program accommodate?***

One program will accommodate eight to twenty participants.

### ***Who teaches the workshop?***

The workshop is taught by two certified leaders, who have completed an intensive four-day certification training conducted by certified master trainers. At least one leader has a chronic condition. Master trainers become certified by completing a four and half day training conducted by Stanford University.



### ***How to become a certified leader?***

Contact one of the state contacts listed below for information about leader certification trainings being conducted across the state.

### ***Would you like to bring this program to your clientele or patients?***

The success of this program is dependent on accessing persons with chronic conditions. We welcome others to join this state partnership by promoting the program to your clientele/patients and/or by providing staff to become certified leaders.

## **What agencies/organizations are delivering this program in Tennessee?**

This program is being funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Administration on Aging and University of Tennessee Extension. At the state-level, the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability, Tennessee Department of Health, Tennessee Arthritis Foundation and UT Extension have partnered to deliver this program across the state. Partners at the regional and county levels include the statewide network of UT Extension educators, aging network of five Area Agencies on Aging and Disability, senior centers, hospitals, health departments, churches, recreation centers, primary care clinics, schools and others groups.

## **For more information about this program, please contact University of Tennessee Extension:**

Dr. Bobbi Clarke, Professor and Health Specialist, [bclarke@utk.edu](mailto:bclarke@utk.edu) /865-974-8197 or Ms. Jessica Taylor, Arthritis Education Program Coordinator and Health Specialist, [jtaylo22@utk.edu](mailto:jtaylo22@utk.edu) / 865-974-7393, who are both certified master trainers.

## **Key Articles**

Kennedy, Reeves, et al. *The Effectiveness and Cost Effectiveness of a National Lay-Led Self-Care Support Programme for Patients with Long-Term Conditions: A Pragmatic Randomised Controlled Trial*. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health (UK)*, 2007; 61:254-261

Lorig, Ritter, and Gonzalez. *Hispanic chronic disease self-management*. *Nursing Research*, 2003, Nov/Dec, Vol 52, #6, pp 361-369.

Lorig, Ritter, et al. *Chronic Disease Self-Management Program 2-Year Health Status and Health Care Utilization Outcomes*. *Medical Care*. 2001, Vol 39, #11, pp1217-1223.

Lorig, Ritter, and Jacquez. *Outcomes of Border Health Spanish/English Chronic Disease Self-management Programs*. *The Diabetes Educator*; 2005, 31; pp 401-409.

Lorig, Sobel, et al. *Evidence Suggesting That a Chronic Disease Self-Management Program Can Improve Health Status While Reducing Hospitalization*. *Effective Clinical Practice*. 1999, Vol 37(1), pp 5-14.

Lorig, Sobel, et al. *Effect of a Self-Management Program on Patients with Chronic Disease*. *Effective Clinical Practice*. 2001, [acponline.org/journals/ecp/novdeco1/lorig.htm](http://acponline.org/journals/ecp/novdeco1/lorig.htm)

McGowan. *Implementation and Evaluation of the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program in the Yukon*. *Yukon Chronic Disease Self-Management Program Evaluation*, Fall 1998

Sobel, Lorig, and Hobbs. *Chronic Disease Self-Management Program: From Development to Dissemination*. *The Permanente Journal*, Spring 2002, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp 15-22.

