



Howard County  
**MEDICAL CENTER**

## Implementation Strategy

Through the development of the Community Health Needs Assessment, several areas that need improvement were identified. Howard County Medical Center (HCMC), along with a group of key community leaders, established priorities based off of the following criteria:

- Results of the community survey
- Top areas of concern from the community leaders in the population they serve
- HCMC inpatient, outpatient and clinic discharge data
- The consequences of not addressing the issues
- The realization that some unaddressed health concerns lead to other health concerns

The following topics and subsequent goals will be the areas of focus over the next three years:

- Improve access to mental health services
- Offering continuing education opportunities to the community
- Increase the number of people at a healthy weight
- Education about preventative health (encourage more people to have preventative procedures/health checks)

After the topics were finalized based off of the above criteria, a senior leadership group at Howard County Medical Center, consisting of the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Nursing Officer, Medical Clinic Director and Human Resources/Marketing Director met to determine individual goals for each theme.

One area that had overwhelming support from both the community and the leaders was the development of a Wellness Center. Although HCMC supports the addition of a Wellness Center to our community, we are not able to lead the community down this path. A Wellness Center does not currently fit in with our business model or strategic plan. It would take significant resources and manpower to make this a reality. HCMC is in the process of implementing a new computer system, making changes to policies and procedures to conform to the Affordable Care Act and also beginning a 1.5 million dollar renovation to our emergency room, laboratory and our patient rooms. HCMC will gladly review any proposals if they can help the Chamber of

Commerce in any way, but those decisions will be made on a case by case basis dependent on the current financial situation of the facility.

### **Improving Access to Mental Health Services**

Improving access to mental health services and increasing awareness was something that was consistently noted throughout the Community Health Needs Assessment process. We have developed several initiatives over the next three years.

#### **2013-2016 Initiatives**

1. Work with the St. Paul school district to develop an EAP plan, in addition to offering education to students and faculty, which will be led by Family Resources in Grand Island. The Howard County Medical Center Foundation has pledged \$5,000 to help offset some of the costs associated with implementing this program.
2. Encourage provider participation in the 9-member Physician Hospital Organization (PHO) Board of Directors so that we have access to needed mental health providers and other specialty providers in our rural area. Providers, Administration and our Board of Directors will attend meetings to be kept abreast of opportunities that can help secure the future of our facility.
3. The Chief Operating Officer at HCMC will continue to reach out to various mental health providers in the area to see if other outpatient specialists would be interested in seeing patients at our facility.
4. Implement an on-line option to our own Employee Assistance Program so that employees can choose their own route should they want/need assistance. The cost for this service is \$7 per employee per year.
5. Help to sponsor parenting, anti-bullying and communication workshops in conjunction with the local C.A.R.E. team.

### **Offering Continuing Education to Opportunities to the Community**

Our facility is located in St. Paul, which is about 25 miles north of Grand Island. Our community looks to us for expertise in the medical arena, and we want to be able to provide timely education in a format conducive for the many volunteers that help to make our community a safe one. We also want to provide education to the community on a variety of other healthcare topics so that citizens of Howard, Greeley and Sherman counties can continue to be informed, proactive citizens when it comes to health care. There are also four main goals in this area:

**2013-2016 Initiatives**

1. We want to help train our community to be able to help save a life through the use of CPR classes should the need arise. Our goal would be to have 100 new people certified in the next three years. The instructor will track this and provide feedback to the CHNA administrative group. This course will be offered at a discounted rate to the community due to sponsorship by Howard County Medical Center.
2. Offer at least three continuing education classes annually to our local emergency management personnel. We will also work to develop and distribute a survey so that we they can let us know their interests and availability.
3. Team up with the Extension Office to annually provide babysitting classes and farm safety classes to the youth in our community.
4. Develop an annual schedule of “Lunch and Learns” which will be led by our medical staff on issues that we diagnose frequently.

**Increase the Number of People at a Healthy Weight**

In conjunction with wanting to bring a wellness center to St. Paul, education on the how to get to or maintain a healthy weight is the third goal. In addition to being a priority for the people that we interviewed for the CHNA, this is also the top health issue as reported by the State of Nebraska, in addition to our service area, which is the Loup Basin Public Health Department. Obesity rates for all three counties in our service area are also over the state and national averages according to the *County Health Rankings* website. Additionally, the treatment of type 2 diabetes and hypertension are two of the top three reasons for visits in our Medical Clinic.

**2013-2016 Initiatives**

1. Encourage provider/dietician involvement when possible in school activities. The CHNA group understands the importance of educating the community early and often.
  - a. “Jump for Heart”
2. Continue to help sponsor events along with the Howard County Wellness Institute for our local school district. Future opportunities will be discussed with a school representative and the Wellness Coordinator at HCMC.
3. Work to provide a diverse group of “health” sponsors at our local Health Fair that takes place each year in April.
4. Explore the possibility of a wellness center.

## **Education on Preventative Health**

Heart attacks, cancer and strokes are the top five causes of death in our three county area. One of the benefits of the Affordable Care Act is that for people with health coverage, preventative procedures are covered at 100%. There are many statistics that show that early detection leads to better outcomes. As a facility, we want our community to know what tests they need to have completed and on what schedule, including immunizations and flu shots.

### **2013-2016 Initiatives**

1. Develop hand out material for patients regarding what tests are recommended based off on their current age.
2. Discuss the importance of immunizations in our child birth education classes and provide handouts showing the recommended sequence.
3. Offer flu shot clinics and educate on why the flu shots are necessary
4. Continue offering education on preventive health in our quarterly newsletters, the local papers and social media.

## **Other Areas of Improvement**

In addition to our four major areas of focus, we also felt there were other suggestions that came out of the community survey and brainstorming session, that although do not fit into the above themes, could still be addressed. Those are:

1. Training 5 current staff members to become Certified Application Counselors (CAC) to assist those seeking insurance in the Marketplace.
  - a. We will measure with a quality control project how many people are not insured in addition to how many people met with one of our five CACs. It will be financially significant for our Medical Center to enroll everyone who eligible to do so.
2. Look for grant funding/vehicle purchase opportunities in order to provide transportation to our facility on the week-end.
  - a. The local Senior Center already has funding and the ability to transport patients during the week; but on the week-end seniors will call an ambulance due to not

having any other transportation options available and consequently seek services in the emergency room when a Clinic visit would have been otherwise the best route.

3. Look at the option of hiring a Care Coordinator in order to help to improve patient compliance and understanding of the patient's treatment plan.