



2015 - 2018

Community Health Needs Assessment

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

and

Collaborative Health Improvement Plan

Introduction:

Palisades Medical Center is the only hospital active within the primary service area that includes 3 southern Bergen County municipalities and 5 northern Hudson County municipalities (Cliffside Park, Edgewater, Fairview, Guttenberg, North Bergen, Union City, Weehawken, and West New York). The non-profit operates a 202-bed hospital providing a diverse range of inpatient and outpatient services. It maintains the following categories of licensed beds: 163 Medical/Surgical, 9 Pediatric, 10 ICU/CCU and 20 OB/GYN. The hospital also has a Neonatal Level 2 Nursery in the Maternity Center. Outpatient Services include Emergency Care, Emergency Crisis Intervention, Mental Health Service, Sleep-Wake Center, Gastroenterology, Diabetic Care Center, Breast Care Center, Wound Care Center, Cardiac/Pulmonary Rehabilitation, Palliative Care Program, Pain Relief Center, Rehabilitative Medicine Program, and Pediatric Rehabilitation. The hospital is also affiliated with The Harborage, a 247-bed nursing home and rehabilitation center for patients recovering from surgeries, strokes, debilitating injuries, and those that need long term nursing care. A new Medical Office Building provides specialized services for community residents that previously had to travel outside of the local community for these services such as the Palisades Dialysis Center, Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC)'s John Theurer Cancer Center at Palisades, Cardiology, Orthopedics, Women's Health and multi-specialty physician practices from HUMC.

As of June 1, 2015 medical staff totaled 481. PMC also credentials allied health professionals and licensed professionals, including advance practice nurses and physician assistants. The hospital has a robust Graduate Medical Education Program that includes more than 110 residents that specialize in Dermatology, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Gastroenterology, Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics, Podiatry and Orthopedics. All specialties embrace a curriculum that emphasized compassionate medical care, an active role in patient advocacy and community service.

In the last year, 5,000 community residents received free health screenings, including blood pressure, blood sugar and HbA1c tests, cholesterol, heart rate, body mass index (BMI) and peak flow & pulse oximetry. An additional 2,500 community members learned directly from medical experts about key health topics, including obesity and nutrition, pain management, smoking cessation, diabetes, podiatry, and women's health issues such as breast cancer. Also, 88 community health fairs and annual events are done in conjunction with partnering schools, employers, civic organizations, and religious congregations throughout the area to educate residents, improve access to care, and reduce health disparities.

Palisades is the largest employer in its service area with more than 1,300 employees and it has an annual operating budget of approximately \$150 million. The hospital was ranked among the top hospitals in the state by *Inside Jersey* magazine and Castle Connolly Medical Ltd. PMC was also ranked "Best Places to Work in Healthcare" by Modern Healthcare. The American Heart Association recognized Palisades with their "Get With The Guidelines Gold-Plus Quality Achievement Awards" for the Medical Center's treatment of heart failure and stroke patients. The Harborage was named on *U.S. News & World Report's* "Best Nursing Homes" List and received a 5-star rating from both the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services. New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) has also recognized Palisades Medical Center with its Community Outreach Award for its positive impact in the local community.

Hospital's mission is to enhance the health status of the diverse communities they serve and deliver patient care in a safe and nurturing environment consistent with the highest standards of excellence, quality and efficiency, and with strict adherence to ethical practices.

Hospital's vision is to be the health care provider of choice in northern Hudson and southeastern Bergen Counties. Both the mission and vision follow a natural path to conduct an assessment in an effort to improve the health of the community.

Community Health Needs Assessment:

In 2012, Palisades Medical Center conducted a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in which five health concerns were identified and an implementation strategy was adopted to meet the needs identified through this CHNA. In order to evaluate the work that was done during the past three years, as well as to plan and deliver the most effective care to those in greatest need, and to meet the requirements of Internal Revenue Code §501(r)(3), the hospital conducted another assessment during 2015.

The 2015 Community Needs Assessment project was a collaborative initiative designed to deliver a Community Health Needs Assessment and an Implementation Strategy that are both responsive to the health disparities in the targeted communities and to enhance coordination and collaboration among community partners and providers. The care provider partnering with PMC in this initiative is the North Hudson Community Action Corporation (NHCAC), the local Federally Qualified Health Center. Other partners that continue to collaborate with the hospital include the Union City Board of Education and multiple public health partners which include five health departments of the eight municipalities within the primary service area, as well as the county's Local Information Network Communications System (LINCS) and County Environmental Health Act (CEHA) agency, Hudson Regional Health Commission. The following are other community partners that were also invited to assist us in their expertise and with the implementation of the plans.

- Bergen County Department of Health Services, Bergen and Hudson Chronic Disease Coalition
- Community Networking Association
- Hudson Partnership Case Management Organization
- Love of Jesus Family Church of West New York
- Hudson North Office Division of Child Protection and Permanency
- Palisades Family Success Center in Union City
- Partners in Prevention
- Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern New Jersey
- Save Latin America, Inc.
- Visiting Homemaker Service of Hudson County

The scope of this project included a thorough assessment of the area's healthcare profile, including a review of public health data, summary patient information from hospital admissions and discharge data, and representation from the community by means of focus groups and key informant surveys. From this analysis there were twenty-one issues identified as significant health needs of the community (Alzheimer's disease, breast cancer, cardiovascular diseases, children in poverty, children in single-parent households, cost barrier to care, diabetes, high school graduation rates, income inequality, inadequate social support, low-birth weights, mental health physician shortage, physical inactivity, preventable hospital stay, primary care physician shortage, respiratory diseases, sexually transmitted infections, severe housing problems, teen birth rates, tobacco use, and uninsured).

These issues were then prioritized by the Community Health Needs Assessment Steering Committee. With additional input from the hospital's partners, this Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategy was developed to address the following four areas of concerns identified in the assessment process:

1. Access to Health Care
2. Chronic Diseases
3. Community Health Outreach
4. Women's Health Initiatives

Strategies to Address Concerns:

When the Community Health Needs Assessment and the Implementation Strategy is board-approved, the projects will be implemented utilizing the following strategies. They will be evaluated every six months by the Steering Committee through process and impact evaluations. Public forums will be conducted on an annual basis with public health officials, community residents, community partners and patients to discuss project implementation and evaluations as well as to obtain feedback.

Four Areas of Concern:

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Access to Health Care was selected as a top issue due to the high rates of hospital admissions for Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions or Preventable Hospital Stay. Despite the hospital's great efforts to educate the community to utilize Federally Qualified Health Centers as a primary clinic, Palisades Medical Center (PMC) continues to get increased Emergency Department as well as admissions for those conditions. This is mainly due to the large number of recent immigrants in the community as well as undocumented immigrants in the PMC service area that do not have health insurance and do not visit or can afford a Primary Care Physician on a regular basis. Thus, by the time immigrants enter PMC's Emergency Department, their condition has worsened. The data also illustrated issues in the community with Cost Barrier to Care as well as Primary Care and Mental Health Physician Shortage.

Strategy to address Access to Health Care:

Goal: Advocate for an additional Family Success Center in the West New York / North Bergen area.

There are currently two family success centers in Hudson County and only one is in the service area, but in the southern tip, bordering Jersey City. It is important to establish a third site in northern Hudson County to service community residents in the Palisades Medical Center service area. Family Success Centers are funded by the State of New Jersey Department of Children and Families as “one-stop” shops that provide wrap-around resources and supports for families before they find themselves in crisis. There is no cost to access services provided by these centers and their services include: Access to information on child, maternal and family health services, including linkages to publicly-funded health insurance programs and referrals to local health care services; Economic self-sufficiency/employment related services/income security services; Information & Referral Services (connection to off-site public and private resources); Life Skills training (budgeting, nutrition, etc.); Housing related services; Parent education; Parent-child activities; and Advocacy.

Strategies:

- Contact the State of NJ Department of Children and Families on the process of establishing a Family Success Center
- Obtain letters of support from members of the Steering Committee and Community Partners

Measureable Objectives/Expected Outcomes:

- Establish a Family Success Center in northern Hudson County that will provide health care access information to community members

CHRONIC DISEASES

Chronic Diseases was selected as a top issue since six out of the twenty-one concerns that were prioritized from the morbidity and behaviors categories involved chronic diseases:

Alzheimer's disease & dementia, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, respiratory diseases, obesity due to physical inactivity and lack of affordable healthy foods, and tobacco use.

Steering committee members decided that it would be important for the hospital to continue to provide preventive services in the community, including screenings that pertain to chronic diseases. Physical activity in the service area is limited due to the community's perception of unsafe streets. Nutrition and weight status are also of great concern since many immigrants have limited health literacy skills and are not knowledgeable of nutrition labels. In addition, even if the medically underserved, low-income and minority populations have access to healthy foods, they cannot afford it.

Strategy to address Chronic Diseases:

Goal: Palisades Medical Center will continue screening for blood pressure, cholesterol, Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) for diabetes, conduct body mass index (BMI) calculations, and peak flow & pulse oximetry at Community Health Screening events and Health Fairs.

As previously mentioned, the hospital sponsors approximately 90 annual events in conjunction with partnering schools, employers, civic organizations, and religious congregations throughout the area to educate residents, improve access to care, and reduce health disparities. More than half of the people that attended Community Health Screenings at places of worship in the area in 2015 did not have health insurance. At these Community Health Screenings 20% of community residents were diagnosed with pre-diabetes for the first time. 16% of community residents attending these screenings stated they had been diagnosed with diabetes which was high compared to a 2013 New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey where 8.9% of Hudson County residents stated to have been diagnosed with diabetes. In addition, 19 people with no

history of diabetes tested positive for diabetes with HbA1c levels of 6.5% or higher.

Strategies:

- Continue to apply for grants that help fund HbA1c that provides an average of one's blood sugar control over the past 2 to 3 months
- Continue to collaborate with partners to conduct screenings and refer patients to primary care centers

Measureable Objectives/Expected Outcomes:

- Decrease in hospital patients with Ambulatory Care Sensitive conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, and diabetes
- Decrease in number of community residents with high BMI values
- Decrease in overall rates in the six areas of concern: Alzheimer's disease & dementia, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, respiratory disease, obesity, and tobacco use

COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTREACH

Community Health Outreach was selected as a top issue because residents are disconnected from services provided in the community. As previously mentioned, there are a large numbers of recent immigrants in the community that are predominately poor and therefore their children are poor. Many of them do not understand the health care system process and as a result, they may fear it. Recent immigrants also do not have the family and community support they were accustomed to in their homeland. This community's focus is on survival; the search for affordable housing and low cost foods to exist. Data also shows that there is a large group of children living in single-parent homes, that this is an area with low high school graduation rates, with a large difference in income inequality, with severe housing problems, and inadequate social support and lack of social associations. Therefore, focus on education and community outreach need to increase and become tailored to target this low-income population. Outreach efforts also need to increase so that the underserved populations become aware of services. In addition, these outreach efforts need to be modified through health literacy so this community understands the services that are being provided and not fear an unknown system that has been created to assist them.

Strategy to address Community Health Outreach:

Goal: Collaborate with community partners in promoting each other's resources and events

Strategies:

- Encourage all community partners to participate in all the mailing lists available in the community such as the Community Networking Association, the Bergen & Hudson Chronic Disease Coalition, and the Health Alert Network
- Encourage all community partners to promote each other's events and also post them on the HudsonServiceNetwork.org website

- The hospital will provide community training on Health Literacy and utilizing picture communication symbols for program flyers so that educational outreach is targeted to the underserved population

Measureable Objectives/Expected Outcomes:

- Increased participation of community residents at sponsored events
- Increased knowledge of health literacy among community partners for better education and promotion of activities
- Increased sharing of information and data among agencies in the hospital's service area

WOMEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVES

Women's Health Initiatives was selected as a top issue because there were multiple concerns that were prioritized from the morbidity and behaviors categories involving women's health issues such as mammography screening and breast cancer, low birth weights and pre term births, teen birth rates, and sexually transmitted infections. As previously mentioned, many of these issues are related to poverty, being unaware of social support that exists in the community, and fear due to the lack of understanding of a foreign health care system.

Strategy to address Women's Health Initiatives:

Goal: Continue providing mammograms through the NJCEED (Cancer Education and Early Detection) program and collaborating with primary care centers that provide preventive health services to women.

Strategies:

- Continue collaborating with the Bergen County Department of Health Services CEED program and providing services to community residents via the PMC Breast Center
- Continue collaborating with local Federally Qualified Health Centers and promoting their women's health services as well as maternal and child health services at hospital sponsored events
- Provide training to community partners and health care staff on cultural barriers to women's health

Measureable Objectives/Expected Outcomes:

- Increase in mammography screenings
- Decrease in breast cancer rates, low birth weight percentages, sexually transmitted infections rate, and teen birth rates

Additional Strategies:

PMC will continue to collaborate with the Steering Committee and Community Partners to encourage participation of other agencies in these efforts to improve the quality of life for our residents. These new relationships will assist the hospital and the community in addressing the significant health concerns addressed in the Community Health Needs Assessment and this Implementation Strategy.

Conclusion:

Despite the twenty-one significant health needs of the community, the service area of Palisades Medical Center has many community agencies that have a history of working together and caring for the community. There were too many issues to address in one Collaborative Health Improvement Plan, but the ultimate aim is to combine efforts to increase awareness among agencies, share resources and data, and target the underserved population utilizing multiple methods so that they become aware of the resources that exist in the community and attend programs as well as events without any fear.

Approval:

Palisades Medical Center Board Approval on December 17, 2015