

Quality Initiatives
National Governor's Association Policy Academy Team
on Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

The vision statement of the NGA Policy Academy Team on Chronic Disease is:

“WE SHALL CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL WEST VIRGINIANS THAT WILL PROMOTE OPTIMAL HEALTH AND REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF CHRONIC DISEASE.”

The focus of the group is:

We shall focus on the underlying behaviors of tobacco use, sedentary lifestyles and poor nutrition from the perspective of both intervention and prevention.

Tobacco Use:

1. Smoking Cessation Program for Pregnant Women-West Virginia specific marketing piece for the Right from the Start Program in the Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health Focus groups were held to identify the materials that would be most meaningful for this program. The advertising campaign increases awareness of the dangers that smoking poses to unborn children and encourages physicians to emphasize these dangers to their pregnant patients. This program was developed in response to statistics that showed that as many as 25% of pregnant women smoked in some counties in West Virginia
2. Tobacco tax-An initiative of the NGA team was to build business support for an increase in the tobacco tax. The tax on cigarettes was increased from 12¢ to 55¢ during the 2002 legislative session.
3. Insurance Program Incentives and Disincentives-PEIA increased its premium differential for tobacco users, the Y-NOT-QUIT Line for smoking cessation was promoted at health screenings in southern counties in the state, and The Division of Tobacco Prevention, under Secretary Nusbaum's signature drafted a letter to Blue Cross-Blue Shield to encourage them to cover participants for tobacco cessation programs. The underlying goal for #3 and 4 was to decrease the incidence of the use of tobacco and decrease the number of chronic diseases that arise because of it.

Obesity-Nutrition Improvement and Increasing Physical Activity

4. West Virginia on the Move-Program that promotes simple physical activity and nutrition-behaviors that can be easily integrated into daily life. It creates and distributes information, programs and resources that support healthy lifestyle changes. WVOM is an affiliate of America on the Move and has been adopted by physicians, schools, senior citizens groups, churches, and civic organizations. It is being introduced to the Medicaid Managed Care population and will provide the first wellness program for Medicaid recipients in the country. This program was introduced to us during the Obesity Summit

held in December 2002 and adopted by the NGA team to help reduce the incidence of obesity in West Virginia.

5. DHHR Wellness Campaigns were started this year. Employees have participated in walking and nutritional campaigns this year. Stepping Stones, March Madness (emphasizing good nutritional choices), 5-A-Day, and 100 Miles in 100 days have all been available for group participation to DHHR Employees. Bowling leagues and exercises class have also been offered as a result of this wellness campaign. PEIA has also developed and disseminated a campaign emphasizing good nutritional choices by portion control and education about fast foods.
6. Senior Citizens Centers have been adapted in order to serve lower fat and sodium content items. Mini-farmer's markets were encouraged at the centers and home gardens and canning were encouraged with the collaboration of the WV Extension Services program. The West Virginia on the Move Program was introduced at Senior Centers and at Senior Symposiums. Each month a consulting dietitian writes a newsletter "Food and Fitness" which is distributed to nutrition program participants and is posted on the Bureau of Senior Services website.
7. The NGA Team endorsed the position statement developed by the WV Nutrition Advisory Council recommending steps to promote healthful choices and to limit the sale and marketing of foods and beverages to students in public school settings. The recommendations were presented to the West Virginia Board of Education and legislative committees of WV House of Delegates and the WV Senate.
8. A House Study Resolution on Childhood Obesity was introduced by Delegate Don Perdue to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance on January 22, 2002. Delegate Perdue is a member of the NGA Team and the Study Resolution was endorsed by the NGA Team. Findings from this resolution are to be presented in 2004.
9. Provided speakers through NGA technical assistance grant for the "Preventing Chronic Illness" Healthy WV Summit 2003, hosted by the West Virginia Medical Foundation. These speakers were from the CDC and Kaiser Permanente and helped medical providers to understand behavioral interventions and environmental and policy interventions to increase physical activity. They also enabled medical practitioners to be better prepared to approach parents of overweight children and overweight patients about the medical concerns of obesity.