

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM SURVEY- Chronic Disease

Contact Information

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Short Title: Research-proven interventions for youth tobacco prevention

Program Location: West Virginia, USA

Objectives and Goals:

Public Health Problem

- Rates of tobacco use, both cigarettes and spit/smokeless tobacco, are higher in West Virginia than in the rest of the nation and smoking costs the state well over a billion every year in health care expenses.
- As a result of the award-winning West Virginia *Raze* youth empowerment campaign, its regional network of full-time educational area coordinators specifically targeting the high teen tobacco use-rates, *Not-On-Tobacco*, a program developed by the University of West Virginia Prevention Research Center disseminated by the American Lung Association and companion efforts, more of the state's high school students say they have never used tobacco.
- Sustaining and expanding these successful efforts is essential to continue to combat the tobacco industry practice of recruiting new teen and young adult smokers with their targeted marketing to these age groups.

Methods:

- The West Virginia Division of Tobacco Prevention implements a research-based, comprehensive tobacco control program based upon *CDC's Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs - 2007* and the *Task Force on Community Preventive Services* recommendations.
- Program components are implemented in partnership with the State Department of Education, the West Virginia American Lung Association, and the Division of Health and Human Resources media vendor, The Arnold Agency.
- The Regional Tobacco Prevention Specialist network is a group of eight specialists located around the State who work full-time facilitating youth tobacco prevention and the *Raze* youth empowerment movement in mostly in middle and high schools. This network has been instrumental in the positive effects of outreach to youth.

Program Length:

Began in 2002 and is an on-going, to-be-sustained prevention program intervention.

Number of target population reached by effort:

Middle School and High School Aged Youth throughout West Virginia (approx 250,000 annually).

Demographic Info:

Among the 50 states, West Virginia ranks 41st in size, covering 24,231 square miles. According to the 2000 Census, West Virginia ranks 37th in population size with 1,808,344 residents, and the state's population is projected to increase by just 0.9 percent by 2010. The greatest percentage of the state's population (11%) is found in Kanawha County, which includes Charleston, the state's largest city. According to the 2000 Census, West Virginia's residents are predominantly white (95.0%). Black or African American persons make up 3.2 percent of the population, persons of Hispanic or Latino origin 0.7 percent, Asian Americans 0.5 percent and Native Americans 0.2 percent. West Virginia has an abundance of prime workforce-age residents, with most of the state's population between the ages of 25 and 59 (48.2 %). The State has an aging population, ranking 3rd among states with the highest percentage of residents over age 65 (15.3%). West Virginia is the third lowest in per capita income, ahead of only Arkansas and Mississippi. It also ranks last in median household income. The proportion of West Virginia's adult population with a bachelor's degree is the lowest in the U.S. at 17.3%.

Overall Cost:

Approx. \$1 million.

Funding Sources:

__100__% State

Outcomes:

- The *Not-On-Tobacco* teen tobacco cessation program achieved a 34% quit rate and a 72% reduction in tobacco use over a single school year.
- The percentage of high school students who report they've never used tobacco increased by more than fifty percent over seven years of programming.
- Raze continues to be represented in all West Virginia counties with a significant increase in attendance for the most recent statewide "Raze On" conference. Also, most West Virginia high school students have heard of Raze.
- Over eighty percent of eligible students received the Life Skills Training tobacco prevention curriculum, far exceeding the target for the most recent school year.

Future Plans:

Every effort must be made to sustain this proven, successful tobacco prevention program intervention.