

Geisinger

Geisinger Medical Center

Geisinger Shamokin Area Community 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 Medical Center and Geisinger Shamokin Area Community 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,

Thomas P. Sokola

GMC Chief Administrative Officer

Rosemary Leeming, MD

GMC Chief Medical Officer

Wayne R. Miller, MD

GSACH Associate Chief Medical Officer

** a campus of Geisinger Medical Center*



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.

Providing care for the uninsured and under-insured

"The fact that the uninsured and under-insured need better access to healthcare shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone," says Tom Harlow, FACHE, former chief administrative officer for Geisinger Shamokin Area Community Hospital. "By providing space for a Primary Health Network community health center, we'll be enabling more people to get the care they need, regardless of their ability to pay."

The Primary Health Network operates Federally Qualified Health Centers, providing comprehensive primary care and preventative care to people of all ages. "We become a patient's primary medical home," explains Marie Mulvihill, Eastern regional director of the Primary Health Network. "But what really sets us apart from private medical practices is our ability to offer a broad range of services and our management structure. Our network of health centers exists because of the great need for a wide range of healthcare services accessible to people of all incomes."

The new Primary Health Shamokin Community Health



Center is located right on the Geisinger Shamokin Area Community Hospital campus. "We had some vacant office space, and this seemed like a great solution," says Mr. Harlow.

Ms. Mulvihill agrees. "This way, we can have the center up and running by early March 2016, and start providing this much-needed service to the community."

Having a center where people can get the care they need, regardless of their ability to pay, will help take pressure off the hospital's Emergency Department. "People without insurance often avoid seeking medical help until they are very sick. That's when they show up in the Emergency Department," says Mr. Harlow. "By then, it can be too late — and it can certainly be very costly. Managing chronic conditions such as diabetes, congestive heart failure and COPD on an ongoing basis is really the best approach."

The Primary Health Network began in 1984 as one small community health center. Over the past 3 decades, it has grown to include 45 service facilities covering 13 counties in Ohio and Pennsylvania, including new centers serving the Geisinger Lewistown Hospital community and Schuylkill County. "We're very excited to be opening this new center in Shamokin," says Ms. Mulvihill. "We can't thank Geisinger enough for offering us this wonderful space."

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.

Milton dental clinic just for kids

"The Milton dental program came about to address health needs in the community by providing better access to dental care for pediatric patients," explains Cheryl Martin, regional operations manager for Oral Maxillofacial Surgery/Dental at Geisinger. She adds that the clinic on Arch Street features a kid-friendly waiting room full of books, puzzles and other activities.

Celina Benza's son Cooper has been coming to the clinic since it opened in August 2015. "He actually gets excited about his appointments," Ms. Benza says. "Who would think a three-and-a-half-year-old would consider a trip to the dentist fun?"

The clinic is open two 10-hour days a week and has one dentist and one hygienist, but should expand to full time in early 2016. "We're looking to bring in another dentist and more hygienists soon," says Ms. Martin. "We're also investing

in new technology, including a panoramic X-ray machine."

The clinic's current dentist, Natalie Stinton, DMD, sees between 10 and 14 patients a day. "There's clearly a need in the community for better access to dental services," Ms. Martin says, "especially when it comes to pediatrics."

Ms. Benza says she's not surprised Dr. Stinton is so popular. "Dr. Stinton has a great way with kids," she says. "She joked with Cooper when he had to have a cavity filled, even making up funny names for Novocain so the needle wouldn't scare him."

"We've done everything we can to make the clinic a positive place for our patients and their parents," says Ms. Martin. "Parking is easy, the atmosphere is quiet and everything we do centers on the kids. Our hope is that a good experience with dentistry now will lead to a lifetime of healthy behavior."

Training the next generation of psychiatrists

"The Psychiatry Residency Program represents a significant part of Geisinger's effort to address the number-one issue identified in the community health needs assessment of several regions — the vexing problem of a shortage of psychiatrists in rural areas of Pennsylvania," says Mark Basinger, associate vice president of Psychiatry.

The 16-resident program includes adult and geriatric psychiatry, child and adolescent psychiatry, adult psychology and many other specialties. Residents



experience integrated primary care with adult and pediatric psychologists, and can work in specialty clinics including oncology, sleep medicine and women's health.

"The spectrum of medical and surgical specialties gathered within the system supplies a breadth of complex patient pathologies and presentations that will prepare residents for any future practice, as they provide the chance to learn skills, collaborate with colleagues and develop as professional leaders in the field," explains Marie E. Rueve, MD, Psychiatry residency director. She notes that residents not only practice in inpatient psychiatric units, but also throughout a continuum of healthcare settings.

"Rotations alternate between Geisinger Medical Center and Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital to expose residents to a larger faculty from which to learn," she says. "Residents also rotate at Danville State Hospital, community mental health centers and the Marworth Chemical Dependency Treatment Center."

Year one of the program establishes a solid foundation of knowledge and competency in managing psychiatric patients. Year two builds psychiatric inpatient consultation evaluative skills. The third year expands residents' skills from inpatient services to outpatient clinics.

"In the final year, residents focus on transitioning into practice and readying themselves to launch into fellowship training or an independent career," says Dr. Rueve.

"The hope is that graduates of the residency program will choose to stay with Geisinger or take positions in area organizations," says Mr. Basinger.

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.

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.



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

Geisinger

Geisinger

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