57% of Vermonters age 65 and older have high blood pressure, a major risk factor for both heart disease and stroke. These two conditions are responsible for 1 in 4 deaths among this group.

With a grant from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the Vermont Department of Health, SASH designed and implemented an initiative for participants with high blood pressure. The goal was to measure the extent to which regular interactions with SASH wellness nurses, combined with education and one-on-one meetings to monitor blood pressure and provide encouragement, could help participants keep their hypertension under control, improve health outcomes and reduce health-care expenditures.

70% reduced their systolic BP an average of 15 mmHg within 3 to 6 months. Of these, more than 50% moved into a lower risk category.

**Annual savings = $1,227 in Medicare expenditures** per participant per year, as documented by an independent, third-party evaluation.

100% of participants...
- Reported less difficulty managing their medications.
- Reported higher overall functional status.
- Said they have learned more about the relationship between nutrition and health.
- Said they would recommend SASH to others.

**WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAY**

“Before I got into SASH, I didn’t think I’d be around much longer. I couldn’t even make it down the hall. Now I walk regularly every day, and I keep my canes in the corner as a reminder.”

“High blood pressure is part of me — it’s probably always been part of me. That’s why I use SASH.”

“They [SASH staff] don’t mind spending the time to explain things to me.”