

## ActiveWV: A Systematic Approach to Developing a Physical Activity Plan for West Virginia

Eloise Elliott, Emily Jones, and Sean Bulger

**Background:** Modeled after the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP), *ActiveWV 2015: The West Virginia Physical Activity Plan* was developed to provide strategic direction for physical activity promotion within the state. The purpose of this manuscript is to describe the systematic approach taken in developing ActiveWV. **Method:** Plan development began with establishing capacity and leadership among key stakeholders representing all societal sectors. A multiphase, statewide decision-making process allowed for input across sectors and geographic regions. The process results identified five priority areas that served as the conceptual framework for ActiveWV. Sector teams, comprised of key organization stakeholders across the eight sectors, finalized the sector-specific strategies and tactics using the NPAP evidence-based recommendations, results from a formalized strategic process, and the teams' expertise and experience. **Results:** ActiveWV was officially released on January 19, 2012 at the State Capitol in Charleston, West Virginia. Community events throughout the state surrounded the release and celebrated West Virginia Physical Activity Day. Ongoing implementation and dissemination efforts are underway at state and local levels. **Conclusions:** As the NPAP calls for states and communities to develop plans that meet the needs of their particular context, other states may find the lessons learned from West Virginia helpful in the development process.

**Keywords:** policy

West Virginia needs to be healthier! The state most commonly ranks among the worst states in most health indices related to chronic diseases: first in the nation for prevalence of heart attacks, second for diabetes, fourth for strokes, and sixth for obesity.<sup>1</sup> Of all these diseases, physical inactivity is a key risk factor. Aside from the concern for early morbidity and mortality of our citizens, poor health also contributes to rising healthcare costs in the state. Compared with the national average, West Virginia spends 13% more per person on healthcare.<sup>2</sup> One study found that in 2005, the annual costs associated with physical inactivity in West Virginia was more than \$1.3 billion and that by increasing the number of West Virginia adults who are physically active by only 5%, the state's costs savings would be over \$100 million a year.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, physical activity can impact economic development in West Virginia. A recent report from an external evaluation of the state's economic development status noted that a key ingredient that should be considered for economic growth for the state's communities is to provide more "livable communities" where active transport to work and school is an option and where green space and natural resources allow for an enhanced quality of life.<sup>4</sup> How active are West Virginians currently?

According to the Health Statistics Center in the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, in 2009, the prevalence of adult physical inactivity in West Virginia was 33.2%. Compared with the US prevalence of 24.6%, that ranks West Virginia second in the nation.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that West Virginia needs to make physical activity a health priority for many reasons.

West Virginia has a strong population of enthusiastic citizens and leaders who are dedicated to the betterment of the state—and specifically to improved health. State government has passed recent legislation related to health promotion, including improved physical education and nutrition offerings in schools. Lead state agencies have adopted policies and developed plans that include physical activity promotion and practice. Nonprofit organizations across the state are spearheading programs that educate children and adults about the need for physical activity and are providing suggestions for community initiatives. Community groups are stepping up and showcasing local projects that are working in their communities. But there is still an important missing link—there is no unified effort among all population sectors to work together to improve physical activity participation and opportunities collectively.

When the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) provided a comprehensive strategy to promote physical activity,<sup>5</sup> West Virginia leaders took notice. As documented in the NPAP, to change individual behavior, the focus must begin with environment, policy, and systems

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changes. What determines individual behaviors is the social, policy, cultural, and environmental context in which one lives. Toward that important end, changes in West Virginia policy and practices to provide more and better physical activity opportunities and advocacy are needed. Specifically, changes are needed that can ultimately decrease the prevalence of chronic health conditions directly affected by insufficient physical activity.

The purpose of this paper is to describe how one state followed the evidence-based NPAP recommendations for change to develop a state-specific plan that meets the needs of the state's contextual variables and to provide a systematic approach that can inform other states' plan development processes.

## Call to Action

The development of *ActiveWV: The West Virginia Physical Activity Plan*<sup>6</sup> was prompted by the NPAP's call for grassroots advocacy efforts to mobilize support for physical activity-focused strategies and tactics. West Virginia's need for strategic vision and direction for statewide physical activity has been magnified by the well-documented health disparities among its citizens. In the spirit of grassroots efforts, ActiveWV represents the collective voice of West Virginians; resonates the values, priorities, and physical activity needs of the state; and reflects the contextual variables specific to West Virginia. ActiveWV is aimed at providing strategic vision for physical activity that promotes a culture that facilitates physically active lifestyles in every societal sector and region of the state—regardless of existing barriers, including sociodemographic factors.

## Development of ActiveWV

### Establishing Capacity and Plan Leadership

The targeted audience of ActiveWV includes 3 main constituency groups: (1) state and local policy leaders, (2) key stakeholders representing state and local organizations in each sector, and (3) West Virginia citizens who will advocate for policy and environmental changes and promote physical activity in the communities in which they live, work, and play. Given this, building capacity by establishing organizational and professional partnerships was essential to the success of the plan. Using a grassroots framework, individuals and stakeholders from local and state organizations were invited to serve on leadership and advisory groups, engage in plan development, and participate in plan implementation and dissemination. The following section describes the processes involved in establishing the ActiveWV Coordinating Committee, the sector teams, and organizational partners.

**ActiveWV Coordinating Committee.** The ActiveWV Coordinating Committee was established to serve as the primary governing body for the statewide physical

activity plan initiative. The Coordinating Committee was composed of multidisciplinary researchers and organizational leaders representing a variety of social sectors from across the state. The aim of the committee was to provide leadership and direction to the development of a unified statewide physical activity plan.

The committee determined that a goal of ActiveWV would be for it to serve as a blueprint for connecting, supporting, and building upon existing efforts within the state while promoting strategies that would require changes in policy, environment, or systems at the state and local levels. Therefore, before plan development the Coordinating Committee outlined the 3 most important factors in ensuring the effectiveness and authenticity of the plan: (1) input and participation from all sectors, (2) leadership from key state and local stakeholders, and (3) support from policy and legislative physical activity champions. These 3 factors strongly influenced the decisions and actions of the Coordinating Committee throughout the plan development process.

**Sector Teams.** Based upon the NPAP's 8-sector framework, ActiveWV established "sector teams" representative of business and industry, education, healthcare, mass media, nonprofit and volunteer, parks/recreation/fitness/sport, public health, and transportation and land-use. Unique to West Virginia, a policy group was added to enlist the support and leadership from those who had more direct influence on physical-activity-related policies.

Using Coordinating Committee input, insight from state government officials and legislators, and communication with sector representatives, a list of chief organizational partners within each sector was devised. Key individuals from those organizations were then invited to serve on 1 of the ActiveWV sector teams. Nearly 70 organizational leaders from state government (education, public health, commerce, transportation), health insurance agencies, local health departments, county and city leaders, medical schools, community and worksite wellness programs, state media outlets, university researchers, interventionists and extension services, local foundations, the governor-appointed state health coalition, and state policy makers agreed to serve on the participatory groups (see Figure 1). Once sector team members were recruited and confirmed, the Coordinating Committee used regular conference calls and Webinars to inform members of their roles and responsibilities (Table 1) and provide updates on the plan development progress. Sector teams, each led by a team leader, contributed to plan development most notably by finalizing the strategies and tactics for their respective sectors.

**Organizational Partners and Affiliates.** ActiveWV sector team members and their affiliated organizations served as primary channels for promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles. Yet, to broaden the reach and impact of the statewide initiative, ActiveWV partnered with various state and local organizations, agencies, businesses, and nonprofits to promote the

Public Health	Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State government public health branch (director)</li> <li>Health Insurance Agency</li> <li>Local Health Department (Officer)</li> <li>Community Public Health Grantee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Department of Education</li> <li>State Board of Education</li> <li>Regional School Wellness Directors</li> <li>State Physical Education Organization</li> <li>PreK-12 and Higher Education</li> </ul>
Transportation / Community Planning	Healthcare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State economic development council</li> <li>State department of transportation (director)</li> <li>County commission (state ED)</li> <li>City planner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WV medical schools</li> <li>State medical associations</li> <li>Practicing healthcare providers</li> <li>Hospital wellness program</li> </ul>
Mass Media	Parks / Recreation / Fitness / Sport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State media outlets</li> <li>Advertising agency</li> <li>University Social Marketing researchers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YMCAs of WV</li> <li>State parks and recreations association</li> <li>State trails coalition</li> <li>Community wellness centers</li> </ul>
Business and Industry	Non-profit and Volunteer Organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State worksite wellness council</li> <li>State chamber of commerce</li> <li>For-profit fitness business</li> <li>Other business dedicated to employee health promotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-profits with a physical activity mission (e.g. WV on the Move, Inc.)</li> <li>University Extension Services</li> <li>WV chapters of chronic disease prevention organizations (e.g. American Heart Association)</li> <li>State young professionals organization (e.g. GenerationWV)</li> </ul>
Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State policy makers</li> <li>County government official</li> <li>Local Foundation (funding) officer</li> <li>Governor-appointed health coalition (e.g. WV Healthy Lifestyles Coalition)</li> </ul>	

**Figure 1** — Key stakeholder organizations represented on sector teams.

**Table 1** Roles and Contributions of Sector Team Leaders and Sector Team Members

Role	ActiveWV contribution
Sector team leaders	Review NPAP strategies Identify leaders within a sector Lead development and refinement of ActiveWV strategies and tactics Prompt changes in physical activity policies and practices Advise and influence plan implementation Support state and local advocacy efforts related to the plan Represent ActiveWV within respective organization and sector
Sector team members	Review NPAP strategies Assist in development and refinement of ActiveWV strategies and tactics Advocate for changes in physical activity policies and practices Contribute to local and state plan implementation Represent ActiveWV within respective organization and sector Encourage community action

plan's mission, goals, strategies, and tactics. These "ActiveWV Partners" have been invited to participate in plan implementation and dissemination efforts, host ActiveWV events, contribute financial resources to plan implementation, and/or participate on a sector team. Partners are formally recognized during ActiveWV promotional opportunities (eg, website, statewide events, etc.); are provided with the ActiveWV logo for branding, templates for social marketing, newsletters, and press releases to promote plan-related activities; and are invited to promote their upcoming events on the ActiveWV website.

**Financial Support.** With seed funding coming from 3 organizational partners (2 university-based programs and a nonprofit organization), the plan development process was initiated in 2010. Various businesses, state organizations, and agencies provided financial support and resources for capacity-building-related activities such as the statewide event to promote ActiveWV and sector team working meetings. Efforts are ongoing to secure resources for implementation, dissemination, and evaluation through private foundations, corporations, and state and federal funding agencies.

## Plan Development Process

The momentum established through the varied capacity-building efforts allowed the ActiveWV Coordinating Committee to proceed with plan development. Modeled after the NPAP, the ActiveWV development process sought and embraced professional experiences, expertise, and a systematic process.

**Garnering Interest and Buy-In.** The initial step in plan development involved establishing interest and buy-in. This process required meetings with state government officials and health policy leaders to inform of the need and seek advice on how to proceed with this statewide initiative. The chair of the Coordinating Committee met with state government officials and health policy leaders including the governor's chief of staff, members of a joint senate/house health committee, key foundation funding officers, directors of state agencies (eg, the state Board of Education, the Bureau for Public Health), and governor-appointed health coalition leaders. As a result, key partnerships transpired, and valuable recommendations were shared (eg, strategies to attract funding agencies and the involvement of key local decision makers, such as county commissioners). Communication with key stakeholders at the very start of the plan development process proved significant to the success of the initiative.

**Statewide Promotional Event.** The next step in plan development involved raising interest and statewide awareness of ActiveWV through the hosting of the first West Virginia Physical Activity Symposium. The intent of the 2-day symposium was to bring together professionals from all sectors and regions of West Virginia to learn about the NPAP, showcase existing physical activity programs

and research in West Virginia, and garner support for a strategic physical activity plan for West Virginia. Over 250 participants representing all sectors and geographic regions attended the event. Seven nationally recognized speakers representing various sectors, including the chair of the NPAP Coordinating Committee, shared their perspectives on physical activity issues and associated sector-specific opportunities. Over 50 West Virginia physical-activity-related initiatives, programs, and research projects were presented in poster or oral formats. During Day 2 of the symposium, sector and regional working groups encouraged collaboration and initiated information sharing relative to the plan development process. Small group discussions centered on the NPAP strategies resulted in sector-specific recommendations and identification of regional barriers. Data from these working groups were considered in the development of the ActiveWV strategies and tactics.

Support from the West Virginia governor and first lady in the development and delivery of the event—including an all-conference reception at the governor's mansion, as well as attendance of nationally recognized celebrities who promote physical activity and health—enhanced the symposium program and drew state and local media to the event.

**Systematic Plan Development Process.** Plan development efforts continued with a more formalized, systematic process that involved gathering input from citizens throughout the state regarding the need for physical activity policy and environmental changes. To accomplish this, an integrated Web-based approach called concept mapping was used. Concept mapping is a strategy often used to help show connections between ideas and concepts<sup>7</sup>; therefore, it proved valuable in gathering and synthesizing strategies and tactics for the statewide plan. For the purposes of ActiveWV, a multiphase concept-mapping process was implemented: Phase 1—Brainstorming, Phase 2—Statement Analysis and Synthesis, Phase 3—Sorting and Rating of Statements, and Phase 4—Data Analysis and Interpretation (see Table 2).

To initiate the process, the Coordinating Committee hosted a Webinar to inform and invite citizens to participate in the ActiveWV brainstorming exercise. Follow-up emails were distributed to statewide Listservs to elicit additional participation. During Phase 1, individuals submitted their ideas related to what they thought needed to happen in West Virginia to improve physical activity participation and opportunities via a Web-based data collection portal. A total of 154 individuals representing all 8 sectors responded to the anonymous brainstorming exercise and generated a total of 240 ideas. Phase 2 involved the review of the 240 ideas, the elimination of nonphysical activity ideas (eg, nutrition, alcohol consumption, teen pregnancy), and concluded with a synthesis of similar or repeated ideas. The result of Phase 2 was a list of 61 single-idea statements that were reflective of the 240 brainstormed ideas. To establish

**Table 2** Phases of the Concept Mapping Process

Phase	Action	Result
Phase 1. Brainstorming	Informational ActiveWV Webinar	154 participants from all sectors responded to prompt
	Invitation to submit ideas	240 generated ideas
Phase 2. Statement analysis and synthesis	Review of the 240 ideas	61 single-idea, physical activity-related statements
	Elimination of nonphysical activity ideas	
	Synthesis of similar ideas into single statements	
Phase 3. Sorting and rating of statements	Statements sorted into like groups	5 discrete priority areas for ActiveWV
	Statements rated on importance and feasibility scales	
Phase 4. Data analysis and interpretation	Informational ActiveWV Webinar	Identification of sector-specific ActiveWV strategies and tactics
	Sector team review of priority areas and statements	

preliminary connections between ideas and assign value to submitted ideas, Phase 3 involved rating and sorting of the statements. Fifty key individuals (ie, sector team leaders, county commissioners, policy makers, etc) were invited to sort the statements by likeness and then rate the statement by importance and feasibility. Results were statistically analyzed and visual concept maps were produced to show how statements were related and which statements were considered most important and feasible. Results of Phase 3 produced 5 categories that became the priority areas for ActiveWV: *School-Based Programs and Initiatives, Public Awareness and Social Marketing, Community Engagement and Environment, Institutional and Organizational Support, and Policy*. The priority areas and related statements were reviewed, analyzed, and interpreted in Phase 4 by the sector teams, who worked to finalize sector-specific strategies and tactics. The sector teams were asked to consider several evidence-informed sources as they finalized the strategies and tactics: (1) the preliminary sector-specific findings from the West Virginia Physical Activity Symposium working groups, (2) the items generated from the concept mapping exercise, (3) the strategies and tactics embedded within the NPAP, and (4) the collective experience and professional expertise of members of the team. The sector teams were also charged to develop sector-specific call-to-action statements to be included in the final plan.

**Final Development of the Written Plan.** Following the concept-mapping process, an ActiveWV subcommittee finalized the written document and made it available for public comment. After 3 weeks, the public comment period closed and the subcommittee reviewed feedback, made additional revisions, and prepared it for widespread dissemination. A marketing firm was commissioned to design graphically appealing versions of the plan along with electronic and printed promotional materials such

as the ActiveWV Executive Summary and sector-specific fact sheets. The full plan and related materials are available at <http://www.wvphysicalactivity.org>.

## Launch and Dissemination of ActiveWV

### Launch of ActiveWV

*ActiveWV 2015: The West Virginia Physical Activity Plan* was officially released on January 19, 2012, at the State Capitol in Charleston, West Virginia. The all-day event at the Capitol included sector displays, lifespan physical activity demonstration groups, invited addresses from state dignitaries and key stakeholders, and 2 physical-activity-promoting national celebrities. The launch ceremony included the signing of a declaration by the Governor of West Virginia to make the day “West Virginia Physical Activity Day,” a proclamation by the West Virginia Legislative Senate to make physical activity a statewide priority and support messages from West Virginia congressional leaders. Across the state, schools and communities supported the launch of ActiveWV by hosting local events. The most powerful example of statewide support and participation of the launch was that of the schools. In conjunction with the West Virginia Department of Education’s Office of Healthy Schools *Let’s Move! WV* initiative, 313 schools (100 652 students) all did a popular line dance simultaneously to bring recognition to physical activity in the schools. In addition, 44 of out 55 county commissioners signed resolutions to support increased physical activity in the communities where citizens live, learn, work, and play. Key media outlets (television, radio, and newspapers) covered the Capitol events as well as many local happenings.

Shortly after the release of the plan, another working meeting for the sector teams was held. The aim of the meeting was to formulate an implementation plan and provide sector-specific recommendations for next steps of the implementation, dissemination, and evaluation of ActiveWV.

### **State, National, and International Dissemination Efforts**

Since the launch of ActiveWV in 2012, the state physical activity plan has received state, national, and international attention. Intentional dissemination efforts planned at the state level include sharing the successes, enlisting support, and seeking additional implementation partners with numerous groups and organizations across the state (eg, regional rural health association, health and physical education professionals, county commissioners, state Board of Education, joint legislative committee on health, etc). Statewide dissemination efforts promote and align with the goal of ActiveWV as it is to serve as a blueprint for connecting, supporting, and building upon existing efforts within the state, and therefore remains a priority. At the national and international levels, ActiveWV has been showcased as 1 of only 2 states to take the charge presented by the NPAP to develop state-level physical activity plans. The systematic plan development process that captured input and participation of all sectors, involved leadership from key state and local stakeholders, and solicited support from policy and legislative champions has caught the attention of individuals at a congressional briefing with West Virginia elected officials in Washington, DC; constituents at the Weight of the Nation Conference in Washington, DC; participants at a national physical education conference in Las Vegas, NV; and delegates at the Fourth International Congress on Physical Activity and Public Health Conference in Sydney, Australia. The national and international attention that West Virginia has received for the efforts related to ActiveWV provokes additional state-level interest and involvement, therefore also remains important to nurturing the physical activity culture in West Virginia.

### **Ongoing Implementation, Dissemination, and Preliminary Evaluation of ActiveWV**

With an evidence-informed West Virginia Physical Activity Plan developed and initial implementation and dissemination efforts underway, the focus has shifted back to the critical factors for plan success. Continued capacity-building efforts ensure that all physical-activity-related organizations and groups with strategic plans use ActiveWV as a guide to their decision-making and implementation tactics. Moreover, such efforts are made to welcome all interested groups to be part of ActiveWV's dissemination and periodic revision. These partnering

organizations are key to successful implementation of the plan and to making policy, environmental, and programming changes at the state and local levels. Such changes are necessary to eventually impact individual behaviors that could result in meeting or exceeding the national recommendations for regular physical activity participation.

### **ActiveWV Dissemination**

As noted, the first step in ActiveWV dissemination was the public release of the plan in early 2012 and various events at the local, state, and national levels surrounding the launch. Entering Year 2, a more formalized dissemination plan was developed, including social marketing, building brand equity, and the hosting of a second state-wide event.

A phased approach to social marketing is being implemented for ActiveWV. The marketing slogan, "Be Wild. Be Wonderful. Be Active." exemplifies West Virginia and calls for all to be physically active. During Phase 1 of the marketing initiative, the focus is on (1) social media (ActiveWV website, Facebook, Twitter), (2) cobranding with partners, and (3) public awareness campaigns in schools, state parks, and in healthcare facilities. These marketing approaches emphasize awareness, education, and solutions. Based on assessment results of Phase 1, Phase 2 will continue the successful strategies and also integrate a robust statewide multimedia campaign focused on changes in policy and practices. Further, an online clearinghouse of statewide physical activity opportunities, programs, and professionals will be developed and launched (pending adequate funding).

The second Physical Activity Symposium, scheduled for Summer 2014, will raise additional awareness for ActiveWV and provide a venue to showcase implementation efforts. The symposium will provide sector teams an opportunity to reconvene, review current implementation and dissemination efforts, and make recommendations for future ActiveWV action. ActiveWV partners will be highlighted, with a focus on connecting and supporting existing efforts throughout the state threaded throughout the meeting.

### **Partnership Implementation Models**

As noted throughout this paper, partners are the backbone of successful implementation of the plan's strategies and tactics. Two highlighted partnership models for ActiveWV have been the West Virginia Department of Education's Office of Healthy Schools and the West Virginia State Parks System. Although in-depth descriptions of these partnerships and others are beyond the scope of this paper, a brief synopsis provides a snapshot of collaborations:

- The West Virginia Department of Education's Office of Healthy Schools is leading states across the country in developing a state-specific "physical activity in schools" campaign, modeled after First Lady

Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* initiative. The *Let's Move! WV Active Schools Campaign* and ActiveWV are partnering to encourage schools to register to become Lets Move! Active Schools! and to adopt Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programming, including quality physical education; more physical activity opportunities before, during, and after school; and family and school staff involvement in physical activity.

- The West Virginia State Parks System is working with ActiveWV to develop and implement a parks prescription program that can be implemented in parks throughout the state. This initiative, involving healthcare providers and state parks in their respective regions, is being led by Stonewall Resort and State Park, which also serves as an ActiveWV demonstration site for parks across the state and beyond.

## Evaluation of the Plan

Process, impact, and outcome evaluation is occurring on an ongoing basis in relation to each plan priority area (school-based programs and initiatives, public awareness and social marketing, community engagement and environment, institutional and organizational support, and policy). The evaluation plan for ActiveWV, developed by a team of researchers and evaluation experts, aligns with the NPAP's evaluation procedures. The evaluation plan includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Documenting the plan development process as a model for other states (process evaluation)
- Determining the short-term impact of implementation on policy, environmental, and programming changes at the state and local levels (impact evaluation)
- Determining the short-term impact of social marketing on awareness and education (impact evaluation)
- Monitoring the long-term influence on the state's progress toward broader public health goals related to physical activity (ie, Healthy People 2020, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, outcome evaluation).

## Policy Impact

Given that 1 of the 5 ActiveWV priority areas is policy, sector-specific strategies and tactics related to policy were developed and included in the written plan. Collectively, the key messages related to policy recommendations centered around the following:

- Greater coordination of physical activity programming and policy efforts within the state
- Emphasis on evidence-informed policy decision-making concerning physical activity
- Specialized policy issues related to increased physical activity opportunities.

Although policy is often thought of as law or legislation, smaller policy changes must occur in communities, in schools, in businesses, even in homes to effect individual health behavior change. The chair of ActiveWV was invited to speak to 2 joint committees of the West Virginia Legislature to discuss ActiveWV development and key messages that emerged related to policy change. As the ActiveWV sector teams and partnering organization leaders continue to work toward policy change, the robustness of the ActiveWV partnerships that allow for knowledge exchange, advocacy, and practice leadership will likely be most influential in helping to change both legislative policies at the state level as well as local policies that affect people in their communities where they live, work, and play.

## Conclusion

As the NPAP called for grassroots efforts to support strategies and tactics within the NPAP, it also called for states and communities to develop plans that meet the needs of the context for which they are developed. West Virginia is only the second state to undertake a strategic planning initiative of this type that included input and collaboration from multisector stakeholders throughout the development and implementation process. Some of the key lessons learned from those involved in the development process, which may be helpful to other states as they develop similar plans, include the following:

- A leadership group that includes partners who represents all societal sectors and geographical regions and that has the capacity to "make it happen" is the key to the success of a plan
- Capacity-building with key stakeholders is a critical component and lays the foundation for leadership involvement, buy-in, and continued support
- A systematic development process involving expertise, experience, and external evidence is needed to validate plan development procedures and the plan content
- Public awareness from the beginning, at launch, and during implementation should be a priority
- Funding for plan dissemination, implementation, and evaluation is necessary
- Implementation responsibilities must be assumed by partners at the local and community levels
- NPAP Involvement is a must—the NPAP and its representatives provide the evidence-informed blueprint and expert guidance and input.

Figure 2 depicts ActiveWV's model for physical activity promotion and increased physical activity participation, from the development and coordination of the effort to local program implementation, plan dissemination, and evaluation.



Figure 2 — West Virginia Physical Activity Plan mind map.



Although ActiveWV's aim is to provide a strategic direction for physical activity promotion that focuses on changes in policy and practice, it is likely that if plan dissemination and implementation efforts are successful, an increase in the number of children and adults who meet or exceed the PA national recommendations will be recognized. In so doing, improved health and well-being of West Virginians would be inevitable. These outcomes are dependent on the establishment of a culture that facilitates physically active lifestyles in every societal sector and geographic region. Local and state policy leaders must make physical activity a health priority. Physical activity promotion must become everyone's responsibility. The healthy choice has to be the easy choice. West Virginia is investing in changes to environments, systems, and policy—changes that can allow its citizens to be healthier in their communities where they live, work, learn, and play.

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