

# The “Ask About Aspirin” Initiative Quarterly Newsletter

*Preventing Heart Attacks and Strokes in Minnesota*

The Minnesota Heart Health Program (MHHP) is dedicated to the prevention of cardiovascular disease and improving the lives of Minnesotans. **Ask About Aspirin** is an initiative of the Minnesota Heart Health Program at the University of Minnesota. The goal of the initiative is to safely reduce first heart attacks and strokes in Minnesota through the use of low-dose aspirin, preventing up to 10,000 of these events within 5 years. Cardiovascular diseases affect all of our families. We welcome you to this new quarterly newsletter, working together we can prevent cardiovascular disease.



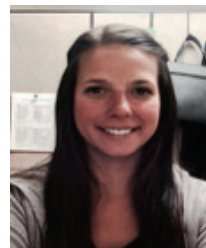
## Health System Highlights

- **St. Luke’s** (Todd Scaia, Lead Clinic Manager) St. Luke’s cardiologists endorsed the Ask About Aspirin initiative. As a result, primary care physician and staff engagement and commitment increased significantly. St. Luke’s clinics achieved high rates of webinar completion via group and individual presentations.
- **CentraCare Health** (Kenneth Bechtold, Director of Care Delivery & Practice Building) At CentraCare Health, identifying physician champions and receiving the support of the Medical Director and Best Practice Committee were critical in gaining commitment to incorporate this primary prevention initiative into the clinic flows. Providing specific dates for webinar completion and launch dates helped to make their project launch successful.
- **Fairview Health Services** (Carmen Parrotta, Quality Improvement Lead) Fairview identified clinic leads at their sites to facilitate bi-weekly team huddles. Now, a MyChart patient engagement strategy is being pursued to encourage patients to complete an on-line self-assessment and to discuss preventative aspirin use with their healthcare professional if identified as an aspirin candidate.
- **Essentia Health** (Julie Newman, System Director of Primary Care) Essentia is leveraging all members of their clinical team, including RNs, NPs, PAs, and Pharm Ds, which has been key to addressing primary prevention aspirin use via a Best Practice Advisory.

## Get to Know Your Practice Facilitators



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Our Practice Facilitators are here to help your clinic team design ways to improve low-dose aspirin use among your patients. Our Practice Facilitators are trained to work with primary care practices to make changes designed to improve patient outcomes. They can help your clinic team to develop approaches to adapt appropriate aspirin recommendations into your clinic work flow. The Practice Facilitators look forward to working with you to make the **Ask About Aspirin** initiative a success!

## Save the Dates! Upcoming Leadership Calls

**May 12, 2016 Noon – 1:00 PM**

**August 4, 2016 Noon – 1:00 PM**

**November 10, 2016 Noon – 1:00 PM**

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MN Heart Health Program

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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## Translating Science into Practice

We are proud to share two manuscripts (and accompanying editorial) that provide you with Minnesota-specific data that inform our State **Ask About Aspirin** initiative. Published in the **Journal of the American Heart Association** in December, 2015, these papers provide information you might share with your health professional colleagues:

Tzeyu LM, Jalal H, Abraham J, Luepker RVL, Duval S, Hirsch AT. **Cost-Effectiveness of a Statewide Campaign to Promote Aspirin Use for Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease.** *J Am Heart Asso*, 2015 Dec 23; 4(12).

*While low dose aspirin has been known to be effective and safe for the primary prevention of heart attacks and strokes, it is important to know the potential impact in Minnesota. This paper evaluated the relative benefit and risk, and cost-effectiveness, of this campaign as a national model. The MHHP team found that the current campaign is likely to prevent almost 10,000 first heart attacks and over 1,200 first strokes. Even with the associated GI risk, the program should sustain cardiovascular health at a net lifetime cost savings.*

Luepker RV, Steffen L, Duval S, Zantek ND, Xiao S, Hirsch AT. **Population Trends in Aspirin Use for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention 1980-2009: the Minnesota Heart Survey.** *J Am Heart Asso*, 2015 Dec 23; 4(12).

*All pharmacologic preventive strategies are associated with a measurable risk. Yet, this risk should not impede achievement of a measurable health benefit. While aspirin can, like all anti-thrombotic medications, cause gastrointestinal bleeding or hemorrhagic stroke, it has not been known if such risks have increased in our state as aspirin use has markedly increased. This paper demonstrates that over thirty years of increasing aspirin use, there has been no associated increase in upper GI bleed or hemorrhagic stroke events (which actually decreased) over this time period. Aspirin should be used carefully. But so used, benefit is greater than risk.*

Ju H. Kim, MD, William B. Borden, MD **Within-the-Clinic Shared Decision for an Over-the Counter Medication** *J Am Heart Asso*, 2015, Dec 23 4 (12) Editorial.

*The “Minnesota method” of strategic collaboration to lower cardiovascular risk has long served as a national model. In this editorial review of our approach, these esteemed authors note that “population health” improvements are always linked to a careful process that links an assessment of individual risk and personal preferences to carefully created treatment choices, best done in a “shared decision making model”. Shared decision making is best accomplished when an informed patient consults an informed health professional. This has long been our Minnesota approach to delivering patient-centered care. It is “what we do” in the **Ask About Aspirin** initiative.*

## Ask About Aspirin Implementation Progress

Congratulations to the nine health systems who are participating in Phase 1 of the **Ask About Aspirin** initiative!

**Kudos to:** CentraCare Health, Essentia Health, Fairview Health Services, Fairview Mesaba, Lakewood Health System, Mankato Clinic, Ridgeview Sibley Medical Center, Sanford Clinic North, and St. Luke’s!

Additional health systems and clinics are now actively joining our Phase 1 program rollout! We anticipate completing creation of this full state network, with an increasing number of partners, over the next 3-4 months! Cardiovascular prevention is our unified goal!

## MHHP Contact Information

Questions or suggestions? We share best practices in order to ease the burden and improve the health of our patients!

Contact Karen Miller at [khmiller@umn.edu](mailto:khmiller@umn.edu) or (612) 624-5961.

## Did you know?

30-40% of Minnesotans in the **Ask About Aspirin** initiative’s target population (women age 55-79, men age 45-79) currently take aspirin for primary prevention.

## MHHP Directors’ Corner

We are a heart healthy state. But, we did not achieve this by good luck alone. Every year and every decade we set unified goals, and we work to achieve them. A first heart attack or stroke changes so many lives: permanently.

Thus, as a state, with your help, we have set the goal of having all clinics and systems in our Phase 1 rollout areas actively prescribing low dose aspirin to all appropriate patients by June 1, 2016!

Can we do this? YES!

With thanks,

Alan T. Hirsch, MD and Russell V. Luepker, MD, MS