



LEADERSHIP COUNCIL PROFILE

Representatives serving on the Leadership Council advise, assist, support and advocate on issues of strategic importance to the operations and functions of the SelfMade Health Network in fulfillment of its mission.



Stephenie K. Kennedy, EdD, MA
Cancer Prevention and Control Administrator
West Virginia University Cancer Institute

Growing up in Appalachia as a first generation college student has always motivated Dr. Stephenie Kennedy to find ways to give back to the people and communities that supported her.

Dr. Kennedy noticed tobacco use and uninsured, low-resourced populations often went hand-in-hand early in her career. Furthermore, she witnessed the most disadvantaged communities often had the highest cancer rates. The blatant health disparities revealed in these studies propelled Dr. Kennedy down the path of health equity and cancer prevention in her career.



Dr. Kennedy maintains the biggest area for growth in cancer prevention and smoking cessation is taking a multi-pronged approach with health professionals and policy-makers working together to solve the problems that affect the Appalachian population. She believes the first step in addressing health disparities is a systematic approach that involves changing policy, as well as engaging health professionals.

Dr. Kennedy also believes in ongoing provider training in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FOHC) and private practices promoting evidenced-based screening protocols and awareness of ongoing clinical trials to better serve patients. By staying up to date with the latest information, providers can boost health outcomes through improved communication in patient-provider relationships, potentially leading to increased cancer survivorship.

“ Growing up in Appalachia as a first generation college student has always motivated me to find ways to give back to the people and communities that supported me. I find that building on the inherent strengths of this culture and tradition engages people as change agents in their lives and the systems around them. ”

Dr. Kennedy joined the Leadership Council in August 2015.

The SelfMade Health Network is a member of the Center for Disease Control (CDC)'s consortium of national networks established to advance prevention efforts related to tobacco-related and cancer health disparities among vulnerable populations, specifically those with low socio-economic characteristics.