

# REACH U.S.

## West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources

Charleston, West Virginia

A REACH Action Community (AC)

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REACHU.S.

**Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Across the U.S. (REACH U.S.)** is a national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) program aimed at eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities. It utilizes community-based approaches to reduce the burden of chronic illness in specific at-risk populations. There are 22 **REACH Action Communities** using practice-based and evidence-based programs. These programs look at cultural and environmental influences related to health disparities and their underlying causes. They develop, evaluate, and share their culturally specific and relevant strategies and best practices.

### ISSUE

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources' REACH U.S. program is targeting health disparities related to type 2 diabetes in African Americans living in five counties in the southern part of the state, including McDowell, Mercer, Fayette, Raleigh, and Kanawha. In West Virginia, health disparities related to type 2 diabetes are evident. Approximately every year since 2000, the crude diabetes mortality rate among African Americans has been significantly higher than the diabetes mortality rate among whites. Recognizing that the five targeted counties face particular challenges in many areas identified as critical social determinants of health, including employment, education, transportation, healthcare access, and food security, the REACH U.S. program focuses on these areas for intervention.

### ACTIVITIES

- Collects data on the social determinants of health in five targeted counties to determine priorities for future strategic planning.
- Supports mass media campaign targeting faith-based, community-based, and privately owned organizations to raise awareness about the social determinants of health in order to gain additional support for REACH WV communities.

- Provides train-the-trainer opportunities to community members and community-based organizations to build capacity, sustainability and knowledge in our targeted counties.
- Conducts facilitated viewings of the *Unnatural Causes* documentary as a platform to discuss social determinants of health issues throughout the REACH communities.
- Collaborates with churches in the REACH communities to help build partnerships and train more community members on diabetes management, health literacy and social determinants of health.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- Conducted train-the-trainer workshops for community and coalition members on an evidence-based health literacy program called "Can You Repeat That Please?".
- Coordinated with the CDC to provide the "Social Determinants of Health: Learning from Doing" train-the-trainer workshop for staff, community, and coalition members.
- Partnered with West Virginia State University and West Virginians for Affordable Health Care to present a town hall meeting on national health care reform as a platform to promote awareness of the social determinants of health and to garner additional partners.
- Collaborated with the West Virginia AARP Foundation to address the social determinants of health through benefit screenings and workforce development training.

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National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion  
Division of Community Health

