

## **Better Choices, Better Health® South Dakota:** *Providing a Better Quality of Life*

*Offered by the South Dakota Department of Health, SDSU Extension, South Dakota Department of Human Services and other partners, Better Choices, Better Health® South Dakota (BCBH) is an evidence-based, community-led intervention that helps individuals with chronic conditions learn to manage and improve their health. BCBH currently utilizes the Stanford University Chronic Disease Self-Management programs (CDSMP). BCBH provides interactive workshops designed to help participants learn the skills and tools to better manage chronic conditions. The workshops are held once a week for six weeks. Trained leaders, many of whom are volunteers and have a chronic illness themselves, facilitate the workshops, which are not disease specific.*

### Summary

Ninety-nine percent of self-management happens outside of a clinical setting. Self-management education programs empower individuals and give them the confidence and skill set necessary to manage their chronic disease(s) independently. Participants who attend BCBH workshops are looking for ways to cope with chronic conditions and learn how to care for themselves or a loved one who deals with arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, breathing problems, or multiple chronic conditions. Workshops focus on challenges that are common to individuals living with any chronic condition: goal setting, problem solving, relaxation/stress management skills, fitness/exercise, eating well, appropriate use of medications, and enhanced communication skills. Outreach activities are aimed at reaching those who are socially or economically disadvantaged and where access to healthcare is difficult.

### Challenge

Chronic diseases decrease quality of life, have a negative economic impact, and increase the need for health care services. South Dakota's rural geography impacts access to health care services. The prevalence of health disparities is high, particularly related to chronic diseases and their associated risk factors. All of these factors can lead to poorly managed health. Reaching individuals who can benefit from evidence-based health promotion and chronic disease prevention programs is an important goal for public health, but engaging a diverse and remote population is a challenge and funding for outreach is limited. Low consumer demand for chronic disease self-management is another barrier and is due in part to lack of awareness of the program.

### Solution

BCBH provides outreach to expand services to rural communities through a strong consortium, utilizing evidence-based programs with the overall goal of improving population health. BCBH utilizes a multi-venue approach, offering a suite of evidence-based programming including face-to-face and online CDSMP workshops and Diabetes Self-Management (DSM). Later this year, programming will expand into worksites, designed so employers may choose to offer the program on work time in support of employee health benefits, and Chronic Pain Self-Management (CPSM) to address opioid abuse and misuse. The BCBH team is developing partnerships with organizations including health systems and health plans that will help the program to expand. A model policy was created to incorporate provider referrals, and a process to manage those referrals is being developed.

## Results

BCBH has impacted hundreds of individuals across the state of SD. Between October 2014 to December 2017, approximately 80 workshops were held. Over 800 people have attended a BCBH workshop, and of those who attended, 64 percent were completers, attending at least four of the six sessions. During this time frame, participants completed workshop pre/post surveys at 6 and 12 months. Analysis of the data showed statistically significant improvement in self-efficacy – participants indicate they felt more confident in being an active manager in their health. The data also showed an increase or improvement in increased physical activity, more energy/reduced fatigue, improved provider communication, and better quality of life.



Left: BCBH SD participants; Right: Megan Jacobson, Dr. Kate Lorig, and Lori Oster

## Future Directions

BCBH SD plans to embed CDSM programming into ongoing operations of organizations and agencies, such as health care and human service delivery systems to increase the reach of the program. A long-term goal is for BCBH programs to be identified as priorities in the CHNA process for hospitals, especially in rural hospitals. Other goals include improving participant outcomes, such as self-efficacy, overall health status, reduced utilization of emergency room/physician visits, and reducing the length of hospital stays. The Chronic Pain Self-Management (CPSM) program is seeking new partners (neurology, mental health, cancer) to develop outreach opportunities.

## Contact

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## Resources

[betterchoicesbetterhealthsd.org](http://betterchoicesbetterhealthsd.org)  
[facebook.com/BCBHSD](https://facebook.com/BCBHSD)  
[twitter.com/BCBHSD](https://twitter.com/BCBHSD)

“ I think one of the most special things was what an incredible job this state has done using all kinds of resources from [SDSU] Extension, the health department, to tribal groups in putting together a truly statewide program. We kind of expect this sometimes from the bigger states but you [BCBH SD] have done it so much better than almost any state in the country - you're really quite amazing.

[Dr. Kate Lorig](#)  
Founder of CDSME

For many years I struggled with depression. Coming out of that was not something that seemed feasible to me at that time. Better Choices, Better Health® SD has given me the tools and the processes and the structure to really find my way out of that hole that I was in for many years and has provided me with the support and ability to make the changes that I need to make in order to be a happier, more content individual.”

[Cole Hunter](#)  
former BCBH Master Trainer  
Outreach Ambassador



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