

West Virginia

TurningPoint

Collaborating for a New Century in Public Health

A strong public health system is crucial for protecting and improving the health of Americans.

West Virginia's Public Health

West Virginia is the second most rural state in the nation, which increases the importance of strong and coordinated local partnerships.

In 1997, 34 of the 49 local health departments in West Virginia were experiencing severe reduction in services and workforce due to a dramatic decrease in revenue and support.

West Virginia's communicable diseases were being under-reported and the need to strengthen surveillance capacity was identified.

Historically, state and local planning efforts have lacked a formal process for setting joint short and long-term priorities.

For more information

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What is West Virginia Turning Point?

The national Turning Point Initiative aims to transform and strengthen the public health system in the United States by making it more community based and collaborative. In West Virginia, the Turning Point Initiative focuses on improving the performance of and working relationship between state and local governmental public health agencies in order to more effectively address health issues. West Virginia, working with Turning Point partners, is creating processes that measure the performance and effectiveness of public health activities throughout the state.

How is West Virginia Turning Point improving public health?

- Regularly assessing the performance of local public health services through a new accountability structure. This new structure assures West Virginians of standardized care and ongoing improvements to services that protect their health. New performance standards, for example, have already reduced the time it takes to recognize a new infectious disease outbreak in West Virginia.
- Convening active partnerships of representatives from a variety of sectors that have a stake in public health at the local level to share resources and decision making based on local health priorities.
- Supporting community partnerships in developing local policies and revising outdated public health codes. As a result, communities have the legal tools and authority needed to respond quickly in a public health emergency.
- Strengthening the relationship between state and local public health structures through formal working agreements and joint planning and assessment with activities such as the Annual Invitational Roundtable on Public Health.
- Increasing the capability of the public health workforce through the development of standardized job descriptions, orientation programs, and structured job training tools for public health nurses.
- Improving ability to track emerging infectious diseases by developing performance standards, increasing regional and state staff, strengthening laboratory capacity, and providing quarterly trainings.

What can West Virginia Turning Point help you do?

- Monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of public health systems and programs through performance management
- Assess the health of state and community populations to establish priority areas for investment and health improvement

Support

The Turning Point Initiative is funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The National Program Office is located at the University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine. Contact the National Program Office at 206-616-8410 or visit www.turningpointprogram.org.