Community Health Needs Assessment
Avera St. Luke’s Hospital
Fiscal Year 2019 Report

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The Community Health Needs Implementation Strategy is an essential aspect in maintaining Avera St. Luke’s Hospital’s mission while following the values of Compassion, Hospitality, and Stewardship in everyday life.
Executive Summary

In 2019, a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was conducted by Avera St. Luke’s Hospital for the residents of Brown County, South Dakota.

Purpose:

According to the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), not-for-profit, tax-exempt hospitals must conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years. The following report is a product of the 2019 CHNA process conducted by Avera St. Luke’s Hospital and is the third CHNA conducted by the organization for this purpose. This report covers 2019, 2020, and 2021 and is intended to be used by stakeholders to: 1) identify significant community health needs in the Brown County, South Dakota; 2) Inform and development of an Implementation Strategy addressing the identified needs; 3) Inform the prioritization of the community benefit programs, the allocation of resources and the development of policies as undertaken by, and on behalf of Avera St. Luke’s Hospital; and 4) Provide documentation of the CHNA for a Charitable Hospital Organizations required by Section 501(r)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service tax law.

Data Sources and Methods:

Qualitative and Quantitative primary and secondary data were collected by the Avera St. Luke’s Foundation Office and CHNA committee. Primary Data was accomplished through focus groups comprised of local representatives from multiple sectors of the community.

Identified Areas of Need:

The needs identified were prioritized by the senior leadership team of Avera St. Luke’s Hospital In the coming three years Avera St. Luke’s commits to:

- Continuing to explore solutions to removing the barriers to community health needs
- Health care affordability
- Exploring barriers and proposed solutions to Transportation needs

This decision was based on the severity of the issue, our current involvement in these areas, and our professional outlook.
## Contents

**Organization Mission** 3-5
- *Mission and Values* 3
- *About Avera St. Luke’s* 3-5
- *Our Employees* 5

**The Community Served** 6-10
- *Defining Community* 6
- *Demographics* 6-10

**Community Health Needs Assessment Process** 11

**Community Input** 11
- *Community Respondents* 12
- *Questions* 12
- *Major Themes* 13

**Prioritized Significant Community Health Needs** 14
**Potentially Available Resources** 15
**Evaluation of Impact** 16-17
Avera/Hospital Information:

Avera Mission and Values:

Avera is a health ministry rooted in the Gospel. Our mission is to make a positive impact in the lives and health of persons and communities by providing quality services guided by Christian values.

At Avera St. Luke’s our mission is imperative as a Catholic health care institution that is guided by Gospel values. We promote and defend human dignity, care for poor and otherwise vulnerable persons, promote the common good and are responsible stewards of our resources. We promote health care as a basic human good essential to human flourishing. Without good health, persons’ abilities to thrive may be diminished, and they may suffer spiritual, temporal and material decline. Their ability to pursue meaningful relationships becomes diminished. Human dignity and life itself may be lost. By The Ethical and Religious Directive for Catholic Health Care #3, we are called to “provide service to and advocacy for those people whose social condition put them at the margins of society and make them particularly vulnerable to discrimination.”

The core values of compassion, hospitality, and stewardship guide Avera employees in their daily work.

Compassion
The compassion of Jesus, especially for the poor and the sick of body and spirit, shapes the manner in which health care is delivered by Avera’s employees, physicians, administrators, volunteers and sponsors. Compassionate caring is expressed through sensitive listening and responding, understanding, support, patience, and healing touch.

Hospitality
The encounters of Jesus with each person were typified by openness and mutuality. Welcoming presence, attentiveness to needs, a gracious manner seasoned with a sense of humor, are expressions of hospitality in and by the Avera Health community.

Stewardship
Threaded through the mission of Jesus was the restoration of all the world to right relationship with its Creator. In that same spirit and mission, the members of Avera Health treat persons, organizational power and earth’s resources with justice and responsibility. Respect, truth and integrity are
foundational to right relationships among those who serve, and those who are served.

Through these values, we work every day to fulfill our mission to its fullest and continue to serve the community in every way possible. It is our mission to provide the highest quality of care to anyone who needs it.

As part of its philanthropic mission, Avera prioritizes preventative care and initiatives that ultimately reduce costs for patients and Healthcare systems.

**About Avera St. Luke's Hospital**

Avera St. Luke's Hospital was established in 1901 in Aberdeen, SD, as a 15-bed hospital by the Presentation Sisters. We have grown into a regional medical center that offers the complete continuum of care from birth to death to the people living in and around the Aberdeen area.

**Our Locations**
- Avera St. Luke’s Hospital – Aberdeen, SD
  - Inpatient Services – 119 acute care beds
    - Medical
    - Surgical
    - Obstetrics
    - Pediatrics
    - Inpatient Physical Rehabilitation
    - Behavioral Health Unit

- Outpatient Services
  - Addiction Services
  - Emergency Department/CareFlight
  - Cancer Care
  - Cardiac Cath Lab/Cardiology Services
  - Diabetes Wellness Services
  - eConsult Services (inpatient and outpatient)
  - Endoscopy Center
  - Home Health/Palliative Care/Hospice
  - Human Performance Center/Aberdeen
  - Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy/Wound Care Center
  - Kidney Dialysis
  - Laboratory/Pathology Services
  - Medical Nutrition Therapy
  - Pain Management Center
  - Pastoral Care
  - Pharmacy Services
- Radiology Services
- Therapies – Massage, OT/TR, PT, Respiratory, & Speech
- Social Work Services
- Surgery Center

- Avera Mother Joseph Manor Retirement Community – Aberdeen, SD
  - Skilled Nursing Facility – 81 beds
  - Semi-Independent Living Apartments
  - Assisted Living Apartments
  - Independent Living (Davis Court)

- Avera Eureka Health Care Center – Eureka, SD
  - Skilled Nursing Facility – 56 beds
  - Assisted Living Suites

- Avera Medical Group – Clinic Division
  - 5 Primary Care Clinics in Aberdeen, Groton, Selby, and Ellendale, ND
  - 1 AveraQuick Clinic (retail clinic)
  - 1 Urgent Care Clinic
  - Student Health Services; Northern State University
  - 16 Medical/Surgical Specialty Clinics
  - 4 Hospital-Based Physician Groups
    - Radiologists
    - Hospitalists
    - Pathologists
    - Anesthesiologists
    - Emergency

Our Employees
Avera St. Luke's employs more than 1,400 people in our hospital, long-term care and clinic divisions. A medical/dental staff of more than 94 employed local physicians, certified nurse practitioners, and physician assistants representing 25 different specialties provides care for the area’s citizens. Nearly 200 volunteers, who help in many ways, are an integral part of the success of the medical center.
Define Community

Avera St. Luke’s chose to focus on Brown County because it would provide the most representative data of which Avera St. Luke’s serves and more accurately assess the health of the Avera St. Luke’s community. Approximately 60 percent of Avera St. Luke’s inpatient discharges originate from Brown County. Therefore, the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was conducted by Avera St. Luke’s for approximately 39,441 residents in Brown County, its primary service area. Avera St. Luke’s serves as the county’s largest integrated health care facility.

Brown County

*Reported from U.S. News & World Report; Healthiest Communities, Brown County residents have a life expectancy of 80.1 years and 9.3% population with no health insurance. Brown County also has a higher Cancer prevalence among Medicare beneficiaries. The Adults in poor to fair general health is 10.4% compared to the state 11.9%.
Insurance and Medicare coverage combined with state and county level health and safety statistics for Brown County, SD. In Brown County, SD the age groups most likely to have health care coverage are 6-17 and 6-17, men and women, respectively. The location has a 1 to 70 primary care clinician to patient ratio and a Medicare reimbursement average per patient per year of $9,145.
The table below shows the age breakdown of the county. It was also noted that a substantial portion of the patients served by Avera St. Luke’s are of adult age.
The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington analyzed the performance of all 3,142 US counties or county-equivalents in terms of life expectancy at birth, mortality rates for select causes, alcohol use, smoking, obesity prevalence, and recommended physical activity using novel small area estimation techniques and the most up-to-date county-level information. Their report for Brown County, South Dakota included findings for Mental and Substance Use Disorders Mortality; Females 3.8% and Male 8.4%

*Data USA; Brown County, SD has a strong physician to patient ratio but shows lower opportunity in Behavioral Health Areas.*
The unemployment rate in South Dakota is at 2.8 percent while the rate in Brown County is also at 2.9 percent - both of which are better than the national average of 3.6 percent. The income per capita for the county is $27,138 and the median household income is $51,398. However, the rate of persons below the poverty level in Brown County is 11 percent, which is an increase in the last 3 years. Approximately 11 percent of the county’s population is uninsured, while the State average is 15 percent. Although Brown County’s numbers are slightly better than the state and national statistics in these categories, these numbers can still be improved upon.

The majority of Brown County is not within a Health Professional Shortage Area or Medically Underserved Area however, the city of Groton and South Aberdeen, have been designated as a medically underserved area. Avera St. Luke’s continue to work with these areas by providing outreach clinics and support.

Brown County and the surrounding area is also home to several Hutterite colonies. Although this population accesses health services slightly different than the mainstream population because of their traditional way of living, Avera St. Luke’s works closely with them on preventive care and education. The hospital recently provided “landing training”. This helped to educate them in the event that the Avera Careflight helicopter would need to assist with an emergency situation.

* United States Bureau of Labor Statistics
* DataUSA Brown County, SD
Community Health Needs Assessment Process

Process and Methods - Avera St. Luke’s CHNA was a collective information gathering process, extrapolated from both primary and secondary data.

The foundation first invited a vast array of individuals from all facets of the community to participate in an on-line survey, over a period of three months. After review of the results, the Avera St. Luke’s Foundation then hosted eight focus groups representing community leaders and members, health care providers, dentists, uninsured/underinsured persons and policy makers to discuss the survey results and address health care needs in Brown County. These meetings were hosted at the public library over a one month period and public was invited to attend. As part of our assessment process, we had individual meetings with key leaders in the community and region; to include our managed clinics. The foundation worked with office schedules to compliment staff training and meeting times particularly for our city emergency responders.

Groups involved include:
- The Brown County 211 Helpline Board
- United Way Board Members
- Presentation Sisters
- Salvation Army; low income and minority populations
- Local Universities
- Aberdeen Diversity Coalition
- City Emergency Responders
- Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce Business and Health committees
- Aberdeen Area Human Resource Association
- Aberdeen Military Committee
- Social Workers; and Community Health Office Staff and Patients
- Cancer Center Patients and Families
- Philanthropy Donors and Spouses

Collaboration - Avera St. Luke’s collaborated with the City of Aberdeen to review existing programs and find new ways to support and improve those programs as well as implement new ideas. The vision is that Brown County will be a region where the opportunity to be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy is available to all and to improve access and transit. This supports the hospitals work towards improving overall Population Health and to improve quality of life. Our coordinated care teams work with all possible partnerships to removing the barriers to healthcare.
Community Input

Community Respondents - In collecting data, Avera St. Luke’s contacted a wide range of respondents from several different ages, economic classes, organizations, and cultures. The groups involved include:

- The Brown County 211 Helpline Board
- United Way Board Members
- Presentation Sisters
- Salvation Army
- Local Universities
- Aberdeen Diversity Coalition
- City Emergency Responders
- Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce Business and Health committees
- Aberdeen Area Human Resource Association
- Aberdeen Military Committee
- Social Workers
- Cancer Center Patients and Families

Questions: The following questions were asked of each focus group:

- What health care services are most important to you?
- What are some of the things you see lacking in your community?
- What do you see as Barriers to Healthcare?
- What is the most pressing health care-related need facing your family?
- Thinking about your family and friends, what are your biggest concerns?
- In what ways could the hospital and/or health care in Brown County improve the way in which it serves the community?
- If you could add or change one aspect of health care in Brown County, what would it be and why?
- What are some of the new needs our community has?
- Are there existing programs that we can leverage?
Major Themes: The questions were asked and replies were recorded in a consistent and statistical structure throughout the study. The facilitator assisted each group with prioritizing the needs they defined from highest to lowest. After all of the groups concluded their meetings, these prioritization lists were compiled and analyzed by Avera St. Luke’s to develop a master prioritization list. The following key themes presented themselves:

- Population Heath/Quality of Life
- Housing and Affordability
- Travel and Accessibility to Care
- Dental Care – adults
- Behavioral Health
- Health Care Affordability; Healthcare Barriers
- Chronic Disease Care
- Suicide Prevention
- Opioid and Drugs
- Diversity Translation and Education

*Responses reflect the input from several of our communities and county non-profit organizations; as they assisted in obtaining information regarding medically underserved, low income and minority populations.

Secondary Data:

The Avera St. Luke’s Foundation reviewed the Brown County 211 crisis hotline annual report and compare results to confirm the areas strongest needs. In one year, they reported an increase in suicide calls in the Brown County area, we shared this information with the Avera team in Sioux Falls to support the grant work and crisis program the Avera System is working to improve and offer to the regions.

Santek, a company from North Dakota was contracted by the city of Aberdeen to do a comprehensive study of the Brown county region; including health and wellness along with growth and overall community needs. They are working to develop a comprehensive plan for the city to support our growth and development. Their study included traffic patterns and confirmed that people living within a one hundred mile radius of Aberdeen come to town for one of two reasons; one being employment and the other for healthcare and wellness.
Prioritized Significant Community Health Needs

Health Needs Determined Through Data Collection:

After consulting with various health professionals, city and service organizations concerning the above mentioned themes, it was determined that the focus of Avera St. Luke’s Hospital will focus on the key theme of Population Health, provide affordable healthcare, improve transit, and continue our efforts to improve adult dental care.

- Overall access to wellness and healthcare needs
- Health care affordability
- Transportation
- Dental; continuation

This decision was based on the severity of the issue, our current involvement in these areas, and our professional outlook; and includes consideration of work already being focused in areas that we can either support or work to implement. Our overall goal is to focus on removing all barriers to health.
Potentially Available Resources

Focus

Population Health, Healthcare Affordability and Transportation, Dental

Organizations to coordinate with:

- The Brown County 211 Helpline
- United Way
- Presentation Sisters
- City of Aberdeen*
- Avera St. Luke’s Social Workers and City Service Organizations
- Local Affiliated Dentists
- Providers and Healthcare Leaders
- Board Members
- Avera System
- Avera Philanthropy; Foundation

Implementation

Avera St. Luke’s leaders will work to develop an overall implementation plan to address the main topics of the CHNA and incorporate them into the master plan for our community impact, utilize our professional resources and develop programs that can support and improve the quality of care to meet the needs in the community we serve.

Methods to consider for implementation efforts

- Work with our coordinated care teams to ensure support and assistance to all patients in efforts to provide the medical, personal needs that will fill the medical gaps and improve their overall quality of life.
- Work with the community to support existing programs.
- Support community healthcare and wellness initiatives for the vitality of our community.
- Collaborate with City and County comprehensive health plan.
- Work with the underserved populations and make connections to improve overall quality of life.
Evaluation of Impact

Since the prior CHNA was completed, Avera St. Luke’s Hospital has received requests for printed copies of the assessment. However, no written comments were received regarding that community health needs assessment or implementation plan.

The three major areas to focus on from the completed 2016 CHNA were dental care, health care affordability and travel and accessibility to health care.

**Access to Adult Dental:**

Impact: In collaboration with Avera St. Luke’s, a partnership of dentists with Delta Dental developed a triage process from Emergency Room to their dental practices for care. In the fiscal year 2017, twenty-one patients received dental care who had no insurance or funding.

Action: Service clubs and educational organizations are open to Delta Dental providing education. Many believe it is the responsibility of local dentists to lead this initiative as they are seen as the experts. Avera has educated their leaders and Board of Directors as to the need echoed by citizens in our community. The Hospital has also developed an educational program that is presented at health fairs, local service clubs, and at the Brown County Fair for two years consecutively on Senior Citizens Day.

Update: Avera St. Luke’s is in the process of seeking a grant through Delta Dental. The Avera Foundation and grant writers are working on a grant application to Delta Dental for funding to provide dollars to educate adults specifically on oral hygiene care. This would assist in implementing the plan to help address the dental needs moving forward as adult dental continues to be a community health issue in Brown County.

**Accessibility to Care Update:**

FY2017 update: Avera Foundation committed upwards of $10,500 through provision of gas cards, community bus tokens, taxis to return them to their home of origin over the past three years. Avera Foundation granted upwards of $38,880 toward city Ride Line over the past three years. Avera Long Term Care provides shuttle service for residents to appointments and day programs and contributed $150,000 over the past three years.

Avera St. Luke’s is partnering with Rideline (the city’s transportation program) to reduce the cost for behavioral health residents, as well as working with several local businesses to provide donated gas cards to patients that need to make multiple visits to Avera St. Luke’s for care; i.e. Dialysis, Cancer Center.
Affordable Care

Our third implementation strategy concerning affordable care programs is in place. With the implementation of the Affordable Health Care Act and the opening of the health insurance exchanges, along with bundled payment programs and rural Accountable Care Organization designation and through Avera MAAP (Medical Application Assistance program) a full time social worker assists patients on navigation through Medicare, Medicaid, Disability and insurance exchange programs. Access and navigation assistance to medication programs, medical equipment needs are also available.

Impact: The Foundation implemented a program for 3D imaging. This assists men and women with the difference in cost in order to receive the highest level of preventative testing. We also assist with home medical assistance by qualifying efforts with our Social Work Team. This is working towards the preventative approach to healthcare. We are also working with our 211 Helpline to assure the community has access to all area of life assistance and quality health programs.

Update: Avera St. Luke's is now part of three ACO's with 8,500 covered lives and continues to grow allowing us to manage care and cost. The ACO's are reducing in-patient hospital stays and preventing a lower incident of further developing chronic disease. Avera St. Luke's also participated in the Orthopedic Bundle payment program based on quality metrics lowering costs to the patient bringing greater value and satisfaction. Through end of the year 2017 number of patients through the bundle project is 596. Average length of stay for these 596 patients is 3.19 days reducing cost to patient.

Our Avera MAAP (Medical Application Assistance) program has assisted patients through insurance exchange programs helping them to cover $1,068,000 dollars year to date over the past three years. This program keeps patients from filing chapter 11 bankruptcy and our social work services department assists individuals with paperwork for Social Security Disability to prevent further financial distress.

The Community Health Needs Assessment was reviewed with a sub-committee of the board under Mission and Strategic Planning. Recommendations were made to accept the Community Health Needs Assessment as written and move to the Avera St. Luke’s Board of Directors for review, and final board recommendation and approval on June 26, 2019.