


Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT



GEISINGER



Over nearly a century, Geisinger has been deeply committed to doing what is right for the community we serve. In fact, Geisinger Medical Center (GMC) opened earlier than planned in 1915 to handle the health care needs associated with a typhoid outbreak.

Although Geisinger Health System is a much different place than GMC was long ago, we remain true to our patient care, education, research and community service mission. As part of this endeavor, we are proud to support and participate in regular community health needs assessments in conjunction with other area organizations.

Community health needs assessments are an important component in our effort to enhance the health and well-being of the people throughout northeastern and central Pennsylvania. Please read the information in this brochure and visit geisinger.org/chna to learn more about Geisinger's ongoing efforts in this regard.

Long ago, our founder Abigail Geisinger set a high standard by stating, "Make my hospital right. Make it the best." We believe community health needs assessments and the actions we take as a result help us achieve that goal.

Sincerely,



Glenn Steele, MD
President & Chief Executive Officer

Getting to Know You Better

Meeting the needs of the communities we serve means understanding those communities thoroughly. And what better way to do that than by talking to the people who live and work there through a Community Health Needs Assessment?

We partnered with the Healthy Northeast Pennsylvania Initiative, a regional membership based organization focused on community health, and contracted with The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development, to conduct the assessment. Together, we initiated a household survey of Luzerne and Lackawanna counties, collected data and interviewed local social service workers, health care professionals, and representatives from major employers, free clinics, local government and insurers. The study was completed in 2012 and what we discovered was eye opening.

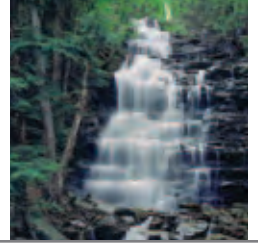
Topping the list of needs for Luzerne County was a need for improved access to healthcare for underinsured and uninsured residents. According to the study, there are a limited number of primary care physicians, specialists and dentists in the area that accept medical assistance. Additional resources for mental and behavioral health issues are also needed. These facts, combined with a high rate of poverty, unemployment and the high cost of health insurance means too many residents were not getting the care they need.

A second crucial need for the community was increasing healthy behaviors. Survey respondents indicated a need for health education programs focused on diet and exercise, stress, safety, and prevention of chronic diseases. Unhealthy lifestyles are a major factor in some of the top ranked chronic conditions identified through the survey, including hypertension and high cholesterol. In addition, Luzerne county residents have higher rates of excessive drinking (20%) and smoking (27%) than the Pennsylvania averages (18% and 21%, respectively). By improving nutrition, making better lifestyle choices about smoking and substance abuse, and increasing physical activity, individuals can help to prevent some of today's most prevalent chronic diseases.

In addition, the study showed that community members are not receiving preventative testing and screening. Less than 25% of the survey respondents received recommended cancer screenings, such as mammograms, pap smears and prostate exams. Patient compliance, health literacy and a general lack of knowledge of existing health care resources are major barriers that make increasing healthy behaviors a challenge.

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

for Luzerne County



The third largest need the study identified was for community development of multilingual healthcare services; expanded mental health and drug and alcohol services; and transportation. Language barriers between patients and providers present challenges when delivering care. There are few or no providers speaking Spanish or any Indian dialects and none able to work with the region's growing Russian and Bhutanese populations. Overall, mental health issues, generational substance abuse issues and prescription drug abuse are all on the rise and existing resources cannot adequately meet the needs. Finally, transportation continues to be a barrier to care throughout the region due to the limited public transportation system.

So now that we better understand the needs of the communities we serve, what are we doing to meet them?

Plenty.

With \$336.6 million put toward community support in 2012 alone, the programs showcased in this brochure are just a small sampling of the ways in which we're working to address the needs and improve the lives of the people we serve. Redefining boundaries: it's not just a motto, it's what we do every day to improve healthcare in the communities we serve.



Your Community is our Community.

Exceptional healthcare. It's what our neighbors in northeastern and central Pennsylvania have been expecting from us for generations. And after nearly a century, we're meeting, and exceeding, those expectations like never before.

In fact, Geisinger's integrated healthcare system has become a nationally recognized model for delivering innovative, high-quality care that's efficient, effective, and most importantly, compassionate.

The way we see it, we don't treat illness. We treat people.

People like John, who turned to the McAuley Clinic just in time to have a life threatening medical situation rectified free of charge.

People who do not speak English as their first language, but communicate in a safe and confidential manner with our English-speaking care providers through the MARTTI interpretation system.

And the many people who receive help directly from a pharmacist to understand their prescription medicine regimens through the medication therapy management program.

Geisinger Health System touches the lives of hundreds of thousands of people each year. With that many people depending on us, we take our commitment to the communities we serve very seriously. In 2012 we provided community support including: free care for patients who could not afford to pay; care for the elderly and poor not covered by Medicare or Medicaid; and numerous community health, education and outreach programs that promote positive, healthy behaviors and encourage early detection and treatment of disease.

We're also proud of the fact that in 2012 the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania reported that Geisinger Health System has an annual \$6.1 billion positive impact on the local, regional, and Pennsylvania economy.

Our non-profit mission allows us to not only make significant investments in community needs, but also partner with other local non-profit organizations to help improve the health of the people we serve in northeast and central Pennsylvania.

Hope for the Under and Uninsured

“Dr. Moses calls me a ‘walking miracle’,” says John of Nanticoke. When he first came to the McAuley Clinic in 2009 he was severely jaundiced and spending most of his days flat on his back, too exhausted to work. Today, John is back on his feet again thanks to Dr. Moses and his staff who made sure he got the blood work and medications he needed. “I never would have made it without them,” he says.



Doug of Wilkes-Barre also feels very fortunate. Severe chest pains brought him to McAuley. Luckily, the pains were a temporary condition caused by a severe coughing spell. But during his visit, clinic staff discovered he had high blood pressure and elevated blood sugar. He now receives affordable medications to treat these conditions. “I was borderline diabetic,” he says. “Hopefully, now that I’m taking better care of myself, and taking my medications, I’ll never need insulin injections.”

The Catherine McAuley Health Center for the Uninsured, established in 1989, was named after the original Sister of Mercy. “We had 619 patient visits in 2012 alone,” explains founder and Director Dr. George Moses. “These people are completely without insurance. Without us, where would they turn?”

Dr. Moses says he and his staff are grateful for the generous support they’ve received since the Geisinger merger. “We owe so much to so many people at Geisinger,” he says. “They’ve allowed us to keep our clinic going. We wouldn’t be here without their support.”

Another option for those in need of free medical and dental care is the Volunteers in Medicine clinic—open five days a week and many evenings. To be eligible for services you must be working but lack adequate health insurance coverage. Which, according to Executive Director Kelly Ranieli, is a category more and more people are finding themselves in every day. “We have 150 core volunteers,” she explains. “This lets us see 125 patients a

week on average. Although, to tell you the truth, we’ve been known to see 100 patients in a single day.”

Ranieli says the medical professionals who volunteer at the clinic already have thriving practices, but they find time to care for the hardworking people who need their help. Most of her patients work multiple jobs but have no insurance or are underinsured. Many also fall into the trap of making just slightly too much to qualify for Medicaid. “We opened five years ago and currently have 9,500 registered patients. We’ve got a lot of people relying on us,” she says.

Free healthcare for needy residents in Wyoming Valley

Geisinger is in the fight for healthier communities and easing the burden of care for the uninsured and underinsured in our area. That’s why we donate vital medical services such as lab work, x-rays, cat scans, ultrasounds and MRIs to McAuley Clinic and Volunteers in Medicine each year.

This partnership allows public and private health care services to function better, maximizes resources and creates a culture of caring that never depends on a patient’s income.

McAuley Clinic
25 Church Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18765
Phone: 570.808.3100

Wilkes-Barre Volunteers in Medicine
190 North Pennsylvania Avenue
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702
Phone: 570.970.2864
vimwb.com





“The poor man had just had surgery,” she explains. “So his system was pretty delicate.” Luckily, once his food service hostess clicked on to MARTTI, it was an easy fix—all it took was a little Spanish translation.

¡muchas gracias, MARTTI!

Removing language barriers for better care

MARTTI (My Accessible Real Time Trusted Interpreter) is an on-demand, remote video interpreting device used for patients who are:

- Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- Deaf or hard of hearing.

Available 24 hours a day in more than 200 languages and American Sign Language, MARTTI is operated by medically-qualified and trained interpreters. MARTTI is immediate, reliable and easy-to-use. At the push of a button, MARTTI helps us connect, communicate and care. Over 60 MARTTI devices are used across the Geisinger Health System with plans to expand the service to our clinical outreach sites around the region.

Geisinger Speaks Your Language

Imagine having a medical issue and being unable to communicate with the people who are there to help. Whether it’s a matter of frustration or a matter of life and death, it’s a situation Geisinger Health System is doing everything it can to avoid. And MARTTI, “My Accessible Real-Time Trusted Interpreter,” is a big part of the solution.

“MARTTI interpreters are always just a click away,” explains Becky Ruckno, Director of Patient Affairs. “If a patient comes to us speaking only Urdu, we can help them. MARTTI can handle that and over two hundred other languages, including American Sign Language.”

MARTTI, she says, works a lot like Skype. What you see is a real person, talking to you in real time and in your native language. Some interpreters even dress in native garb, which really seems to put patients at ease, according to Ruckno.

Ruckno also points out that since MARTTI interpreters are fully trained in medical terminology, they can better understand and translate the critical information that providers need their patients to hear. “We never like to rely on family members, especially children, for this kind of communication,” she says.

Not to mention the fact that not everything we tell our doctors is something we want our child, significant other or other family member to know. Having a third-party interpreter means people can have the privacy and comfort to say what really needs to be said.

It’s easy to imagine how using MARTTI can facilitate communication between patients and their medical providers. But nurses and physicians aren’t the only ones with access to this technology.

Becky Ruckno remembers a time when a patient was having a terrible time communicating that his meals were disagreeing with him.





Your Pharmacist as Coach and Mentor

Getting to know our patients as people is at the heart of what makes Geisinger care both effective and compassionate. This personal approach is especially apparent in the Medication Therapy Management Program, headed by Michael A. Evans, BS R.Ph., Director of Ambulatory Clinical Pharmacy Programs and John R. Jones, BS R.Ph., Vice President Enterprise Pharmacy.

This revolutionary program casts pharmacists in the role of consultants and educators, meeting one-on-one with patients to help them understand their current disease states and current medications, and to address any problems they may be experiencing. When a pharmacist works this closely with a patient to make sure the medications selected for them are the best fit for their lifestyle, the patient's compliance usually increases.

"We look at the total pathology of the patient," Michael A. Evans explains. "What is the patient willing to accept? What can he or she afford? Prescriptions don't work if they sit in the medicine cabinet—or never make it home in the first place."

Evans explains that working with patients is an ongoing process. Upon entering the program, patients are told why their physician has chosen particular medications and dosage plans. Then, it is up to the pharmacist to determine whether or not it's a plan they are likely to follow. "If not, we come up with a treatment plan that's tailored specifically to their needs and lifestyle," he says. After a few weeks, patient and pharmacist meet again to go over the results. Once a patient sees positive progress, he or she is often more willing to commit to the more aggressive approach that the physician had originally recommended.

"Being seen as a person is what really matters," Evans explains. "When a patient experiences their pharmacist working with them on their own terms, they are far more willing to cooperate. And when it comes to chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes, that can mean adding years to life."



Making medication therapy safer for patients and providers

The goal of the medication therapy management (MTM) is to keep you safe and healthy. How? By making sure you're taking the proper medications to treat your medical conditions, and working with you one-on-one to customize your drug plan to your medical needs.

We've developed a comprehensive MTM program that:

Performs extensive medication therapy reviews to:

- Ensure you understand your medications
- Explain all the risks of each medication you take
- Eliminate medication duplications

Identifies, evaluates and resolves medication related problems by:

- Providing patient counseling
- Resolving side effects
- Reducing medication interactions
- Ensuring that medication instructions are easy-to-follow

Monitors and manages chronic disease medication regimens

Designs patient specific and tailored medication therapies and monitoring programs

Recommends cost-effective therapy regimens

Documents each step of care and shares information with your other health care providers

Dial 211 and Get Connected to the Services You Need

Did you know it used to take an average of seven phone calls to reach the human services office you were looking for?

Not anymore, thanks to 211.

211 is a *free* three-digit telephone number that gives you access to customized health, housing, and human service information all in one place. Need help with job training, transportation, health insurance, rent assistance, or crisis intervention? Call 211— it covers all that and more. They can also be reached at www.pa211.org.

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