

2024 WV Physical Activity Symposium

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On May 29, 2024, the “2024 WV Physical Activity Symposium – Uniting Leaders for an Active WV” was held at the Stonewall Resort in West Virginia, hosted by the WVU College of Applied Human Sciences. The event gathered 86 attendees, bringing together individuals and organizations dedicated to improving the overall health of the state. The symposium aimed to foster dialogue around exploring opportunities for future collaboration and collective action. A key highlight of the event was the unveiling of the updated ActiveWV 2030: WV Physical Activity Plan, an evidence-informed roadmap designed to increase physical activity opportunities across West Virginia and motivate residents to lead more active lifestyles.

The day’s discussions were centered around six key panel presentations, each addressing vital aspects of promoting physical activity across West Virginia. These panels were designed to stimulate conversation around exploring innovative strategies and solutions for several critical questions. The panels further showcased six key panel speakers who play significant roles in advancing the physical activity agenda in West Virginia, supported by 17 additional panel members from state and national organizations actively involved in promoting physical activity. Attendees represented a wide range of societal sectors identified in the ActiveWV 2030 plan: (10 attendees), Community Recreation, Fitness, and Parks (22), Education (59), Faith-Based (5), Healthcare (21), Media and Communications (4), Military (2), Public Health (34), Sport (12), and Transportation, Land Use, and Community Design (10). With representatives from 45 organizations and 21 counties across West Virginia, the symposium offered a broad platform for sharing diverse perspectives and experiences.

The 2024 WV Physical Activity Symposium resulted in several important outcomes, particularly in fostering cross-sector networking and collaboration to enhance physical activity efforts statewide. Attendees stressed the importance of pooling knowledge and resources, focusing on accessibility, inclusivity, and youth engagement. Successful examples of adaptable recreation opportunities and youth-focused programs were shared to inspire future initiatives. The symposium additionally provided valuable recommendations for effectively disseminating,

implementing, and evaluating the updated ActiveWV 2030. Digital marketing strategies, such as websites and social media, were highlighted, along with the need for marketing kits and presentations at local and state events. The event additionally showcased successful programs within various sectors, offering new perspectives and ideas for promoting physical activity. While the presence of influential legislators at the symposium was particularly appreciated by the attendees, there was a strong call to connect with additional community design leaders, county health and resource organizations, as well as local and state politicians, to further disseminate and implement ActiveWV 2030. Attendees also recommended utilizing sector-specific metrics to evaluate the plan, such as Military behavioral profiles, insurance costs, recreation program participant numbers, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), and the Rural Active Living Assessment Tool, to measure the plan's effectiveness.

The 2024 WV Physical Activity Symposium marked a significant milestone in West Virginia's ongoing efforts to promote physical activity and health. Building on the progress made since the first iteration of the WV Physical Activity Plan, the connections and insights gained during the event will be crucial in advancing ActiveWV 2030. Continued commitment to collaboration, resource sharing, and community engagement will be essential to achieving the goals of ActiveWV 2030 and fostering a healthier, more active population across the state.