



SPARC

Sickness Prevention Achieved through Regional Collaboration

A Successful Community-Based Model to Increase the Use of Preventive Health Services by Older Adults

www.sparc-health.org

SPARC is addressing a national problem at the local level:

- Between 1990 and 2020, the number of Medicare recipients with chronic diseases will increase by 77% percent, from 28.1 million to 49.7 million.
- The American medical care system cannot yet deliver proven, effective measures to prevent illness in a systematic manner to an entire population. These services include influenza vaccine, pneumonia vaccine, cholesterol screening, mammography, blood stool test, sigmoidoscopy, and Pap test.
- Despite reimbursement by Medicare for more than 20 years, delivery of pneumonia vaccination - arguably the simplest of the clinical preventive services - has reached only about 55% of those aged between 65 and 74. Among African-Americans, the delivery rate is less than 40%.

SPARC's strategy:

Enhance existing local systems by "filling the gaps" so that providers can deliver more cancer screening, immunizations, and preventive services for cardiovascular disease. Activities include:

- Local prevention outreach tailored to each community - educating patients to change their prevention behaviors
- Create new points of contact for preventive services
- Bundle delivery of preventive services together
- Help physicians avoid missed opportunities
- Assure community-wide access to vaccine supplies
- Create a central locus of accountability

SPARC results published in the professional literature and presented at national healthcare conferences:

- Increased by 94% pneumonia vaccinations delivered in Dutchess County, NY (Medicare reimbursement data).
- Doubled the use of breast cancer screening among women attending flu clinics where SPARC made mammography appointments available.
- Doubled the countywide rate of pneumonia vaccinations in Litchfield County, CT, in a single flu shot season, approximately twice the increase in other Connecticut counties. (Medicare reimbursement data).