
Executive Summary

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) consists of a group of diseases and conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels. Heart attack and stroke are the most common forms of cardiovascular disease.

The Problem

- Each year, approximately 700 Alaskans die of cardiovascular disease.¹
- Taken together, heart disease and stroke account for 27.2% of Alaskan deaths.¹
- Heart disease is not just a disease of the elderly.¹
- Heart disease is the second leading cause of death among both men and women in Alaska.¹
- Individuals suffering a heart attack or stroke are living longer with illness and its complications.¹
- At the present time, Alaska Native people have similar age adjusted death rate from heart disease and higher age-adjusted death rate for stroke than non-natives.¹

Many Alaskans are at risk for developing cardiovascular disease because:

27% of Alaskan adults smoke.²

21% are not physically active in their leisure time.²

75% do not participate in regular physical activity.³

59% are obese or overweight.²

29% have high blood cholesterol.²

22% have high blood pressure.²

32% have not had cholesterol screening.²

4% have diabetes²

Good News

Cardiovascular disease can be prevented or delayed through healthy lifestyles and preventive health services such as:

- Eliminating the use of tobacco
- Eating a heart healthy diet
- Being physically active everyday
- Having regular checkups for blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels
- Controlling high blood pressure and high cholesterol
- Maintaining desirable weight
- Managing stress

The healthy lifestyles that prevent cardiovascular disease also prevent other health problems, such as cancer, diabetes, arthritis, and depression.

Purpose of the Alaska Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Plan

The purpose of the Alaska Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Plan is to provide the impetus for action.

It is intended to provide overall guidance to communities, worksites, schools, health

care providers, public health leaders and others interested in improving cardiovascular health in Alaska and improving the systems to carry out that mission.

Goals of the Alaska Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Plan

The overall goal of the plan is to increase heart health among all Alaskans through advocating for individual and community-based commitment to healthy lifestyles and improving access to preventive services.

Goal 1: Leadership, Coordination, Advocacy: Develop improved leadership, coordination and collaboration in Alaska in order to identify resources and improve advocacy for cardiovascular health.

Goal 2: Alaska Specific Issues: Ensure that Alaskans living in rural areas have access to cardiovascular disease prevention activities.

Goal 3: Healthy Lifestyles: Improve the ability of all Alaskans to eat a healthy diet, to engage in sufficient physical activity, to live tobacco-free, and to obtain needed preventive health services.

Goal 4: Data and Information: Develop and expand Alaska's capacity for making data about cardiovascular disease available and easily understood.

Goal 5: Education: Ensure the distribution of heart healthy information to the public and to health care providers.

Goal 6: Secondary Prevention: Ensure optimal secondary prevention programs and service at risk population.

Development of the Alaska Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Plan

The second edition of the Alaska Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Plan was a joint project between the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health and the Take Heart Alaska Coalition. The coalition grew out of the agencies and organizations that joined together to develop the first Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Plan.

The original plan was developed as a joint project of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health; the American Heart

Association, Alaska Region; and Alaska Health Fair, Inc. Individuals representing hospitals, tribal health organizations, local government, and experts in cardiology, wellness, nutrition, physical activity, and others were involved in the planning process.

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