



news release

January 4, 2010

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The Wellmark Foundation provides funding for disease self-management program for older adults

DES MOINES, IA (January 4, 2010) – The Wellmark Foundation has awarded a two-year, \$144,744 grant to the Iowa Department on Aging to expand a disease self-management program designed to improve the health of older adults in the state.

The Iowa Healthy Links/Wellmark Foundation Initiative will expand the successful Iowa Healthy Links' evidence-based Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP), primarily designed for Iowans 55 years and older, into 19 mostly rural counties, says John McCalley, director, Iowa Department of Aging.

“Healthy Links CDSMP has improved and enhanced the lives of older adults who have participated in its workshops, successfully helping hundreds of Iowans learn to manage their own health,” says McCalley. “This project will help create the infrastructure to connect individuals and entire communities with the Healthy Links workshops in these 19 counties.”

McCalley explains that six community workshops will be conducted in each county. Participants will learn to set achievable and obtainable goals, create step-by-step action plans to improve their health, and explore techniques to help them reduce the burden of chronic conditions. The emphasis of the program is on wellness and prevention, not clinical disease management.

In addition, Healthy Links will also target Latino individuals of all ages in Iowa, sharing the program information in a culturally appropriate format.

Program partners include many agencies and organizations serving older adults, county health departments, colleges and universities, hospitals and clinics, and businesses throughout the 19 participating counties. For more information on Iowa Healthy Links, contact Mabelle Shaffer at 515-725-3312 or mabelle.shaffer@iowa.gov.

The Wellmark Foundation has provided approximately \$17.43 million to fund 428 health-related grants in Iowa and South Dakota since 1997, including \$447,395 in this *Healthy Communities: Supporting a Culture of Wellness & Prevention* funding cycle. “The Wellmark Foundation works to improve the health of Iowans and South Dakotans,” says Matthew McGarvey, director of The Wellmark Foundation. “We are pleased to support Iowa Healthy Links, a comprehensive program that focuses on wellness and prevention, which will work to measurably improve the health of many older adults in Iowa.”

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