

# Effectiveness

**H**ealth care should be effective. Diagnostic testing and treatments should be based on scientific knowledge. Evidence-based medical practice should be provided to all who could benefit, but not to persons not likely to benefit. Effective care ensures that medical services are neither underused nor overused.<sup>1</sup>

The following nine sections focus on common health care conditions and topics of interest.

- Maternal Child Health
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Respiratory Disease
- Heart Disease
- Behavioral Health
- Oral Health
- Long Term Care
- End of Life Care

## Spotlights on Quality

There are a few ongoing quality improvement efforts in the state that address important issues not included in the subsections of this chapter. Descriptions of these efforts follow.

### Relevant Resources

#### National Guideline Clearinghouse (NGC)

A public resource for evidence-based clinical practice guidelines. NGC is sponsored by the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) in partnership with the American Medical Association and the American Association of Health Plans. <http://www.guideline.gov/index.asp>

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Medicine, *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century*. Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 2001 pg. 52.

## Community-Based Osteoporosis Education

*A Rural Outreach Program to Promote Prevention and Early Detection of Osteoporosis in Women*

### Background

Nationally, it is known that one in two women over age 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime. In addition, one-fourth of those who suffer an osteoporosis-related hip fracture and were ambulatory before their fracture, will require long-term care after the fracture. While specific data regarding the incidence in Vermont of osteoporosis and its debilitating outcomes are not readily available, increasing the percentage of women who are counseled about osteoporosis prevention is among the goals of Healthy Vermonters 2010. Nearly 30% of the female population in the North Country Health System (NCHS) service area are age 55 and over, thus the risks of hospitalizations, lengthier convalescence, and impaired quality of life are greater in this area. A community-based osteoporosis education project was developed to help raise community awareness about prevention and early detection.



- Track number and age of women attending educational sessions, and town of residence to assure adequate geographic spread by project
- Measure change in osteoporosis knowledge via pre- and post-tests administered at educational sessions.
- Measure effectiveness of educational sessions via a brief evaluation tool administered at most sessions.

(Some settings, e.g. work sites did not allow adequate time for this.)

### Activities

The population of Vermont's rural northeastern counties which are served by NCHS is associated with significant economic and educational challenges. In 2001, with support from the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, NCHS implemented a community-based outreach program for osteoporosis education. A community health educator/registered nurse developed an educational display and presentation that was implemented at over 40 sites throughout the two counties. Over 500 women were reached through group presentations and additional numbers were reached through community and work site health fairs and events.

### Outcomes

Pre- and post-test scores which ranged from an increase of from 7% to 29%, with an average increase of 13%, revealed a significant increase in knowledge about osteoporosis. A lack of understanding that osteoporosis might be preventable and an

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### Project Goals

- Increase the number of women in the NCHS service area under 50 who are counseled about osteoporosis prevention, and those over 50 who are counseled about the need for early detection
- Increase osteoporosis knowledge in at least 250 women throughout the NCHS service area

..... SPOTLIGHT ON IMPROVEMENT .....

**Community-Based Osteoporosis Education**

attitude that it is a disease solely of older women emerged as obstacles for reaching a significant number of younger women in this rural area. Many older participants of the educational sessions who see their primary care providers regularly had received screening previously, others were informed of the screening available at NCHS and were advised to see a health care provider in the future.

**Next Steps**

A modified osteoporosis awareness campaign continues targeting younger women about prevention and older women about the need for early detection.

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