



Community Health Improvement Plan

2020 – 2023

August 10, 2020

Wild, Wonderful and Healthy Summers County

Wild, Wonderful and Healthy Summers County is part of a community health improvement planning process implemented by Wild, Wonderful and Healthy West Virginia. Throughout the state, Wild, Wonderful and Healthy West Virginia is led by the Center for Rural Health Development, Inc. The Center is a private, nonprofit organization with the mission of creating a healthy future for West Virginia by strengthening the health care delivery systems and improving the health of West Virginia residents, especially in rural and distressed communities throughout WV.

Linkage to Economic Development. Summers County's economy is not only based on railroad but is also one that is supported by small business development. **Small business owners and young entrepreneurs want a healthy, productive workforce and are therefore more likely to locate in communities where their employees and families have an opportunity to live healthier lifestyles.** As Wild, Wonderful and Healthy Summers County works to create a culture of health in our county, it is also working to create community conditions attractive to small business development.

Creating a Culture of Health, that is a community environment where all residents have equal opportunities to make healthy choices, whatever their circumstances, in Summers County requires that **community residents, leaders and organizations collectively identify priorities and take coordinated action to implement *sustainable* systems changes and policy-oriented long-term solutions.**



Creating *Sustainable* Improvements in West Virginia's Communities. As you will see in this report, Summers County's health statistics can be daunting to consider, but we can change them. To do so requires a coordinated approach that reaches beyond our public health and health care organizations and engages businesses, economic developers, government leaders, residents, and others in community health improvement planning. Wild, Wonderful and Healthy Summers County differs from earlier health promotions programs, in that it focuses on creating *sustainable* changes in Summers County that will support healthy decision making by individuals and organizations in our county.

Wild, Wonderful and Healthy Summers County will continue to work with a wide range of community partners to modify this Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) in the months and years ahead in Summers County. We hope that this CHIP will be used to inform strategic plans of our partner organizations across the county where appropriate. This CHIP will be widely disseminated electronically to partner organizations and used as a community roadmap to monitor and evaluate our collective efforts.

Overview of Community Health Improvement Planning

This 2020 – 2023 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for Summers County, is an action-oriented community health improvement plan outlining the priority health issues for Summers County and how these issues will be addressed—including strategies and measures—to ultimately improve the health of our county. The Summers County CHIP was created through a community-wide, collaborative action planning process that engaged partners and organizations to develop, support, and implement the plan. This CHIP is intended to serve as a framework for organizations in Summers County to use in leveraging resources, engaging partners, and identifying their own priorities and strategies for community health improvement.

This CHIP is intended to help focus and solidify each of our Community Health Improvement (CHI) Committee partner organization’s commitment to improving the health of residents of Summers County in specific areas. The goal is that through sustained, focused effort on this overarching framework, a wide range of partners and stakeholders engaged in assessment, planning, and action will be able to document measured improvement on these key health issues over the coming years.

Each year, Task Force(s) engaged through the Community Health Improvement (CHI) Committee will develop an annual action plan which will detail implementations strategies over a 12-month period to achieve the goals and objectives stated in the CHIP. The community health improvement planning process is iterative and involves continuous monitoring: we plan to release our first action plan in July 2020, and then subsequent action plans in July 2021 and July 2022. The next community health needs assessment will be conducted in 2022.

List of Health Priorities and Root Causes

The following list of High Priorities and Root Causes were developed from information obtained through conduct of a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The CHNA identified factors that affect the health of Summers County residents. The process involved the collection and analysis of a large range of secondary data collected by various organizations in Summers County. This data was also informed through the collection of primary data through community surveys to ensure we had input from residents with lived experiences in our CHNA.

Identification of High Priority Issues. Once the primary and secondary data was compiled, **the CHI Committee met on July 9, 2019** to identify 2-3 high priority issues on which to focus its work over the next several years. As a result, the following four high priority issues emerged: Inadequate Housing, Small Business Development, Recreational Opportunities for Youth and Community Gardens.

“Hinton needs healthy community spaces for both children and adults that is accessible from the downtown area.”

Former Mayor

Root Cause Analysis. Two of the high priority issues – housing and small business development are complex problems with many contributing factors. Identifying genuine solutions to a problem required Wild, Wonderful and Healthy Summers County partners to

“Bad buildings are a sign of decay in the community and has a really negative impact on the economic future of our town. Property owners need to be held accountable and families need safe and healthy places to live. “

Small Business Owner

understand what the root causes of the problems are.

Taking action without identifying what factors contribute to the disease can result in misdirected efforts, that wastes time and resources. So, on **September 24, 2019 the CHI Committee** met to conduct a root cause analysis of the two high priority issues. By thoroughly studying the cause of each high priority issue, the CHI Committee gained more understanding of the problems so that they would better understand

them and be motivated to deal with more specific issues rather than broad issues. During this discussion, the CHI Committee narrowed down the list of high priority issues to Housing and small business development. Following a **Community Dinner on November 5, 2019**, the CHI Committee decided to focus on the housing issue for the next few issues. Then **on December 30, 2019 the CHI Committee** met to assess the root causes of the housing problems and identified the following root causes on which to develop the CHIP:

- Lack of safe and affordable housing for low income residents
- Abandoned and dilapidated buildings

Snapshot from the CHNA.

The following key data and trends helped support the determination to focus on housing issues. This is only a snapshot of the housing problem; more detail can be found in the 2020 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA).

2020 Community Health Rankings and Roadmaps Data

Median Household Income \$34,800 Summers County \$44,000 WV

- Both Summers County and WV have median household incomes that are below that of top US performers of \$69,000

Severe Housing Problems 13% Summers County 11% WV

- Both Summers County and WV have rates of severe housing problems that are higher that of top US performers of 9%

Homeownership 74% Summers County 73% WV

- Both Summers County and WV have rates of homeownership that are below that of top US performers of 81%

Severe housing cost burden 10% Summers County 10% WV

- Both Summers County and WV have rates of severe housing cost burdens that are higher than top US performers of 7%

How to Use this CHIP

This Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is designed to be a broad, strategic framework for community health, and will be a “living” document that will be modified and adjusted as conditions, resources, and external environmental factors change. It has been developed and written in a way that engages multiple voices and multiple perspectives. We are working towards creating a unified effort that helps improve the health and quality of life for all people who live, work, and play in Summers County.

We encourage you to review the priorities and goals, reflect on the suggested strategies, and consider how you can join this call to action: individually, within your organization, and collectively as a community. To get involved or for questions about the purpose of this document, please contact Shalom Tazewell (Phone: 304/673-5428; Email: shalomtazewell@frontier.com)

Priority Health Issue: Lack of safe and affordable housing for low income residents; abandoned and dilapidated buildings
Description: The lack of safe and affordable housing in the county and city of Hinton, as well as the abandoned and dilapidated structures, have a detrimental effect on property values, public safety and health, fire safety, and economic development.
Goal: Improve access to safe, affordable, and well-managed rental housing.
Objective #1: Increase the number of safe, affordable, and well-managed houses for low- and moderate-income renters by 30 properties by June 30, 2023.
Strategy 1.a. Identify rental housing properties that require rehabilitation prior to rental as well as sources to finance and/or provide appropriate home repairs, contingent upon contractual agreement with property owners to rent the rehabilitated property to low- and moderate-income residents.
Strategy 1.b. Implement a public awareness campaign that focuses on the rights of renters and the connection between safe housing and community health (public forums, literature).
Strategy 1.c. Assist low- and moderate-income renters to develop self-advocacy skills to exercise their rights as renters, including understanding lease agreements, characteristics of safe and habitable housing, and tenant and landlord responsibilities as well as providing information about available resources to address problems.

Continued

Objective #2: Improve community safety and the environment by demolishing 15 blighted buildings by June 30, 2023
Strategy 2.a. Work with local government to identify funding for the cost of demolition.
Strategy 2.b. Cooperate with efforts of local government to prioritize for demolition those buildings which pose the greatest threat to public safety and health.
Strategy 2.c. Work with property owners of demolished buildings to reclaim vacant lots by creating community space for mini-parks, playgrounds, community gardens, off-street parking, etc.
Objective #3: By June 30, 2023, ensure that city code and county ordinances promote and sustain safe, affordable, and well-managed housing.
Strategy 3.a. Amend city code to establish the obligations of owners of abandoned and/or rental properties and provide penalties for non-compliance.
Strategy 3.b. Amend city code and/or county ordinances to specifically define the rights of renters to habitable housing and the responsibilities of both renters and property owners to maintain the property.

Next Steps: 2020/2021 Annual Action Plan

Next steps will be for the Housing Task Force to use the strategies stated in the CHIP to develop an annual action plan to address the identified health priorities over the next 12 months*. Each annual action plan will include evidence-based strategies that focus on system or policy change, target specific groups, and/or specify infrastructure improvements that will support individual, family, and community change over time.

* The 2020/2021 Annual Action Plan will be the first annual action plan developed by Wild, Wonderful and Health Summers County and may only cover a nine-month period due to delays related to COVID-19 pandemic

Monitoring and Accountability

The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) will be monitored bi-monthly by the current Housing Task Force. Frequent monitoring will allow for modification of actions as needed to improve overall results. The Task Force chair will report any needed modifications to the Core Support Team when they are identified. The CHI Committee and Task Force members will review the CHIP jointly on a quarterly basis and will revise annual action plans as needed throughout the 12-month time period. Shared responsibility throughout the monitoring process will allow for joint responsibility for the actions to be carried out in the plan.