



Healthy in the Hills Network, West Virginia
**Health Improvement Plan
 SNAPSHOT**

To view the full plan, visit www.healthyinthehills.com

VISION

Our efforts over the next ten years will result in improved physical environments with greater opportunities and accessible support for all. With a growing business community and increased access to broadband, we expect an increase in available job opportunities. The Healthy in the Hills Network (Network) aims to address the social determinants of health and health equity barriers to ensure the changing local economy impacts the community at large.

FOCUS AREA

The Network, established in 2012, is a team of cross-sector partners in southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky who have developed a shared vision for improving rural health that may be replicable in rural areas in Appalachia, across the United States, and abroad.

This plan was developed as Network partners began to question how to build a culture of health and tackle community needs together. The focus of the plan is to launch a collaborative, community-driven planning process to address the social determinants of health and health equity.

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN GOALS			
<p>STRONG RURAL NETWORK</p> <p>Ensure infrastructure and resources are available to increase community participation in planning</p>	<p>DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS</p> <p>Utilize tools to identify health and equity barriers to inform community decision-making</p>	<p>STRONG COMMUNICATION</p> <p>Engage stakeholders and residents to make health equity a shared value</p>	<p>SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT</p> <p>Build capacity of Network and community through planning, evaluation and improvement</p>

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

In 2014, Williamson, West Virginia was recognized as a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health prize winner. This recognition positioned the Network to learn from peer communities about strategies for health improvement and to share evidence-based approaches and promising practices with rural communities facing similar challenges. Williamson Health and Wellness Center operates a Federally Qualified Health Center that serves an area known to be one of the unhealthiest and most economically distressed communities in West Virginia. Williamson Health & Wellness Center serves as an anchor institution for the Network.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMUNITIES IN ACTION: PATHWAYS TO HEALTH EQUITY REPORT

This plan is guided by a recommendation from the *Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity* report, released by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine in January of 2017:

[Recommendation 7-5](#): Public health agencies and other health sector organizations should build internal capacity to effectively engage community development partners and to coordinate activities that address the social and economic determinants of health. They should also play a convening or supporting role with local community coalitions to advance health equity.

GOALS, STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

To learn about engaging lived experience in community planning, go to www.healthyinthehills.com for the full plan.

Goal 1: ENGAGED COMMUNITY NETWORK: Community voice is essential to ensuring that the Network selects health improvement projects that are representative of what the community wants. In order to truly engage with residents, the Network identified three tactics to ensure that the community is a driving force behind the projects, and that the collaboration is sustainable. We learn from the lived experience in our community.

- A. Strengthen capacity through distributed leadership
- B. Engage in meaningful conversations about health equity
- C. Leverage resources to sustain growth

Goal 2: DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS: To develop projects that will ultimately benefit the community, the Network first identifies the issues that community members are experiencing. Using a data-informed process gives a solid foundation to residents and stakeholders working to build projects together. The following tactics drive collaborative decision-making for the Network.

- A. Develop a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)
- B. Co-design action plans
- C. Engage support from academic and service-learning partnerships

Goal 3: STRONG COMMUNICATIONS: To address the social determinants of health and advance health equity we must first develop shared values to address these issues. Using the four tactics below, we will develop a communications plan that reaches diverse audiences to ensure engagement across our community.

- A. Raise awareness that inequities are costly
- B. Identify leaders to signal importance
- C. Build connections with prospects and partners
- D. Give voice to a hopeful narrative

Goal 4: SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT: To ensure that the plan is carried out as planned and that desired milestones are reached, the Network will implement the following three tactics:

- A. Design and implement a three-year Evaluation Plan
- B. Celebrate and work through challenges together
- C. Host health improvement trainings to enhance skills locally and regionally

STAKEHOLDERS

Distributed leadership involves authentic engagement between organizations and the community including individuals with lived experience who know health disparities firsthand. Opportunities to be involved in the Network include serving on the Leadership Council or volunteering to assist with programs, improvement projects, or community events.

Volunteers and Leadership Council members contribute to Network sustainability and growth, and deliver messages within diverse community settings. Supporting partners also play a role by offering resources and technical assistance.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the Network involves ongoing communication to maintain relationships among network members and the community. Sustainability also requires strategic healthcare and economic development partnerships and fundraising. In addition to building key partnerships, the Network will fundraise for planning, implementation and evaluation. The health improvement plan will require a combination of private, state and federal investment.

LEARN MORE

- To view the Network's Health Improvement Plan, visit www.healthyinthehills.com
- To schedule a tour or to attend a future training event in Williamson, West Virginia:

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