

Try This West Virginia Partnership: Influencing Stakeholders for Change

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West Virginia ranks at or near the bottom of nearly every health ranking, including obesity, diabetes and heart disease. The goals of the Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease (HPCD) are to reduce obesity and to improve key chronic disease indicators. To do this, we need the help of every community, healthcare system, and person to do all they can to improve environments making the healthy choice the easy choice. One of the ways we connect with people where they live, work and play is by partnering with like-minded organizations.



Most news about health in West Virginia focuses on us being the "worst" in many factors. While there are many good things and positive improvements happening in our state, few were being recognized. The Try This West Virginia project is working to change this by identifying champions who are making a difference in the health of communities in West Virginia and sharing the evidence-based projects being expanded across the state.

Try This West Virginia is a partnership of organizations who have come together to contribute their expertise and resources to "knocking WV off the worst health lists". Using the guidance of a steering committee comprised of state, educational and community champions, Try This offers technical assistance and resources to expand the reach of projects that improve health. Two of the ways they do this are through:

- An annual conference where community groups can apply for mini-grants, learn about evidence-based interventions, and share their community's successes.
- A comprehensive website featuring many how-to resources with real life examples of how those programs were used in West Virginia.

HPCD works with Try This by contributing leadership on the steering committee and assisting with planning the agenda for the annual conference. HPCD provides funding for mini-grants, and reviews and scores those mini-grants to ensure that the projects reflect HPCD's goals. HPCD staff then provides technical assistance to the selected projects throughout the project period and reports that information to our funders. This helps us implement the very best interventions at the state level and helps our stakeholders plan for projects yielding a greater return on investment. HPCD also serves on the Try This evaluation team so each project's goals are measured and recorded for continual quality improvement.

The Try This West Virginia project began four years ago, and now has the attention of other states and national organizations, all trying to replicate the "movement". Try This has been contracted to work with another state to help implement these interventions. The fourth annual conference takes place June 2 and 3 and promises another year of initiatives to celebrate. A new feature includes Second Stage grants available for former mini grant recipients to expand their projects or reach different audiences.

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