

Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategy for Lindsborg Community Hospital

2024

Background and Process

In 2022, the leadership of McPherson Hospital in McPherson, Lindsborg Community Hospital in Lindsborg, Mercy Hospital in Moundridge, and the McPherson County Health Department chose to collaborate in creating a community health needs assessment (CHNA). Provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) require charitable hospitals to conduct community health needs assessments every three years, and adopt implementation strategies to meet identified needs.

Further, the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) defines public health accreditation as the development of a set of standards, a process to measure health department performance against those standards, and reward or recognition for those health departments who meet the standards. This accreditation process also requires a periodic community health assessment.

The service area assessed was McPherson County, Kansas. The assessment combines existing secondary data with information gleaned from a survey made available to county residents and workgroup feedback representing a broad cross section of organizations from throughout the target area. After reviewing this data and compiling and reviewing existing resources, a list of prioritized needs has been developed. Furthermore, the data was also broken down by zip code. Thus the responses from the Lindsborg Community Hospital primary service area of the 67456 and 67464 zip codes were also analyzed.

Needs Identified and Prioritized

Results of the survey indicated perceived health issues in the county. The identified needs were reviewed and supported by a focus group comprised of a cross section of stakeholders from throughout the county. This group met to discuss survey results and explore relevant county secondary data from various sources indicated in this report. The workgroup examined the top health issues gleaned from the survey to arrive at a prioritized list.

The prior survey and prioritization processes, we looked at three main areas: 1) Barriers to Access 2) Risky Behaviors and 3) Health Problems. A change in this year's survey included dividing the question related to the most significant health issues in the county into two separate questions. The first asked what the three most important health issues in the county are from a provided list while omitting the previous years' identified needs, and offering an "other" option for them to write in anything not included in the provided list. Interestingly, those writing in responses in the "other" field overwhelmingly wrote that drug use, mental health issues and obesity were significant issues, in that order; the same issues that had been identified in the prior assessment. The next question then asked which needs from the prior years were still significant. Those responses indicated that mental health, obesity and cancers were the top three, with drug abuse following.

In reviewing the data from the zip codes most encompassing the LCH service area (123 responses), the opinions typically mirrored the county-wide data. The top three most important health issues were Aging Problems (hearing/vision loss, falls, etc) for 86/123 (70%) of respondents, high blood pressure for 50/123 (41%) of respondents and Other for 40/123 (33%) of respondents. Included in Other were nine (9) responses for weight loss/obesity, seven (7) for mental health and four (4) for substance abuse.

For the question about prior health issues and what issues the respondent still feels are important, the LCH area responses also mirror the county-wide data. Obesity had the most responses as 98/123 (80%) of respondents listed it. Cancers were next in responses with 90/123 (73%) of respondents listing it and 87/123 (71%) responses listed Mental Health Problems. At the county level, Drug Abuse was a close fourth place but it didn't rate as high for the LCH service area for this question.

However, in the final question of “What worries you when you think about health in our community,” Drug Abuse is a close 3rd for overall responses as 64/123 (52%) of respondents listed it while Poor Eating Habits is 2nd for responses at 65/123 (53%) of respondents listing it. Texting/Cell Phone While Driving was 1st in responses as 69/123 (56%) of respondents listed it as what worries them.

The Community Health Needs Assessment was approved in the summer of 2022 by the Board of Trustees of each of the three hospitals mentioned above. On March 12, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the SARS COV-2 virus (COVID-19) a global pandemic and the United States and the state of Kansas followed. Since that time, most of all resources have been focused on preventing, diagnosing, treating and vaccinating for COVID-19. This has dominated what our community “needs” in 2020, throughout 2021 and early into 2022. With increased immunity from vaccination and previous COVID-19 illness, the numbers of cases and spread of the disease has decreased. The federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ended on May 11, 2023. Illnesses from the SARS COV-2 virus are still occurring but without the volume and severity.

Action Plan for Health Issues

The health issues listed from two of the questions in the survey process include Aging Problems, High Blood Pressure, Obesity, Cancers and Mental Health Issues. Each will be further discussed below.

Aging problems can be difficult to address, as many of the challenges are often thought to be a “normal” process of aging. Two issues of aging that LCH will try to address are falls and dementia. To reduce the chance of falls, LCH offered four sessions of the Stepping On class. These classes are designed to have a max of twelve participants per class but on occasion, the demand necessitates more in the class. Stepping On provides education in fall prevention strategies and teaches exercises with provided weights to those willing to participate in the free class. LCH has provided four sessions in 2024 and will plan on the same for 2025.

LCH has also worked with Lindsborg EMS/AMR and the City of Lindsborg to discuss a possible paramedicine program. The purpose of the program would be to identify ways to reduce the need for emergency room visits. In review of LCH ER data, the second leading reason for an ER visit over a year of time was due to a fall. Lindsborg EMS/AMR has started to provide some fall education and referrals to the Stepping On program. The current plan is for AMR to develop the paramedicine program, with fall prevention as a primary objective starting out.

The second issue of aging that we will try and address is dementia. It is a condition that is affecting an increasing number of Americans, especially as life expectancy has increased. LCH, and specifically the Family Health Care Clinic, is participating in the Cognitive Care Network with the University of Kansas Health System. The Network has provided education to LCH providers and staff on the diagnosis and management of dementia. It has also provided resources, including social services to affected patients and families. These are resources not previously provided to area residents experiencing this condition. Through the Cognitive Care Network, patients and/or family members are scheduled at FHCC to visit with a dementia-specialized navigator. This person comes to LCH from the Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center of the University of Kansas Health System. The purpose is to provide dementia education and support. Through that same program, LCH provided virtual education to the public at no charge. The appointments to the Cognitive Care Network navigator will continue in 2025.

High blood pressure can be a precursor to more serious related cardiovascular issues, including heart attacks and strokes. Through the electronic medical record, the family medicine providers and staff in the Family Health Care Clinic will receive lists of their patients with blood pressure measurements outside of acceptable limits. Medication management and other interventions will be attempted to reduce the

number of patients with high blood pressure. The Chronic Care Management program in the FHCC is also providing home blood pressure monitoring devices, in an attempt to improve management of this condition. It assumes better home monitoring will aide provider management and general reduction in the rate of high blood pressure. This has been performed through 2024 and will be continued into 2025.

Obesity is a top issue based on survey responses and also based on overall state health rankings. It often is a by-product of two other issues that are seen as concerns – Poor Eating Habits and lack of Exercise Options. As stated above, Poor Eating Habits ranked in the top three of what worries respondents when thinking about the health of their communities. When asked if the community has enough resources to meet wellness needs, 47/123 (38%) disagreed. Another question asked if the community has enough places where a person can exercise and 49/123 (40%) said no. A final question on exercise asked about affordability and 28/123 (23%) said they were not able to easily afford to exercise.

Poor eating habits can often occur from a basic lack of knowledge of what foods and food preparation techniques are better than others. The Dietician and Food Service Manager have put together menus and information on how to utilize food received from the local food bank. They have also communicated how to call the LCH Food Service Department for assistance with questions regarding food preparation. The goal is to improve knowledge and ease of use of more nutritious foods.

The Food Service and Marketing Departments also put together a pamphlet with information on where to receive food assistance Lindsborg, Salina, McPherson and Marquette. The pamphlets are available in exam rooms of the Family Health Care Clinic and in other locations around LCH. Further marketing of this information and increased marketing of the LCH Frozen Meal Program has been performed in 2024 and will continue into 2025.

To add to the exercise and wellness opportunities, LCH resumed pre-pandemic hours in the Wellness Center (6a-10p Mon.-Fri. and 8a-10p Sat.-Sun.). The hours had been reduced for safety concerns during the pandemic. The Wellness Center is available to the public at no cost to patrons. It appears many in our survey are unaware of that so increased publication will be attempted. LCH also donated \$25,000 to the Lindsborg Community Health Care Foundation to assist in the construction of the Fredrickson Family Fitness Park. In partnership with the City of Lindsborg, this outdoor fitness park was completed during the summer of 2023 and is available 24/7/365 and at no cost for use. The park has equipment designed to assist in improving/maintaining balance, thus assisting with fall reduction as well as strength and overall fitness. Lindsborg Community Hospital has also sponsored the Bike Share program with the City of Lindsborg. The program provides bicycles that can be rented in three different locations across Lindsborg. This program started in 2023 and will continue into 2025.

In 2023, one of the quality initiatives for the family medicine providers in the Family Health Care Clinic was to assess BMI (Body Mass Index) and to provide an intervention if below or above healthy ranges. Each of the providers received reports on their performance of this measure and each improved. One of the interventions could include a referral to the medically supervised weight management and disease control service line, provided by Greg Lindholm PA and Jade Banning PA in the FHCC. The clinic has rebranded this service line and it is now called Lifestyle Health. Increased marketing will be performed in 2025 to increase awareness and share the success of the patients in that service line.

Cancer continues to affect people throughout our society, either as a patient, family member or friend. Prevention and treatment can be challenging to say the least, depending on the type of cancer. LCH aids in the attempts at early diagnosis or even prevention through the mammography and colonoscopy services provided, along with other diagnostic testing services. The providers and staff in the Family Health Care Clinic receive and monitor lists of their patients in need of cancer screening services as recommended by the appropriate agencies. They work with the patients to refer to the appropriate screening services and

through fiscal year 2024, 82% of eligible patients received appropriate breast cancer screening and 63% received colorectal cancer screening. Increasing these numbers will continue. When asked if they have a primary care provider, 114/123 (93%) survey respondents said yes. Regardless of where they receive services, having a primary care provider to encourage and refer to cancer screening services should aid in at least early diagnosis, which often can assist treatment.

LCH also offers financial assistance to LCH patrons through the Smoky Valley Cares Fund. The fund has established criteria to provide grant assistance to those in need of cancer screening. The fund also has grant assistance for those with a cancer diagnosis, to aid in covering medical or other expenses. The Marketing and Development and Food Service Departments developed a fund raiser in October 2024 for the Smoky Valley Cares Fund. Called the Autobahn Oktoberfest, the fundraiser consisted of a drive-thru German meal, prepared in the LCH kitchen. Approximately \$6,000 were raised for the fund.

Mental health issues, often intertwined with substance abuse issues, continue to rise to the top of community health issues. LCH works with Prairie View mental health services to screen and assist in appropriate placement or follow-up in emergent cases. Referrals are also made to Veridian, CKF Addiction Treatment and other mental health and/or substance abuse treatment centers as needed, at any access point at LCH. The reality is that it is not enough, here or anywhere. In October 2024, LCH convened a meeting with representatives from Prairie View, Avel eEmergency, AMR EMS service, Lindsborg police department and LCH providers and staff. The purpose was to discuss improved ways to manage people in mental crisis, especially through use of Prairie View Crisis Center in Newton and Prairie View same-day walk-in clinic in McPherson. The goal is to reduce time spent in the LCH ER and under police protection, when possible. This work will continue into 2025.

Quite often, acute or chronic pain is the cause for substance use and abuse. In May of 2023, LCH began a partnership with Holistic Pain Management to provide clinical exams and procedures for pain management. It is a specialty service line with clinic appointments at least two days per month and procedure days on two other days per month. The demand for this service has grown throughout 2024 and will continue into 2025. HPM and LCH have increased the number of days they offer services, depending on availability. In 2025, LCH will purchase several pieces of equipment necessary to perform the pain relief procedures, versus leasing them. This demonstrates confidence in the program.

In Closing

The next Community Health Needs Assessment will be performed in 2025. Between now and then, we will work to develop and complete action plans such as this. Hopefully measurable progress will be made. With the assistance of groups listed in this action plan along with those unnamed and the patients themselves, we will continue to work towards completing our Mission of *Partners, Caring for the Health of the Smoky Valley Communities*.