

Milbank Area Hospital

Avera 

Community Health Needs Assessment

FY 2019

Implementation Plan

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Summary

Milbank Area Hospital Avera has been serving the communities that make up Grant County since the 1920's. Since its inception, it has kept up with the needs of the community at large. Over time, the hospital has nurtured partnerships with local community organizations and has grown into a 25-bed critical access hospital. During fiscal year 2018, there were 27,285 outpatient visits, 460 hospital admissions, 300 surgical procedures, 1560 emergency room visits, and 888 outpatient psychotherapy visits. Milbank Area Hospital Avera has ranked within the top 100 of over 1300 critical access hospitals in the country for the fifth time in 2019 (only in existence 9 years). This honor is based upon market share, quality, and patient satisfaction ratings.

The hospital is owned by the community-based organization, the Northeast South Dakota Healthcare Foundation (NESDHCF). The hospital has a management lease agreement with Avera McKennan Hospital & University Center, located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Avera Health System is a rural-based health system located in Sioux Falls. It serves healthcare facilities in South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Iowa. NESDHCF is a nine-member board, which also serves as the advisory board to Milbank Area Hospital Avera.

Community Served

The Milbank Area Hospital Avera's service catchment area includes Grant, Roberts, Day, Marshall, Big Stone, and Deuel counties. The Community Health Needs Assessment indicates that the majority of the hospital's patients live in Grant County, which consists of 7,147 individuals. According to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Big Stone City and Reville are designated as medically underserved. Twenty percent of patients surveyed were from medically underserved areas.

Implementation Strategy Process

Primary data collection included personal interviews with community members with special knowledge of some needs of the community, and distribution of a needs assessment survey. Community members were asked the following questions:

- *What healthcare services are most important to you?
- *What is the most pressing healthcare related need you, your family, or community is/are facing?
- *Do you think there are certain populations of people in our community that are in need of services they cannot get?
- *If a person, or a person you know, doesn't go to the doctor or the hospital, why not?
- *In what way(s) is the hospital and/or healthcare in Milbank serving the community well?
- *In what ways could the hospital and/or healthcare in Milbank improve the way it serves the community and surrounding areas?
- *Name a health service you would like to see in our community.

Secondary data collection included research of current Grant County demographics and local health statistics cited in the document.

Prioritized Identified Needs

Data analysis revealed the following as prioritized community needs:

- *Continued recruitment of primary care physicians
- *Addition of mental health services
- *Greater outreach to ethnic minority patients

Action Plans

Continued recruitment of primary care physicians:

Milbank Area Hospital Avera will utilize the services of a recruitment firm to find primary care physicians. The hospital will serve as a rural experience rotation for residency programs and the local high school. This serves as an opportunity to expose these future possible candidates to our hospital, with hopes that they will strongly consider this location for future employment.

Addition of mental health services:

The addition of one licensed Clinical Psychologist has resulted in 888 outpatient psychotherapy sessions offered to patients who utilize the hospital. Given survey respondents' specification of a need to address substance abuse issues, addition of more mental health services are necessary. Milbank Area Hospital Avera has nurtured a partnership with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and local citizens from a variety of vocational backgrounds to form a local group referred to as "Moving To Wellness". The first group of leaders will be trained and certified for group leadership during the summer of 2019. Community feedback called for greater use of social media to reach patients. Therefore, the hospital could use social media platforms to promote mental health wellness tips and sponsored activities. Given that men seek mental health services significantly less than women, but commit suicide significantly more, Milbank Area Hospital Avera will create some mental health wellness activities focused on the needs of men.

Greater outreach to ethnic minority patients:

National statistics indicate that routine visits to healthcare providers prevent costly preventable illnesses. Unfortunately, many lack awareness of the services and benefits for which they qualify. This is especially the case for ethnic minority populations. Grant County's minority population is primarily being served at the Grant County Health Department. The County Health Nurse has noticed that over time, as individuals who happen to be Hispanic, utilize services and benefits for which they qualify, patients tend to share their experiences with others and promote utilization of services by word-of-mouth to friends and family members. Such services include immunizations, prenatal care, medication vouchers to prevent health crises resulting from missed essential medications, and distribution of free car seats for motor vehicle safety. Based upon this local example, customers' positive experiences conveyed to others through the use of personal

referrals are helpful promotional tools for increased service utilization and ultimately, positive health outcomes for Grant County at large. Those who have utilized services have been helpful in sharing with other individuals who happen to be Hispanic that they are welcome to the variety of services and benefits offered to Grant County at large. It's important to recognize that methods of information dissemination such as the local newspaper and the county website, are not necessarily the most effective modes of promoting our services to this group. A goal for the 2019 -2021 period is to reach minority populations who rarely use our services through the development and strengthening of relationships with organizations currently serving their communities. Milbank Area Hospital Avera has reached out to a local corporation that employs the greatest number of individuals with Hispanic backgrounds. As a result we successfully received completed surveys from this population and conveyed the importance of their opinions. The hospital will distribute an information packet to this corporation and others in order to create an awareness of what resources are available on our medical campus. To enhance what we currently offer, activities that are already offered will provide activities inclusive of local cultural groups.

Due to such efforts to connect with the community, the hospital has repeatedly experienced success in forming community partnerships. This will be a matter of replicating the process used to develop our current rural rotation for medical students, essential partnerships for fund raising for cancer, and our recent alliance with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Underserved groups will be informed of services that address various needs. The goal will be fulfillment of needs of the underserved, where feasible. As we recruit for various positions in the clinic and hospital, we will include the need for bilingual employees. Bilingual/translation services by phone are currently used. We find these services helpful.

Board Approval

This report was presented to the Northeast South Dakota Healthcare Foundation Board on June 27, 2019 for approval. The board approved the Implementation Strategy for addressing findings and recommendations identified in the most recent Community Health Needs Assessment.