

Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital

Miller, South Dakota

2013 Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategy

Introduction

The community health needs assessment is a tool used to help communities determine their capacity and use of resources by residents. It is also the foundation for improving and promoting the health of county residents. Community health needs assessment is a key step in the continuous community health improvement process. The role of the process is to identify factors that affect the health of a population and determine the availability of resources within the county to adequately address these factors.

The community health needs assessment is also a part of the required hospital documentation of “Community Benefit” under the Affordable Care Act. Nonprofit hospitals are now required to perform community assessments to help them determine community benefit and plan for the future. Further explanation and specific regulations are available from Health and Human Services, the Internal Revenue Service and the United States Department of the Treasury.

This community health needs assessment is the first of its kind for Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital. In order to comply with the established regulations, Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital completed the following:

- Community Health Needs Assessment report, compliant with IRS – Treasury
- Provide the Hospital information needed to complete the IRS – 990h schedule
- Develop an implementation strategy for the hospital to issue an assessment of community health needs and document how it intends to respond to the needs

Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital will conduct a community health needs assessment every three years to evaluate the health of the community, identify high priority health needs and develop strategies to address the needs of the community. The 2013 community health needs assessment represents a combination of quantitative and qualitative information based on census data, patient data, and focus group feedback from several community organizations and leaders.

Data for Hand County was compared to statewide data as well as national data. This report summarizes the results of the analysis.

How Strategy & Plan Developed:

(Who was involved & How the Assessment was conducted)

In 2012 and 2013, Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital completed a Community Health Needs Assessment for Hand County, S.D., the hospital's primary service area. The process started with paper surveys completed by community residents. At the same time, research began regarding the status of health and risk factors for the county. A compilation of the CHNA surveys was conducted. The results of these surveys were shared with community groups where discussion took place on the findings of the surveys. The groups looked for opportunities to prioritize goals to address identified community health needs to improve the overall health of the community.

Action Plans/ Next Steps:

The Board of Trustees of Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital has determined that the following health needs identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment should be addressed through an implementation strategy noted for each identified need.

I. FINDINGS AND PLAN:

#1 Mental Health Access.

Finding.

In the satisfaction survey, four of the top ten most unsatisfactory responses the essay and interviews indicated that mental health access and availability in Hand County is a significant concern. Currently, Hand County is part of the central South Dakota region that is managed by Community Counseling of Huron, S.D.. Each Friday, Community Counseling has a counselor in Miller. Through the interviews, it was discussed that comfort with a mental health counselor is a very personal choice and that relationship is the basis for access and use of the mental health counseling services of the community. Hand County currently has no specialized pediatric counselors who come to the community.

Plan.

South Dakota mental health is divided into regions. Hand County is included in the region that Community Counseling supports. The hospital will work with Community Counseling to improve access and awareness of the services offered and to offer community educational information regarding mental health support.

Avera Medical Group is studying Care Coordination. Under this primary care clinic process, a Master's prepared Social Worker is part of the clinic care coordination team. Avera Medical Group –Miller will continue to study care coordination and may volunteer to serve as a pilot program for Avera Medical Group in providing additional mental health services.

Avera eCARE Services may soon be adding behavioral health to its service line. Avera Behavioral Health Center in Sioux Falls, S.D., could serve as a hub for eConsult whereby electronic access would be given to a patient in Miller, S.D. and a social worker, counselor, psychologist or psychiatrist, would be available on an emergent basis or scheduled for routine appointments. Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital will continue to work with Avera on the development of this form of service.

#2 Public Transportation.

Finding.

In the satisfaction survey, access to public transportation was a top-10 unsatisfactory response. In addition, the essay and interview responses indicated the distance to specialist providers and public transportation to regional medical care are significant problems. The census indicated that the Hand County age 65+ breakdown is almost twice the statewide breakdown. In addition, due to the nature of the rural or frontier population density, many elderly Hand County residents have no or minimal family in the area. This causes significant issues when a person develops health related needs that require regional appointments for care or follow-ups. The interviews illustrated that a public transportation service that would take Hand County residents to Aberdeen or Sioux Falls and back for doctor appointments or treatments would be greatly beneficial. The trip to Aberdeen is one-and-a-half hours, while the trip to Sioux Falls is three hours. When a clinic appointment or treatment is conducted, the trip can be very long and stressful. In addition, the tertiary centers are in large communities, which makes travel very stressful for elderly drivers whose residence is rural Hand County.

Plan.

Capital City Transit of Pierre has a public transportation bus that takes patients to appointments in various cities. Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital will dialogue with Capital City Transit to see if there is an opportunity whereby they will drive through Miller to take Hand County residents to Aberdeen or Sioux Falls for appointments or treatments.

Miller Transit is a community-based nonprofit organization that runs a bus service for low income and elderly community residents. It is subsidized by local, state and federal dollars. Routinely, it does not leave the community. Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital will see if

Miller Transit will explore leaving the community for transport to tertiary facilities for appointments or treatments.

#3 Recruitment.

Finding.

While access to health care providers did not score as unsatisfactory in the survey, the essay portion and the interviews stressed the need for more providers. At the time of the survey, a physician's assistant had recently left the community. In the months following, two nurse practitioners were hired, both meeting and increasing access and availability for clinic appointments. This brings the median age of the three nurse practitioners to the low 30s. The two physicians in the community are in their 60s. This means that there will be a short-term need to recruit for physician coverage, and collaboration with the three nurse practitioners is necessary.

Comments on the essays and during the interviews indicated that clinic access is a concern. Making appointments that accommodate patients' schedules, particularly for urgent needs and physicals, was discussed.

Plan.

Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital has offered scholarships to local students pursuing a medical degree, and continues to work with local students pursuing medical careers with the intent of recruiting them back to Miller.

To meet the more current demand, Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital has engaged a physician recruitment firm to assist in the recruitment of a family practice physician. Interest is developing and a community visit is scheduled. Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital is developing a professional recruitment team and working to create a visit that will lead to signing the prospective physician.

Avera Medical Group - Miller is exploring lunch and evening hours. This will begin once a nurse practitioner returns from maternity leave and the staff are more comfortable with the latest EMR upgrade. In addition, a future upgrade will also allow for registration of clinic appointments through the Internet to facilitate patients being able to select the most convenient time for their appointment. Avera Medical Group Miller is also studying the possibility of offering unscheduled "Urgent Care" appointments for a block of time in the mornings. They would be operated on a first-come, first-served basis for urgent health needs.

#4 Wellness.

Finding.

Wellness was not a high ranking need on the satisfactory survey, however in the essay and interviews, several comments and discussions were held regarding the need for improved wellness opportunities. HCMH does have a new 24 hour wellness center. However, there are no organized group social wellness activities. It was suggested that these group wellness activities be offered to enhance the peer support group for wellness activities within the community.

In addition, the discussion of healthy food choices is a concern in the community. There are few healthy food choices at restaurants in the community. There are no vending machines in the community that offers a healthy snack.

Plan.

AHCMH will work with the wellness center to offer group social wellness opportunities, such as aerobics, sports leagues or wellness challenges. In addition, AHCMH will develop a healthy snack vending machine in the waiting area of the hospital to offer a healthy fresh fruit or vegetable rather than a candy related snack item.

Board Approval:

This report was prepared for, and approved at the March 2013 Avera Hand County Memorial Hospital Board of Directors regular meeting.