

Geisinger

Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital

Community Health Needs Assessment



Dear friends,

Listening is an important component in delivering effective healthcare. At Geisinger, we listen not only when our patients talk with us about their individual health histories and symptoms, but also when our community shares information regarding areas in need of improvement so we all can become healthier and happier. To that end, we work cooperatively with other organizations to conduct community health needs assessments. Based on the feedback provided — whether it is the need for increased access to medical services or educational programming — we take action to make things better.

This is not simply the right thing to do. It is also who we are and what we are all about. And as we begin our second century of service at Geisinger, we remain committed to our patient care, education, research and community service mission.

We are pleased to share our latest Community Health Needs Assessment brochure, and hope you will take the time to review it. You can also visit geisinger.org/chna to learn more about Geisinger's ongoing efforts to enhance the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

Thank you for your interest.

Take care,

David Feinberg, MD
President and Chief Executive Officer

Compassionate caring. That's our commitment to you when you come to Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital for care. Our physicians' and practitioners' dedication to serving the community and providing care to all in need has never been stronger.

Geisinger's well-being is closely tied to the health of the community — which is why we seek to understand and respond to identified community health needs. Our role is to be good corporate citizens and work with the community to tackle the most critical health and social problems. We are invested in community partnerships, job creation and support for local governments.

Geisinger's community support also includes the provision of free, uncompensated care to patients who cannot afford to pay; care to the elderly and poor not paid by Medicare or Medicaid; allied health, medical residency and fellowship educational programs to train physicians and other healthcare professionals; healthcare research; and community health, education and outreach programs.

As you read more about Geisinger's response to the community health needs assessment, we welcome your ideas regarding how we can better serve you, your family, your friends and your neighbors.

Be in good health,

Stephen Paolucci, MD
Chief Medical Officer

Lissa Bryan-Smith
Chief Administrative Officer



You talked and we listened

Providing the best possible healthcare means understanding the needs of the people that Geisinger Health System (GHS) serves. It means caring about what their everyday lives are like. It means communicating with them to assess what they think about the services and programs we provide. Finally, it means identifying barriers to how they access and use the comprehensive healthcare resources that GHS offers.

That's why Geisinger Health System collaborated with outside organizations across a 13-county region to contract Tripp Umbach, a private healthcare consulting firm and nationally recognized leader in health needs assessments. They assisted us in conducting our Community Health Needs Assessments.

Between October 2014 and March 2015, information was gathered from key community stakeholders using a variety of methodologies, including interviews, hand-distributed surveys and analysis of secondary data. The information we collected indicated three distinct areas on which to focus:

- Addressing needs related to behavioral health and substance abuse
- Increasing access to/affordability of healthcare
- Reducing the negative impact of lifestyle choices on health

In terms of behavioral health, the study indicated that

there are not enough providers to meet demand. Where care is available, providers are often fragmented, with better coordination needed between primary care providers, behavioral health specialists and substance abuse counselors. Too strong a reliance on pharmacology was also cited as an issue when it came to care.

Residents, many of whom live in rural areas, complained of problems finding transportation to appointments. Some were resistant to seeking care for behavioral health concerns due to cost and perceived social stigma. This combination of factors led to higher-than-average rates of issues with anxiety, depression and bipolar disorders. Suicides and relapses into substance abuse were also of serious concern.

Increasing access to healthcare was determined to be the second-greatest need in our community. In addition to problems with transportation, residents cited not enough local providers, lengthy waits for service and problems having insurance plans accepted. Cost of care is a major concern for many. Uninsured care can be unaffordable, and even moderate income earners cannot always afford health insurance.

Poverty is an issue for many in our community — and unfortunately, it is often an indicator of poor health status. Our studies indicated that other social determinants, such as cultural and religious affiliations, also provide barriers to care. In many cases, people are simply unaware of the health services that are available.

The third-largest need we discovered was for finding

means of reducing the impact of questionable lifestyle choices on health. Smoking, lack of exercise, substance abuse and bad eating habits all contribute to poor health and can lead to chronic conditions such as diabetes, obesity, cancer, heart disease and respiratory problems. According to our study, every county in the region, with the exception of Schuylkill, showed significantly lower rates of physical activity than those reported for the state, and rates for smoking are high throughout the region. Meanwhile, there has been an increase in the rates of lifestyle-related illnesses since 2012.

So now that we've learned so much about the communities we serve, what do we do next? Create solutions that will enable us to serve them better. In the words of Geisinger Health System CEO Dr. David Feinberg, "I want us to exceed every patient's and family's expectations."

This brochure presents a sampling of programs developed to address the needs of the communities we serve. Some of them are new, but many of them were already in existence. Some may be improved or expanded based on the new data. The brochure also details additional programs put in place at Geisinger facilities throughout central and northeast Pennsylvania to address needs that are specific to those locations.

You talked. We listened. Now let us show you how we plan to care for you and your loved ones — not only when you are a patient, but every day.

Get Fresh Markets make it easy to eat healthy

Good nutrition can have a tremendous impact on health and well-being. But it can be a challenge to fit in shopping and learning how to cook new options that are good for you and taste good, too. With so many in our community suffering from chronic health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease, we feel it's our mission to not only educate people on the subject of better lifestyle choices, but to also make those choices easy — and fun.

Our Get Fresh Markets do just that.

"Get Fresh Markets is a partnership between Foodservices, Clinical Nutrition, the Sustainability Program and Geisinger Wellness," explains Diane Harlow, director of Geisinger Wellness. "The markets are held throughout the summer and feature seasonal and, when available, locally grown produce. There are cooking demonstrations, recipe cards and tips for recycling."



At each market, Foodservice highlights a different type of produce in their daily menus. Customers are taught how to prepare and store the featured item, and nutrition information sheets are distributed. "The team also comes up with a minimum of six recipes using the featured produce," says Ms. Harlow. "That way, if someone in the family doesn't like one option, there are other possibilities."

According to Ms. Harlow, many visitors bring their children and grandchildren to the Get Fresh Markets. "The more people we can get involved, the better. It's all about supporting a culture of health and wellness," she says.

A unique program designed for seniors at risk

"Elderly patients often have special challenges, such as altered mental status and weak muscles, which make them more susceptible to poor outcomes during hospitalization than the general population," explains Jordan Barbour, MPH, administrative fellow, Geisinger Health System. "The Acute Care for the Elderly (ACE) program addresses these issues and more."

The program, designed for geriatric patients who are expected to remain in the hospital for five to seven days, also accepts younger patients who meet certain criteria. Each patient admitted to the program is assigned an interdisciplinary team led by a hospitalist and comprised of a care manager, a pharmacist, a clinical nutritionist and physical, occupational and speech therapists. Remote consults via Geisinger's tele-health program allow on-demand access to other specialists.

Upon admission, each patient receives an in-depth review of existing prescriptions. "Many times we find that elderly patients are in the habit of taking multiple types of medication — sometimes as many as 20 pills a day," says

Mr. Barbour. He adds that different physicians, unaware of what else the patient is taking, sometimes prescribe these medications. This becomes problematic when prescriptions are contraindicated and work at cross-purposes, canceling each other out or even creating new complications. "That's why the first thing our pharmacists do is review at-home medication lists upon admission to ACE," he says.

The ACE program is a 10-bed pilot program located within a 30-bed medical-surgical unit. ACE patients with altered mental status may be asked to wear a WanderGuard® bracelet that not only alerts staff if they approach an elevator or stairwell, but that also automatically locks or deactivates the doors to prevent injury or escape. Mr. Barbour explains that although this technology is common in many institutional settings, the ACE program at Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital represents the first time it is being used in an adult inpatient unit. He says the precautions are especially important at dusk when geriatric patients often experience "sundown episodes," a surge of energy that makes them get up and walk around. "Anyone who has worked with the elderly has seen it," he says.

The ACE program provides access to better care for a growing segment of the population — the elderly. And because it addresses behavioral health issues, it fills a primary need for many. "ACE may be a relatively new program here in Bloomsburg, but it has already resulted in higher levels of function and independence for patients who are hospitalized and experience the program," Mr. Barbour says.

Finding better ways to communicate with our patients

"The Community Health Needs Assessments determined that better access to health services is an important need in all communities we serve," says Rebecca Ruckno, director of Patient Experience for Geisinger Health System. "When it comes to access, many factors are involved, including issues with insurance and challenges finding transportation. But in some cases, the problem boils down to patients not being able to communicate effectively with healthcare providers."

Ms. Ruckno points out that there can be many reasons for miscommunication. Some patients do not speak English, others cannot read it well even though they are native speakers and some are sight-challenged.

"Health literacy is something we've been addressing for a while," says Diane Harlow, director of Geisinger Wellness. "At the moment, we're working to formalize a cohesive, structured approach to enhancing health literacy that can be replicated throughout our system — and elsewhere."

For foreign-language-speaking patients, Geisinger has implemented an online system called Stratus Video Interpretation, which uses technology to connect healthcare providers with interpreters in over 175 spoken and signed languages. "Stratus is an application that we've loaded onto tablets," explains Ms. Ruckno. "It's available 24/7, on demand."

Ruckno and Harlow say they're also developing a training program for employees to help them communicate more effectively with patients. "For most people, coming to the hospital is very stressful," says Ms. Ruckno. "We're teaching staff members to take emotional states into consideration and [to] ask questions to make sure patients understand the information they're being given."

New strategies are also being discussed to help make patients' needs more obvious. "We've talked about having a patient's preferred language appear on the first page of his or her electronic medical record," says Ms. Harlow. She adds that if a patient is sight- or hearing-impaired, that should come up, too. "The more we do to facilitate and optimize patient experience, the better," Ms. Harlow says.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach to care

"From our maternity and pediatric centers to our new Acute Care for the Elderly (ACE) program, Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital offers specialty healthcare services to patients of all ages," says Lissa Bryan-Smith, chief administrative officer for Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital. "And because many of our new programs take an interdisciplinary approach, our patients have access to more types of providers, working as a team to address their health concerns."

Each patient admitted to the ACE program is assigned a team led by a hospitalist and comprised of a care manager, a pharmacist, a clinical nutritionist and physical, occupational and speech therapists. But this innovative program is just one example of Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital's interdisciplinary approach to care.



The Pulmonary/Sleep Medicine Outpatient Clinic offers services to people of all ages. “Children with sleep disorders visit a pediatric sleep specialist, a pediatric gastroenterologist and a pediatric psychologist all during the course of one visit,” explains Kelli Zimmerman, operations manager for Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital. “Adults see specially trained physicians and advanced practitioners for help with pulmonary diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and sleep disorders like sleep apnea.”

Traumatic brain injuries are treated with a similar multidisciplinary approach at Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital’s new outpatient clinic where patients see specialists in neurosurgery, neuropsychology and psychiatry. “The psychiatrists act as rehabilitative medicine providers,” explains Ms. Fisher.

Medication management plays a big role in the hospital’s interdisciplinary approach. Pharmacists at the Medication Therapy Disease Management Clinic are specially trained in the areas of anticoagulation, diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol and pain therapy, and work closely with physicians to manage diseases. The pharmacists document patients’ prescriptions and progress and communicate essential information to other care providers on the team. They can also make medication therapy adjustments and order lab work and diagnostic tests. “Our pharmacists provide disease management as part of the patient’s care management team,” says Ms. Fisher.

The walk-in clinic Careworks® treats people who need urgent care but not the emergency room, says Ms. Bryan-Smith. “Patients don’t need appointments and they’re in and out in no time. Timely access to healthcare doesn’t get much easier than that.”

Helping patients dispose of old medications safely

Cleaning out your medicine cabinet is a way of protecting your loved ones from harm. Unused and expired prescriptions may end up in the hands of young children or get abused by teenagers looking for a quick high.

But flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash sends them to local waterways and landfills, where they can harm the environment.

Luckily, Geisinger has a solution. MedSafe and MedReturn collection bins are in place or being installed at many Geisinger locations for safe, eco-friendly disposal of all unused and expired medications. The program, which

has collected more than 4,000 lbs. of expired and unused prescriptions over the past 4 years, is entirely free of charge.

“More than 440 million prescription drugs are improperly disposed of each year,” says John Jones, RPh, vice president of Enterprise Pharmacy at Geisinger. “We want to make it as easy as possible for people to dispose of their unwanted medications responsibly.”

MedSafe units are available Monday through Saturday during normal pharmacy hours on the Geisinger Medical Center campus. They will soon be installed at the Geisinger Clinic in Dallas and a second MedReturn location is planned for Wilkes-Barre.

Starting babies off right

In early fall of 2015, the Women’s Health Department at Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital was dramatically expanded and is now the location for all deliveries by Geisinger midwives. There are six licensed midwives on the labor and delivery team as well as three doctors specializing in obstetrics and gynecology. Most deliveries take place in private birthing suites. Cesarean suites are also available, and pain management and anesthesia can be ordered 24/7.

The Women’s Health Department offers classes for first-time mothers and coaches to prepare them for labor and delivery. There are also classes to help with breastfeeding after the baby is born. Jane Haile, RNC, an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant, teaches both classes. “In the ‘fast-track’ class, I prepare them for labor, delivery and what happens postpartum,” she says. Ms. Haile says she likes to keep the class fun and always brings a 35-lb. pregnant belly, complete with breasts, for the men to take turns wearing. “No one has refused yet,” she says. “And the moms really get a kick out of it.”

Ms. Haile’s breastfeeding class covers the many advantages of breast milk, which provides natural antibodies to help strengthen babies’ immune systems. “Nature knows best,” she says.

Students in Ms. Haile’s breastfeeding class learn that skin-to-skin contact between mother and child helps babies latch on and breastfeed more successfully. “Breastfeeding has so many advantages for mothers and babies alike,” says Ms. Haile.

Mothers who attend Ms. Haile’s breastfeeding class are free to call her at any point after discharge for help with nursing. “It doesn’t matter if that’s a matter of days, weeks, months or years. I’m here for them and for their babies,” she says.



It’s such an old idea
it almost seems brand new.

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