



Talking Points: How Living Well Can Help Coordinated Care Organizations Fulfill their Mission

Living Well with Chronic Conditions and its Spanish-language equivalent, Tomando Control de su Salud, are six-week workshops that teach tools for living a healthy life with chronic health conditions. Living Well and Tomando Control workshops are innovative interventions that span community and health system settings, and can help Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) fulfill their mission in the following ways:

- Living Well and Tomando Control workshops are an **effective prevention resource** for CCOs, because participants learn skills and build confidence for making healthy lifestyle choices. Participants learn to deal with fatigue, frustration, pain and isolation, learn about healthy eating, and explore exercises that help maintain strength and flexibility.
- Living Well and Tomando Control’s focus on enhancing confidence **empowers people with chronic conditions to become active partners in their health care, and to be full participants in health-related decisions.** Workshops teach how to deal with physical and emotional issues and communicate effectively with health care providers. Participants also form supportive relationships across their communities.
- Living Well and Tomando Control workshops are an **effective intervention for addressing the needs of plan members who incur the highest costs** and use the most services. A study of 4,000 program participants in Oregon found that they avoided an estimated 557 emergency department visits, 557 hospitalizations and 2,783 hospital days, avoiding more than \$6.5 million in health care costs.¹ The average cost to provide the six-week program is \$455, a minimal expense compared with the thousands of dollars it costs to treat a preventable severe event. Although CCOs may use different means of calculating their exact savings, the return on investment for the program is clearly significant.

¹Bovbjerg V and Kingston SJ. *Living Well Impact Report*, 2010.

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/ChronicDisease/LivingWell/Documents/Living%20Well%20Program%20Impact%20Report%20Final.pdf>

- Living Well and Tomando Control are specifically designed for people with multiple chronic conditions, including both mental and physical health issues. The average participant in a workshop reports having three to four chronic conditions. Workshops have been offered to groups with mental health conditions for several years. It is an **effective way to support the whole person.**
- Building Living Well into health system structures as a fully funded intervention is an **innovative and efficient way to address the complex needs of people with multiple chronic conditions in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.** Living Well may be delivered in community or health care settings by trained peer wellness specialists, health navigators and/or community health workers.

CCOs can build Living Well and Tomando Control into an integrated health system by:

- Covering workshops as a primary benefit for members with chronic mental or physical health conditions.
- Sponsoring workshops coordinated by organizations in the community.
- Funding staff time for program coordination.
- Setting up referral systems from primary care medical homes and specialty clinics to clinic- and community-based programs.
- Training community health workers, health navigators and peer wellness specialists to become program leaders.
- Providing incentives for plan members to participate.
- Hosting leader training.
- Recruiting volunteers to provide workshops.
- Publicizing programs.
- Providing program space and healthful snacks.
- Underwriting scholarships for people with financial need.
- Actively encouraging employees to participate in Living Well and Tomando Control.