

# **Mercer County, West Virginia**

**A Community / State Response**

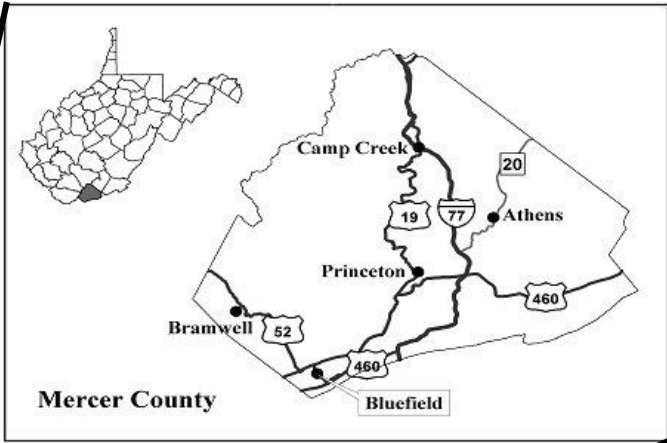
**National Prevention Network Conference**

Chicago, Illinois - August 29, 2019

*Presented by: Greg Puckett*



**Mercer  
County,  
West  
Virginia**



**Est.  
Population:  
57,300**

# West Virginia (The Bad Stuff)

- West Virginia is only state encompassed in Appalachia
- Rate of Rx per person = 19:1
- 28 Counties out of 220 nationwide at risk of HIV outbreak
- Highest overdose rate in the US
- 2016 – 818 people died of overdose in WV (One every 10 hours)
- 86% of overdoses die of at least one opioid in their system
- Under State of Emergency for Hep C
- Geographic Isolation
- Limited services



# More about West Virginia (The Bad Stuff)

- Annual health care costs in West Virginia directly caused by smoking
  - **ONE BILLION**
- Medicaid costs caused by smoking in West Virginia
  - **\$277.3 million**
- Residents' state & federal tax burden from smoking-caused government expenditures
  - **\$1,205 per household**
- Smoking-caused productivity losses in West Virginia
  - **\$1.23 billion**





# More about West Virginia (The Good Stuff)

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COMMUNITY COALITION IN  
EVERY COUNTY



SIX REGIONAL "PREVENTION  
FIRST" AGENCIES AND STATE  
COLLABORATION!



COMMITMENT TO CHANGE  
COMMUNITIES!



# Mercer County WV

- Tale of Two ‘Cities’
  - Princeton (County Seat) – Population 6500
  - Bluefield – Population 10,500
- Deeply rooted in coal production support and export out of state
- Transportation Hub (12 hours from 60% of US Population)
- Highest rate of Hepatitis B/C Per Capita
- Regionally highest in RX Abuse/Overdose Rates Per Capita
- High rate of poverty
- Appalachian Heritage

# More about Mercer County WV

- Jail Bill \$1.7 Million Annually
- 2005-2012 – 31 Million Pills (Estimated another 18 million in the last seven years)
- Ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in WV for prescription drug overdoses with 47.5 overdose deaths per 100,000 people.
- Ranks 4<sup>th</sup> highest of the state's 55 counties for drug-related diagnosis
- Ranks 5<sup>th</sup> for drug overdose.
- Designated High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)
- Southern Coalfields ranked nations highest with Serious Psychological Depression (2011)
- Society of Addiction

“We don't have a DRUG problem...  
We have an ADDICTION problem!”



# More about Mercer County WV

- The West Virginia Department of Education's 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey identifies that the following **tobacco use behaviors** occurred among WV high school students [ages 13-18]:
- 47.3% had ever tried smoking cigarettes and 13.0% smoked a whole cigarette before age 13.
- 18.8% were current smokers; 7.4% were frequent smokers; 5.4% were daily smokers; 10.1% were heavy smokers.
- Among current smokers, 11.7% bought their cigarettes in a store or gas station; 3.8% bought them on the Internet.
- Overall, 40.8% currently used some type of tobacco product (cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, cigars, or electronic vapor products).



# More about Mercer County WV

- Almost 31% of Mercer County residents report cigarette smoking.
- 30<sup>th</sup> in WV for lung/bronchus/trachea mortality
- 4<sup>th</sup> in the state for chronic obstructive mortality
- 8<sup>th</sup> in state for cardiovascular disease, all tied to tobacco / nicotine use.
- Ranks in the bottom five of West Virginia's 55 counties on health outcomes, including length of life, quality of life, and health status.
- The obesity rate of Mercer County is 35.3% and 27.7% of adults are in Fair/Poor Health.
- 43<sup>rd</sup> in the state in health factors, which include health behaviors (smoking/vaping, obesity, excessive drinking, alcohol-impaired driving deaths, sexually transmitted infections, and teen births), clinical care, social and economic factors (high school graduation rate, unemployment, children in poverty, children in single-parent households, violent crime, and more), and physical environment.

# More about Mercer County WV

## THE GOOD NEWS

- Named 100 Best Communities for Young People by America's Promise 2005 - 2010
- Recognized Nationally for Prevention Efforts
- Previous Tobacco / Nicotine Prevention Strategies
- Promotion of the Tobacco Quit Line
- SADD (STATEWIDE)
- WVCADCA (STATEWIDE)

West Virginia  
**TOBACCO  
QUIT LINE**  
1-800-QUIT-NOW 1-877-966-8784



# More about Mercer County WV

## THE GOOD NEWS

- Varied Coalition Strategies
  - Explorers



Introducing the ...  
**PRINCETON  
POLICE  
EXPLORERS  
program**

### About the Princeton Police Explorers Program

The Princeton Police Explorers program is a collaborative effort between the City of Princeton, Princeton Police Department, and Community Connections, Inc. The goal of the Princeton Police Explorers program is to connect youth to police officers in a meaningful way. Additionally, we aim to improve youth perception of police officers and provide prevention education curriculum in a safe, welcoming environment by law enforcement to community youth at the substation on Mercer Street in the Grassroots District. Participation is limited to the first 40 kids. Due to substation space limitations, parents are encouraged to drop their kids off for programming and return for pick-up.

**Program Dates:**  
Saturdays 1-2PM (unless otherwise noted)  
**Sept. 14:** Gracie's Guide: Police Officers / Trolley Ride / Railroad Museum  
**Sept. 28:** K-9 Police Dogs & Role  
**Oct. 12:** K-9 Demonstration at Princeton City Park (1-2:30PM)\*\*  
**Oct. 26:** Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Overview  
**Nov. 9:** CID Mock Crime Scene at Princeton City Park (1-3PM)\*\*  
**Nov. 23:** After-party  
\*\*Weather permitting

**For more information, call (304) 913-4956 or visit [StrongCommunities.org](http://StrongCommunities.org)**

Parents - please note that by allowing your child to participate in the Princeton Police Explorers programming at the Princeton Police Substation on Mercer Street, you grant permission for Community Connections, Inc., its agents and assigns, to use your child's photo or video and likeness for the purpose of promotion by Community Connections, Inc. and the City of Princeton, for all forms, media, and masses, for the following, but not limited to: news releases, photographs, video, audio web site, marketing, advertising, trade, promotion, exhibition for an indefinite period of time.

James W. Johnston & Sonoma W. Johnston, Jr.  
Family Foundation, Inc. aetna  
ALTHOUGH THE HEALTH OF BEST PEOPLE United Way Community Connections Inc. The Katharine B. Tierney  
Charitable Foundation

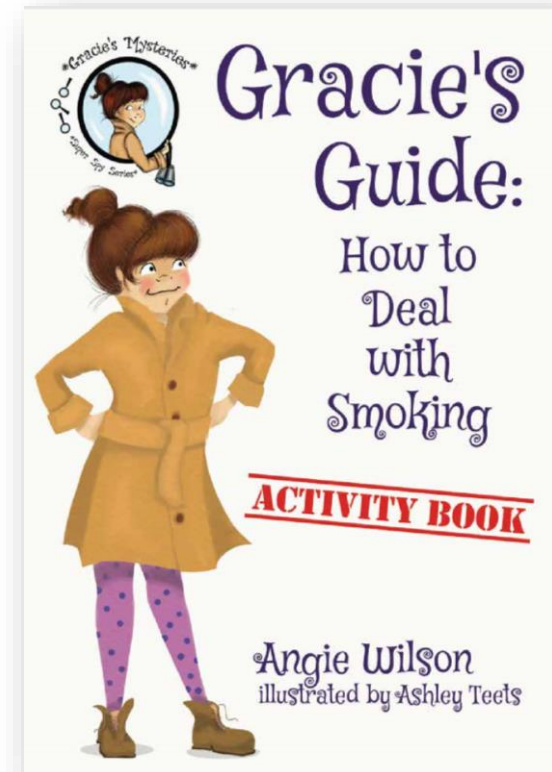




# More about Mercer County WV

## THE GOOD NEWS

- Varied Coalition Strategies
  - Explorers
  - Gracie Guides





# More about Mercer County WV

## THE GOOD NEWS

- Varied Coalition Strategies
  - Explorers
  - Gracie Guides
  - Camp Mariposa



*One of 12 Nationwide*





# History of Change

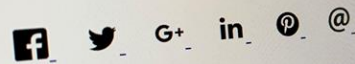
**COMPREHENSIVE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
FOCUS**

Since 2001...

- DFC Coalition Support
- Tobacco prevention efforts
- Southern Coalfields Tobacco Prevention Network
- Expanded CIA Ordinance - 2005
- County/Regional Efforts to Increase Awareness
- Community Revitalization
- Expanded Ordinance to include vaping/ENDS – 2015

## Board of health set to consider regulations on e-cigarettes, vaping

By GREG JORDAN Bluefield Daily Telegraph May 10, 2015



PRINCETON — Should vaping, the use of electronic nicotine devices, fall under the same indoor air regulations as smoking cigarettes? It's a question being considered May 13 before the Marion County Board of Health.



Inbox - drugfree@strongcommunities.org - Outlook

Tobacco use among W.Va. high school students ... strategic prevention framework ... wv tobacco quitline png - Google ... Tobacco cessation funds cut in 2017-18 budget

https://www.herald-dispatch.com/wcn/wc\_news/tobacco-cessation-funds-cut-in-2017-18-budget/article\_0128a176-6b29-11e7-8e35-8bd686dcd4b0.html

"The most effective force in building a good community is a good newspaper" 7 Days a week!

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## Tobacco cessation funds cut in 2017-18 budget

By NIKKI DOTSON MERRITT Staff Writer Jul 17, 2017

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Thanks to JUDY RUNYON of Fort Gay for subscribing!

As of July 1, all funding for tobacco education and prevention programs across in W.Va. were cut to zero by state legislators.

The cuts to the state Department of Health and Human Resources include the elimination of 100 percent of state funding or \$3 million for tobacco prevention and cessation programs.

Latest News

WV+Tobacco+Qui...p... spf2\_orig.png logo\_fid.png Show all

here to search 2:33 PM 8/16/2019

**Sometimes  
Politics  
Gets in the  
Way**





HOME / CIVIC / BEST STATES / WEST VIRGINIA NEWS

# W.Va. Bill Would Raise Minimum Age for Tobacco Buys to 21

A bill moving through the West Virginia Legislature would raise the state's minimum legal age for buying tobacco products from 18 to 21.

Feb. 13, 2019, at 5:18 a.m. f t

**CHARLESTON, W.VA. (AP)** — A bill moving through the West Virginia Legislature would raise the state's minimum legal age for buying tobacco products from 18 to 21.

The Senate health and human resources committee on Tuesday sent the bill to the Senate judiciary committee. The bill covers all tobacco and vaping products. A similar bill is pending in the House health and human resources committee.

ADVERTISING ▶



*NOTE – Passed the Senate. Failed passage in the House. Mercer County Delegate Voted NO on passage.*



# Puckett removed from Board of Health; long-time member Wides resigns

Aug 9, 2018



Staff photo by Emily Rice

Craig Puckett argues for his place on the Mercer County Board of Health during Wednesday afternoon's meeting.

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NEWSPAPER

- Cardinal Natural Gas Company
- COLDWELL BANKER Yost Real Estate
- Development Authority of Mercer County
- ELITE
- Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital
- Estee Tire & Auto Center

# Sometimes Politics Gets in the Way



# EDUCATION IS KEY

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Partnerships



Traditional Media



Cessation



Social Media



Schools



Focus on  
Resources/Positives



Data



Policy



Prevention -  
Interventions that occur prior to the onset of a disorder & are intended to prevent or reduce risk for the disorder.



**Education is Key**





West Virginia  
**TOBACCO**  
**QUIT** **LINE**

**1-800-QUIT-NOW** **1-877-966-8784**





ww tobacco quitline - Google Search | WV Tobacco Quitline | (27) Mercer County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition

facebook.com/MCSAPC/

Mercer County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition

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Mercer County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition @MCSAPC

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**West Virginians for Affordable Health Care**  
July 2 · 🌐

In one year, from 2017 to 2018, tobacco usage among American youth skyrocketed by almost 40 percent. The culprit? E-cigarettes. Great interview with Greg Puckett.

**Discipline referrals involving tobacco/nicotine products have escalated recently.**

School Year	Number of Discipline Incidents
2015-2016	3300
2016-2017	2683
2017-2018	3215
2018-2019	5861

WVPUBLIC.ORG

**In One Year, Youth Tobacco Use Climbed 40 Percent**

In one year, from 2017 to 2018, tobacco usage among American youth...

+ Add a Button

226 likes +1 this week  
Jill Puckett and 64 other friends

235 follows

See Pages Feed  
Posts from Pages you've liked as your Page

244 post reach this week

1 video views this week

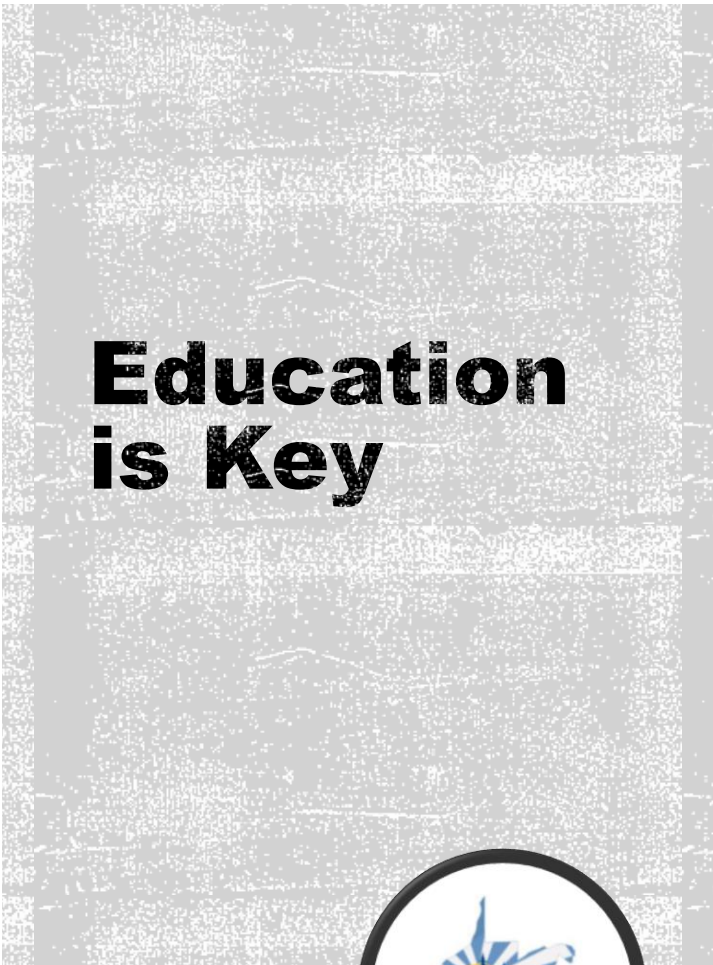
**Community** See All

Liz McKinney-Brooks and 64 other friends like this

Invite Friends

226 people like this

235 people follow this



Inbox - drugfree@strongcommunities.org - Outlook

Tobacco use among W.Va. high school students

https://www.wvpublic.org/post/tobacco-use-among-wva-high-school-students-skyrocketing-likely-culprit-e-cigarettes#stream/0

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Charleston TV, Morgantown Radio Off The Air Today

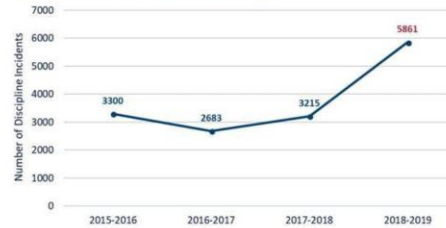
## Tobacco use among W.Va. high school students is skyrocketing. The likely culprit is e-cigarettes.

By KARA LEIGH LOFTON · JUL 2, 2019

PROGRAM  
Appalachia Health News

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Discipline referrals involving tobacco/nicotine products have escalated recently.



Tobacco use among West Virginia high school students is skyrocketing. The likely culprit is e-cigarettes.  
COURTESY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Type here to search

Taskbar icons: Edge, File Explorer, Mail, Office, Chrome, Spotify, PowerPoint, Word



# Education is Key



***“I think that people think that vaping is actually safer than actually smoking and that’s not the case,” said 16-year-old Bailey Darago, who is a member of the anti-substance abuse program Students Against Destructive Decisions.***



Bailee Darago (16), Audrie Helmondollar (17) and Naomi Gills (15) pose in front of Community Connections in Mercer County. All three are members of the anti-substance abuse program Students Against Destructive Decisions. They say since they began high school two-three years ago, kids have started vaping in class, in the hallway, in bathrooms and after school.



**Education  
is Key**

<https://www.wvpublic.org/post/tobacco-use-among-wva-high-school-students-skyrocketing-likely-culprit-e-cigarettes#stream/0>







**Education is  
Key  
—  
THROUGHOUT  
ALL OF WEST  
VIRGINIA**







**Education is Key**  
**YOUTH LED**  
**ADULT GUIDED**  
**EMPOWERED**





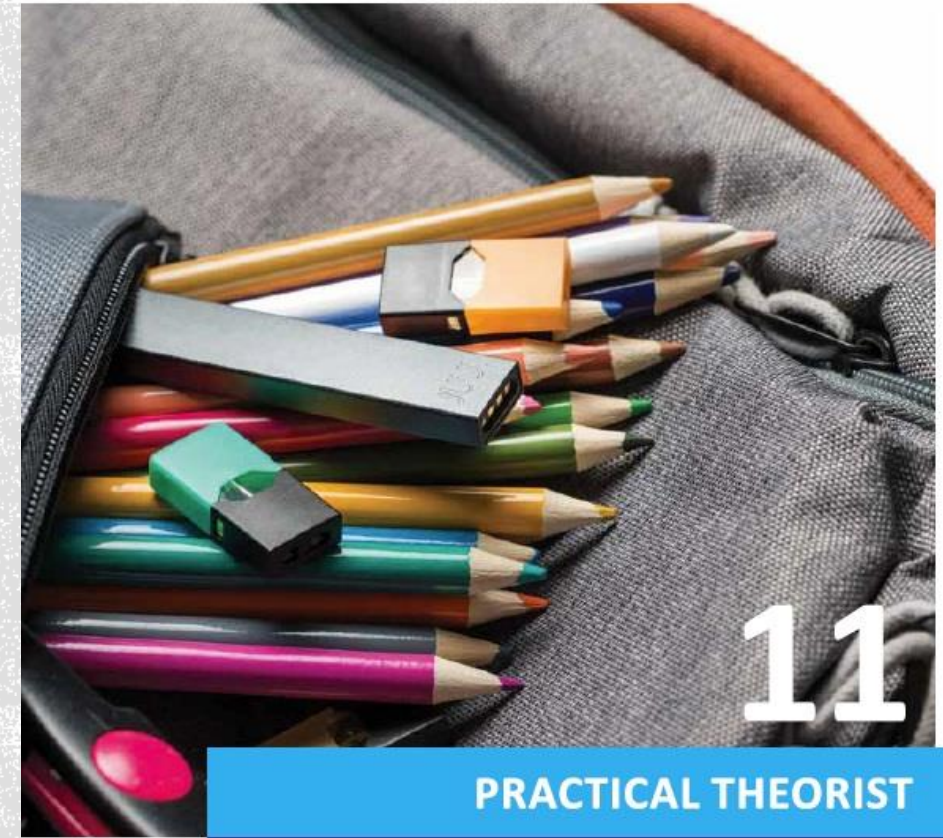
# Looking Forward...

- Working with CADCA to build a PowerPoint to use in Communities Nationwide
- Lunch and Learn Sessions with all TWELVE (12) SECTORS
- Continued Education via Social Media
- Data Collection in Schools (YRBS)

**CADCA Best Practice Publication on Juuling Endorsed by Surgeon General Jerome Adams**



*“Amazing...it literally has everything you would ever want to know about e-cigarettes. And we need to make sure this is the hands of every adult, every teacher, every community leader, and every student out there.”*



**PRACTICAL THEORIST**

**Electronic Nicotine  
Delivery Systems:**

**Juuling, Other Trends,  
and Community Prevention**

Supported in Part by the  
National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)  
National Institutes of Health (NIH)  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)



# **Mercer County, West Virginia**

**A Community / State Response**

**National Prevention Network Conference**

Chicago, Illinois - August 29, 2019

*Presented by: Greg Puckett*

