

PREFACE

STATE HEALTH PLAN PURPOSE

The goals of the West Virginia Health Care Authority (WVHCA) are to control health care costs, improve the quality and efficiency of the health care system, encourage collaboration, and develop a system of health care delivery that makes health services available to all residents of the state. The WVHCA views the State Health Plan (hereafter referred to as “the Plan”) as a policy blueprint for shaping the health care system through the action of public agencies and the cooperation of private sectors. The Plan undertakes an active role in proposing needed changes in the system, including the reallocation of resources to achieve a health care system that is cost-effective and balances considerations of financing, access, and quality. It contains the policies, standards, and service-specific need projection methodologies that the WVHCA uses in making certificate of need decisions. The WVHCA carefully weighs issues of quality of care and geographic and financial access to health care services against the cost of those services to society. The Plan is the legal foundation for the WVHCA’s decisions in its regulatory program.

Many changes are occurring in the health care system across West Virginia as well as the United States. Contributing factors such as the high cost of care, technological changes, and changes in the health care market are contributing to the reorganization and consolidation of the delivery system. These factors are also significantly affecting the supply of and demand for health care services.

Within West Virginia, there are many individuals suffering from cancer, respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression, chemical dependency, and obesity. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 17% of the West Virginia population does not have health insurance. Moreover, health care services and providers are not distributed evenly throughout the state but are usually located in more populated areas.

The Plan is intended to be an objective statewide appraisal of the health of West Virginians from three important perspectives: the current health status of the people of the state, the major health risks they face, and the health care system that exists to protect, maintain, and improve their health. It can also be used to identify gaps in our data or basic knowledge of underlying processes by which disease, injury, disability, and premature death affect us. The Plan can indicate where the data are entirely missing, where we have no proven approaches for bringing about desired outcomes, and where we have not even yet begun to assess the magnitude and distribution of significant health problems.

The 1999 State Health Plan is a complete replacement of prior State Health Plans, with the exception of the certificate of need standards. The certificate of need standards will be revised beginning in January 2000 and are not replaced by the adoption of this State Health Plan. Note: Some certificate of need standards fall within older versions of the State Health Plan; those portions of earlier State Health Plans that contain the certificate of need standards are not replaced by the adoption of this Plan.

VISION FOR THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Improve the health status of the residents of West Virginia by developing a patient-centered, community-based, integrated health care system of health promotion, disease prevention, and curative and treatment care services.

Provide a health care system that effectively integrates the delivery of a full continuum of health care services for residents of West Virginia that advances and promotes health in a way that is accessible, affordable, of high quality, and cost-effective.

GOALS FOR ACHIEVING AND MAXIMIZING A HEALTHY POPULATION

The goal of the Plan is to improve the health status of West Virginians and the efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system. The health care system should advance and promote the health of West Virginians in a manner that is accessible, affordable, and of high quality and should seek to:

- Improve access to a full continuum of integrated and coordinated health care services throughout the life span with a focus on prevention, health promotion, and primary health care.
- Consider the needs of the poor, the working uninsured, small businesses, and people with special needs to ensure that basic health care services are available to them.
- Increase the availability of health care services by improving or expanding community-based services. At the same time, prevent the unnecessary duplication of services.
- Encourage West Virginians to take greater responsibility for their health care decisions to improve their health status and promote healthy lifestyles.
- Assure that health care providers, purchasers, and payors accept accountability for their services to ensure that such services are appropriate, effective, of high quality, and cost-effective.
- Assure the availability of a competent health care workforce to effectively address the health care needs of West Virginians.
- Recognize that quality of life is an essential aspect when making decisions about services settings and attempt to accommodate individual preferences for care, assistance, and choice of health care provider.
- Allow West Virginians the option of remaining in the environment of their choice for as long as possible, or be helped to return to such environments as early as possible.
- Design and implement a statewide health care data system to provide comprehensive information on health status, health system capacity, and financial and other measures of the quality of care that is available to West Virginians.

- Encourage a public decision-making process to be used through the health care system to address the health care needs, values, and concerns of consumers providers and payors.
- Systematically evaluate the health care system in a timely and regular manner to ensure that health care needs are met, unnecessary care is eliminated, and that health care services are provided in an appropriate, effective, and financially responsible manner.