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**WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 16**  
**ARTICLE 5U**

WV Legislature

**§16-5U-1. Short title.**

This article may be known and cited as the "West Virginia Arthritis Prevention Education Act."

WV Legislature

**§16-5U-2. Responsibilities of Bureau for Public Health.**

(a) The Bureau for Public Health shall establish strategies to promote and maintain an arthritis prevention education program in order to raise public awareness, to educate consumers and to educate and train health professionals, teachers and human service providers, to include the following components:

(1) The bureau shall develop strategies for raising public awareness of the causes and nature of arthritis, personal risk factors, the value of prevention and early detection and options for diagnosing and treating the disease that include, but are not limited to, the following:

(A) Community forums;

(B) Health information and risk factor assessment at public events;

(C) Targeting at-risk populations;

(D) Providing reliable information to policymakers; and

(E) Distributing information through county health departments, schools, area agencies on aging, employer wellness programs, physicians, hospitals, health maintenance organizations, women's groups, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations and departmental offices;

(2) The bureau shall develop strategies for educating consumers about risk factors, diet and exercise, diagnostic procedures and their indications for use, risks and benefits of drug therapies currently approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, environmental safety and injury prevention and the availability of self-help diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitation services;

(3) The bureau may develop strategies for educating physicians and health professionals and training community service providers on the most up-to-date, accurate scientific and medical information on arthritis prevention, diagnosis and treatment, therapeutic decision-making, including guidelines for detecting and treating the disease in special populations, risks and benefits of medications and research advances;

(4) The bureau may conduct a needs assessment to identify:

(A) Research being conducted within the state;

(B) Available up-to-date technical assistance and educational materials and programs nationwide;

(C) The level of public and professional awareness about arthritis;

(D) The needs of arthritis patients, their families and caregivers;

(E) The needs of health care providers, including physicians, nurses, managed care organizations and other health care providers;

(F) The services available to the arthritis patient;

(G) The existence of arthritis treatment programs;

(H) The existence of arthritis support groups;

(I) The existence of rehabilitation services; and

(5) The bureau may replicate and use successful arthritis programs and enter into contracts and purchase materials or services from organizations with appropriate expertise and knowledge of arthritis.

(b) Based on the needs assessment conducted pursuant to this section, the bureau may develop and maintain a resource guide to include arthritis-related services. This guide shall include a description of diagnostic testing procedures, appropriate indications for their use, drug therapies currently approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, and a cautionary statement about the current status of arthritis research, prevention and treatment. The statement shall also indicate that the bureau does not license, certify, or in any way approve arthritis programs or centers in the state.

(c) The bureau may promulgate rules in accordance with the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code necessary to implement the provisions of this article.

(d) Nothing in this article may be construed or interpreted to mean that arthritis treatment or arthritis education are required to be provided by the bureau or the council created in section three of this article. Nothing contained in this article may be construed to mandate funding for arthritis education or any of the programs contained in this article or to require any appropriation by the Legislature.

**§16-5U-3. Interagency council on arthritis.**

(a) There is hereby established the interagency council on arthritis. The Director of Public Health shall chair the council. The council shall have representatives from appropriate state departments and agencies including, but not limited to, the entities with responsibility for aging, health care reform implementation, education and public welfare.

(b) The council shall:

(1) Coordinate arthritis programs conducted by or through the Bureau for Public Health;

(2) Establish a mechanism for sharing information on arthritis among all officials and employees involved in carrying out arthritis-related programs;

(3) Review and coordinate the most promising areas of education, prevention and treatment concerning arthritis;

(4) Assist the Bureau for Public Health and other offices in developing and coordinating plans for education and health promotion on arthritis;

(5) Establish mechanisms to use the results of research concerning arthritis in the development of relevant policies and programs; and

(6) Prepare a report that describes educational initiatives on arthritis and transmit the report to the Legislature and the Governor and make the report available to the public.

(c) The council shall establish and coordinate the advisory panel on arthritis which will provide nongovernmental input regarding the program. Membership shall include, but is not limited to, persons with arthritis, public health educators, arthritis experts, providers of arthritis health care, persons knowledgeable in health promotion and education and representatives of national arthritis organizations or their state and regional affiliates.