

Great Plains of Smith County, INC. dba

Smith County Memorial Hospital

Community Health Needs Assessment 2018

Implementation Strategy

Smith County, KS – 2018

The objective of the Smith County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was to determine health needs from the perspective of the community in collaboration with the health providers for the community. This report summarizes the plans for Smith County Memorial Hospital to address prioritized needs identified in the 2018-2019 CHNA through the development of programs and health initiatives.

These issues were identified as the most critical and therefore have been prioritized to be further addressed through an implementation of an action strategy as follows:

1. Behavioral & Mental Health
2. Wellness/Disease Prevention
3. Dental Service Access
4. Poverty/Affordable Insurance
5. Child Care and Development Access
6. Alcohol and Drug Prevention
7. Elder Care/Housing

Addressing Community Needs & Action Plan

1. Behavioral & Mental Health

It was evident through the Community Health Needs Assessment that community members and healthcare providers agree that behavioral and mental health care availability, access and promotion is a concern in our community. Abundant citations are noted throughout the study of expressed concern for our community's mental health needs. Mental Health Assistance was the second highest rank need identified in prior CHNAs, indicating it is an ongoing problem. According to the community stakeholder survey, limited access to mental health assistance was the second highest response when asked "what are the root causes of poor health in our community?" Almost 43% of survey takers perceive the mental health delivery system of our community to be poor or very poor. Mental health topics were the highest cited issue of participants at the Town Hall meeting.

Behavioral health services play an important role in the overall health status of rural residents. Primary care providers are equipped with cursory training in behavioral health, however a provider that is specialized can play an important role in supporting patients in making and maintaining health behavior changes. Perhaps the most effective change the community will see in the behavioral health arena will be the integration of a Behavioral Health Professional into the primary care setting at the Smith County Family Practice. We will attempt to address this need by hiring a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. This position would allow the physicians and primary care nurse practitioners to

perform a “warm handoff” to a mental health professional within the clinic. The Clinical Social Worker could provide diagnosis and assessment of mental health diagnoses; patient, family and group therapy; mental health crisis intervention; transitional management services as well as behavioral assessment and intervention services such as medication compliance, diet, stress management, smoking cessation, etc.

Other relationships and Memorandums of Understanding will continue to be fostered between Smith County Memorial Hospital and behavioral health resources including telehealth services. We will pursue expansion of telehealth services through High Plains Mental Health Center (the Community Mental Health Center serving this county under contract with the State of Kansas), Veridian Behavioral Health of Salina, Kansas, and other agencies as available and appropriate.

In addition to these efforts, the Kansas Clinical Improvement Collaborative (KCIC), which Great Plains of Smith County participates in, has been awarded grant funding to explore and implement a program of mental health services in selected communities. Although the program is in its infancy, GPSC is participating in development discussions related to the project.

2. Wellness/Disease Prevention

Operation of the Gardner Wellness Center, a gymnasium with equipment for community members to perform self-directed exercise, was turned over to the Smith County Commissioners concurrently with Smith County Memorial Hospital’s move to our new facility. This change was made in order to provide for the financial well-being of the hospital under reimbursement rules unique to Critical Access Hospitals. Despite disaffiliation with the wellness center, SCMH continues to explore ways to educate and motivate the community regarding wellness and disease prevention. Among these are communication through classes and social media on topics related to wellness and disease prevention. Among the topics addressed are appropriate immunization of children and adults, handwashing and other appropriate disease prevention techniques, provision of a drop-off station for unused or outdated medications, and healthy diet. We have hired an Executive Chef who is also a Registered Dietician. This chef has a very strong interest in diet as a preventive measure. He has begun working with the medical staff to develop an education program that will be targeted at the public. He hopes to show participants healthier styles of cooking and food preparation that could lead to healthier lifestyles. In addition to the education program, SCMH has, under the leadership of the Registered Dietician and Food Service Manager, begun providing a much healthier diet in our cafeteria. The menu has transitioned dramatically from the one in our previous facility. The cafeteria has been opened to the public for the lunch meal Monday through Friday, with a very large salad bar and entrees that are low fat, low sodium, and demonstrate appropriate portion size. The cafeteria has been very well received by the public.

3. Dental Service Access

The inclusion of adequate dental services in the list of healthcare needs in Smith County stems from the decline in the availability of dental services over the past few years. In earlier times, two full time dentists served the Smith County area and had thriving practices. Unfortunately, the availability of local care has now declined to a single provider available at most two days per week. This decline in service availability has forced many residents to travel outside of the county for dental services. Not only does this add expense for the residents, but it also provides a financial barrier for lower income residents who may not have the financial ability to travel longer distances for dental care. Additionally, the poor reimbursement for dental care by the KanCare program, coupled with the refusal of state government to allow expansion of the Medicaid program to allow inclusion of more eligible individuals have impacted the availability of dental services. Although addressing this problem is not realistically within the purview of Great Plains of Smith County, we none the less work collaboratively with Smith Center Economic Development and other agencies that are working to improve the availability of dental services.

4. Poverty/Affordable Insurance

Smith County has an average household income of \$39,836 according to 2010 U.S. Census data. This ranks Smith County 30th out of 105 counties in Kansas, and compares to an average household income of \$49,424 for all of Kansas and \$51,914 for the U.S. as a whole. This low average income level, combined with the high number of individuals employed by small business that do not provide group health insurance, makes the number of individuals without adequate health coverage higher than many other counties in Kansas. While this is a definite determinant of health status of residents in the county, there is little that is within the purview of Great Plains of Smith County to address this. Rather, it is viewed as an overall economic development issue.

5. Child Care and Development Access

The availability and adequacy of child care and early childhood development services was viewed by the participants in the CHNA as an area of concern. A not for profit organization has been established within Smith Center with a goal of establishing and operating a Child Development Center. The group has purchased property located south of the Hospital property on which they plan to develop this center. Although development and operation of this type of facility is not viewed as being within the scope of Great Plains of Smith County, we none the less continue to monitor developments and collaborate where appropriate with them.

6. Alcohol and Drug Prevention

Abuse of illicit and prescription medications has become a widely recognized health factor across the U.S. in recent years. The increasing emphasis on prevention and treatment of inappropriate use of opioids has generated headlines in the press across the country. Despite the increased emphasis on this threat, there is little evidence that opioid abuse is a significant problem in Smith County. The Medical Staff at Smith County

Family Practice, operated by Great Plains of Smith County, had proactively developed a program of monitoring and controlling prescriptions for all patients that receive long term opioid prescriptions. This program involves an actual contract with the patient. Under the terms of the contract, the patient's prescriptions are transmitted to the retail pharmacy only on a tightly controlled schedule, and the patient is subject to random testing to determine that they are taking the medication appropriately.

The presence and abuse of illicit drugs, including methamphetamines, is felt to be a larger problem than the abuse of opioids in Smith County. The presence of illicit drugs is a multi-factorial situation. It is tied to both the economic status of the community as well as the inadequate availability of substance abuse and behavioral health services as referenced above. The lack of substance abuse services also significantly affects the prevalence of alcohol abuse in the population. It is our expectation that improving the availability of mental / behavioral health services will have a positive impact on all of these health issues in Smith County.

7. Elder Care/Housing

The availability and adequacy of elder care and senior housing in Smith County has been a topic of concern for many years. As noted in past Community Health Needs Assessments, the financial viability of Great Plains of Smith County under reimbursement rules for Critical Access Hospitals provided a strong impetus to separate the operation of Smith County Memorial Hospital Long Term Care from the operations of the hospital. As part of our forecasting and planning for the construction of the new hospital, the Board of Trustees of Smith County Memorial Hospital worked diligently to find an independent partner to assist with construction and operation of senior living facilities. Late in 2016 a presentation was made to the Board of Trustees regarding the potential for development of a complex of facilities, with a continuum from Independent Living apartments through Assisted Living facilities, and including Skilled Nursing units. The company providing the proposal, which subsequently became known as SunPorch of Smith County, proposed a multi-phase project to construct facilities on the south end of the property purchased for the construction of the hospital. Permission was granted by the Board of Trustees to proceed, and a long term lease for a portion of the property was developed between SunPorch and the Smith County Commissioners. Development of plans and financing for the initiation of construction lagged behind the work on the hospital, but work has progressed on the first phase. As this Implementation Plan is written, the projected completion date for Phase I, which includes two 10 bed Skilled Nursing Facilities and a 12 bed Assisted Living Facility, is within two or three months. The new facility, utilizing a newer design model from the relatively institutional approach to senior living in the past, is expected to be popular with residents and the community alike. If the first phase proves financially successful, it will make prompt construction of subsequent portions of the proposed project more feasible. When complete, the project will go a long ways towards meeting the senior housing needs of the community.