

PREVENTION

We envision a proud West Virginia comprised of healthy, resilient communities, where all individuals are supported, purposeful and hopeful throughout their lifespan.

Prevention helps individuals develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to promote wellness (or change unhealthy behaviors) related to substance use/misuse prevention, suicide prevention, and mental health promotion. Prevention is an important piece of the continuum of behavioral healthcare, along with promotion, treatment, and recovery.

The prevention field relies on research and practice working in concert within local communities to effectively create positive outcomes in building healthy families and communities.

Prevention work in the state is based on data and the implementation of proven, evidence-based programs and practices by a credentialed workforce.



The work of prevention seeks to boost protective factors and eliminate or reduce risk factors. There is strong scientific evidence that supports the effectiveness of prevention programs.

Evidence-based prevention interventions can:

- prevent use or delay early use
- stop the progression from first use to misuse to substance use disorders

Research-based prevention is cost-effective. Evidence-based prevention interventions can decrease costs related to substance use-related crime, lost work productivity, and related treatment and health care costs.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) categorizes prevention into three categories in relation to substance use/misuse:

Universal prevention targets the entire population and is not directed at a specific risk group.

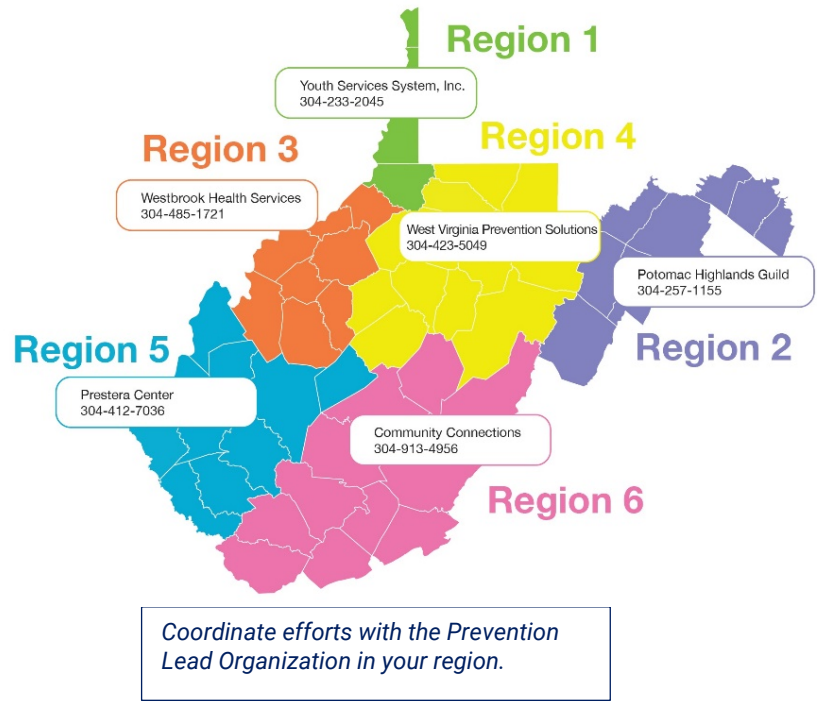
Selective prevention targets subpopulations that are at increased risk for substance use/misuse due to exposure to identified risk factors.

Indicated prevention targets those already using or engaged in other high-risk behaviors to prevent heavy or chronic use.

West Virginia Prevention Infrastructure

Coordinated through the WVDHHR Bureau for Behavioral Health and includes:

- State Leadership
- Six regional Prevention Lead Organizations (PLOs)
- County coalitions
- Partnerships for Success (PFS) Coordinators
- SOR Coalition Engagement Specialists
- SOR Adult Suicide Intervention Specialists
- Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Youth Suicide Intervention Specialists and Prevent Suicide WV
- Expanded School-based Mental Health
- State Opioid Response



Additionally, coalitions and organizations also receive money to fund prevention services from federal agencies, private funders, foundations, and other community resources.

West Virginia Office of Drug Control Policy Draft 2022 Priorities and Implementation Plan | Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment: Prevention Goals

Goal 1: Increase, sustain and align investments in prevention (including strengthening prevention workforce and advocating for policy reforms).

Goal 2: Maximize cross systems planning, collaboration, and integration.

Goal 3: Improve data collection, integration, and use at the regional and local levels to track progress and promote shared accountability.

Goal 4: Align strategic communications, awareness and education using the following principles: Individual/community acceptability, data-driven, best or promising practices, and culturally relevant and inclusive.

Goal 5: Monitor opioid prescriptions and distribution.

Goal 6: Enhance West Virginia's evidence-based cessation and prevention efforts for tobacco and other nicotine delivery devices/systems through the West Virginia Tobacco Use Reduction Plan.

1. **Prevention Works!** Prevention saves lives and saves money.
2. **Effective Prevention requires a professional, credentialed workforce** who uses data to drive prevention decisions—from identifying substance use problems and addressing them in communities, choosing the most appropriate and effective evidence-based programs and practices to address identified issues, and evaluating evidence-based programs and practices to ensure effectiveness and meeting outcomes.
3. **Prevention requires sustainable funding** to provide evidence-based prevention strategies in our communities.
4. **Prevention is lifelong.** Prevention should start at an early age and should continue throughout the lifespan - a dose of evidence-based prevention at every stage of development.

For more information, contact

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