Innovations: The Council of State Governments- Awards Application

Id# 12-S-20-OK

State: Oklahoma

Assign Program Category (applicant): Corrections

Program Name: Offender Peer Education for Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP)
Living Longer Living Stronger (LLLS)

Administering Agency: Oklahoma Department of Corrections

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1. Program Duration:
   The Oklahoma Department of Corrections would like to nominate the Chronic Disease Self-Management offender led prison program known as CDSMP Living Longer Living Stronger for the Innovations Awards. This prison program began in 9/2009 and is currently operating collaboratively with the Oklahoma State Department of Health and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. This Public Health intervention facilitated mostly by prison peer educators is an offender-centered, participatory and culturally appropriate health education program designed for ageing offenders living with chronic disease.

2. Describe the program:
   • Why was it created? The program was created to teach incarcerated people with chronic illness a healthy way to live with a disease. The program teaches about the seemingly paradoxical notion of living longer and stronger with a chronic disease by overcoming the physical and emotional problems caused by disease. The goal of the program is to achieve the strongest possible physical endurance and capability to obtain maximum pleasure from life. The program teaches about self-management of chronic disease by providing ageing offenders with the skills to manage their lives in the face of chronic illness.

   • Why is it a new and creative approach or method? This innovative method draws from the strength and skills of existing prison peer educators who teach about infectious
disease to facilitate this chronic disease program. The existing and some newly trained peer educators are trained by CDSMP Master Community Trainers to impart the knowledge and skills to other incarcerated offenders who choose to participate in the program. Currently, the Oklahoma Department of Corrections is the only State utilizing the expertise of peer offenders to accomplish this model of education.

- **What are the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order?**
  
  In 2008 the Oklahoma State Department of Health was tasked with providing the Chronic Disease Self Management Program in rural communities. The program was funded by the Department of Human Services. Unfortunately, the program lacked participation and in 2009 the Department of Corrections was contacted to grant permission to begin the CDSMP LLLS program for incarcerated people. The program was graciously received by the Department of Corrections utilizing a Master Community and Health Department Trainer to help incarcerated people live with their chronic diseases. During 2010 the notion of utilizing existing prison peer educators was developed and a pilot test was conducted at one particular prison. Through qualitative measures the pilot test revealed that peer educators exemplified peer education theory by: 1) exerting a positive behavioral influence on other offenders, 2) imparted education in a contextual and sensitive manner, 3) prison peer educators were seen as credible and non-judgmental and 4) offenders offered other offenders education from an individual with similar concerns. Program participation soared and peer education theory to practice was enabled through CDSMP LLLS activities that helped offenders modify knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors about their own health.

In 2011 the Department of Corrections’ recognized CDSMP LLLS as an official program and granted up to 10 days of earned credit for offenders who successfully completed the program. Furthermore, the Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Corrections designed a protocol to track pre and posttest measures for offender’s cholesterol, weight, blood pressure and HGB AIC and number of medications and doctor office visits to assess differences before and after the CDSMP LLLS intervention. This protocol is now the focus of a Department of Human Services IRB approved research study. Moreover in 2012 the prison CDSMP LLLS program expanded to eight correctional facilities. Specific activities facilitated by prison peer educators include: 1) techniques to deal with pain, isolation, fatigue and frustration (meditation and grounding), 2) exercises for improving strength, endurance and flexibility, 3) appropriate use of medications, 4) techniques for communicating with family 5) information and activities on healthy nutrition and 6) skill building activities on how to evaluate treatment.

- **Is it effective? Provide tangible results and examples.** The program is effective in reaching offenders evidenced by its expansion from one facility to eight facilities. Moreover, when CDSMP peer educators are community corrections eligible from a
higher level security prison, he or she requests permission to continue teaching in the program or to begin a new prison program in their current facility. In addition, the following statistics represent the increase in offenders who graduated the program and the increasing program participation utilizing prison peer educators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CDSMP (LLLS) graduates</th>
<th>2010 taught by community leaders</th>
<th>249</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDSMP (LLLS) graduates</td>
<td>2011 taught by prison peer educators</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDSMP (LLLS) graduates</td>
<td>2012 (thru March 2012) taught by prison peer educators</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Qualitative findings report offenders are choosing healthier food items at canteen and exercise programs at female facilities are increasing. Numerous offenders report increased confidence to deal emotionally with their chronic disease and three offenders left prison and now teach community members about the CDSMP LLLS model of disease self-management. Moreover statistical data reveals some offenders who completed the program demonstrate a decrease in medication and utilization of medical care.

3. **Did the program originate in your state?** Although the program was previously developed and evaluated in randomized trials for long term outcomes at Stanford University, and appears to be robust across cultural and racial groups, only Oklahoma is utilizing trained prison peer educators to facilitate the program. Melanie Spector, Ed.D has developed prison peer education programs in Oklahoma prisons for 20 years. Her address is 440 South Houston, Tulsa Ok 74127, 918 581 2444, melanie.spector@doc.state.ok.us. Melanie collaborated with Pastor David Lee of the Oklahoma State Department of Health who trained many of the peer educators. His contact information is: 1000 NE 10th Oklahoma City, OK 73117 and email address is: haroldl@health.ok.gov and phone number is 405 2719444.

4. **Are you aware of similar programs in other states?** New Jersey also teaches the CDSMP LLLS chronic disease programs to offenders who are incarcerated however utilize the expertise of University nurses to deliver the intervention. Only Oklahoma is utilizing prison peer educators.

5. **What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter when attempting to adopt this program?** Other prisons may expect obstacles to utilizing this model if they do not have experience or approval from prison administrators to develop peer education programming in their facilities.