

Local Partnership Influences Statewide and National Practice

Challenge:

Disability populations have higher rates of chronic disease such as arthritis and diabetes. Evidence-based programs to prevent health problems from chronic disease are often not inclusive or accessible for people with disabilities without adaptations or accommodations. Evidence-based programs are based on research showing that if programs are delivered as intended, they improve health outcomes. Program leaders are trained on consistent delivery methods to ensure the programs will show results, which is called fidelity. Leaders may be concerned that adapting programs for people with disabilities will affect fidelity.

Approach:

The Arthritis Foundation Walk With Ease (WWE) program embraces adaptation and accommodation for accessibility. The Arthritis Foundation created a Disability Adaptation Guide to help WWE leaders adapt the program for participants.

The Oregon Office on Disability and Health (OODH) is a partner in Community-Integrated Network of Oregon (CINO), an effort working to build a sustainable infrastructure for chronic disease self-management education in Oregon through policy and system changes. OODH leveraged CDC Disability and Health State Program funding and relationships created through CINO to obtain a grant to engage in NCHPAD's Inclusive Community Implementation Process (NiCIP) in Eugene, Oregon. A NiCIP Inclusive Health Coalition is working to make WWE delivery more accessible on the local level. In 2025, the Eugene Inclusive Health Coalition partnered with the state WWE leadership to review policy statements in the Oregon WWE Leader Agreement.



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Results:

The Oregon WWE Leader Agreement signed by all Leaders said that Leaders needed to commit to following all Arthritis Foundation and Oregon State University program policies regarding WWE and conduct all class sessions without making changes, additions or deletions.

The IHC suggested adding a statement to more clearly align WWE Leader Agreement language with state and national WWE policy, which encourages adaptation and accommodation by WWE Leaders. The Oregon WWE Leader Agreement was updated. After review, the Arthritis Foundation also committed to language updates in the national WWE Leader Agreement.

Updated Oregon WWE Leader Agreement

"Commit to following all Arthritis Foundation and Oregon State University program policies regarding Walk With Ease and conduct all class sessions in accordance with the Leader's Guide without making changes, additions or deletions, **except for those accommodations or adaptations that allow for participation by people with disabilities. Please see the AF Disability Adaptation Guide for a discussion of allowable adaptations.** Sign a Statement of Understanding to document this commitment."

