

2016

Hamilton Medical Center
Implementation
Strategy

Hamilton Medical Center

Implementation Strategy

For FY2017-2019 Summary

Hamilton Medical Center is regional, acute-care hospital with 282 beds. It is located in Dalton, Georgia. In 2016, the hospital conducted a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to identify the health needs of Whitfield and Murray counties. The Implementation Strategy for Hamilton Medical Center was developed based on findings and priorities established in the CHNA and a review of the hospital's existing community benefit activities.

This report summarizes the plans for Hamilton Medical Center to sustain and develop community benefit programs that 1) address prioritized needs from the 2016 Hamilton Medical Center CHNA and 2) respond to other identified community health needs.

The following prioritized needs were identified by the community and the CHNA steering committee. Particular focus was placed upon these needs in developing the implementation strategy.

- Lifestyle and Chronic Diseases
- Access to Care - Providers and Facilities
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Adolescent Lifestyle Including Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs
- Access to Care - Free and Reduced Cost Care
- Mental Health
- Senior Health
- Teen Birth Rate
- Accidents

Hamilton Medical Center has addressed each of the health needs identified in the CHNA. Hamilton Medical Center developed implementation strategies to address each of the health issues identified over the next three years. Due to the overlap of Access to Care - Provider and Facilities and Access to Care - Free and Reduced Care, these priorities have been combined in the Implementation Strategy. Adolescent Lifestyle and Teen Birth Rate have also been combined in the Implementation Strategy.

Specific implementation strategies for each of the CHNA identified health needs are addressed in the following appendices to this report.

The Hamilton Medical Center Board approved this Implementation Strategy through a board vote on August 25, 2016.

Priority Health Issue #1: Lifestyle and Chronic Diseases

The community identified lifestyle and chronic diseases, and more specifically, the needs for low cost nutrition counseling, education and awareness, and places for physical activity.

Preventable diseases identified in the community (diabetes, hypertension, heart disease) can be traced to lifestyle of the population, including poor nutrition and lack of exercise. Other lifestyle factors can also affect the overall health of the population.

Hospital Strategy

Hamilton recognizes lifestyle education is an important contributor to changing several health issues throughout the community. The hospital offers many educational and screening opportunities, and will continue to do so to address this need. Additionally, community agencies provide educational and screening services.

Hamilton Medical Center offers free screenings and education throughout the year related to heart health, nutrition, healthy cooking and food options. This occurs as Hamilton events as well as participation in health fairs and other events throughout the community. Hamilton Diabetes and Nutrition Center, a division of Hamilton, offers many programs for disease management and support, often covered by insurance or at a reduced cost.

- HMC screening and education programs:
 - Take it to Heart - A two-part education seminar and cardiac risk assessment. Free to anyone who has a family history of heart disease and is not currently being treated by a cardiologist. Offered four times per year.
 - Dare to Care - A two-part cardiovascular disease program screening. Free to anyone over the age of 60 or those over the age of 50 with vascular risk factors. Offered four times per year. This program continues to evolve to better reach those with vascular health needs.
 - Bradley Wellness Center (BWC) (a division of HMC) - Offers dietary consults with dietician in the cardiac rehabilitation program.
 - HMC provides screenings at various locations throughout Whitfield and Murray counties during February - Heart Month.
 - Blood pressure checks, cholesterol screenings, and health information are provided at events throughout the year.
- HMC Diabetes and Nutrition Center offers:
 - A six and a half hour class for diabetes patients without prior education on the disease. Includes quarterly follow up for 1 year.
 - Medication Management - One-on-one education
 - Continuous blood glucose monitoring (72 hours)
 - Nutrition Classes - One-on-one and one class per month. Offered in English and Spanish.
 - Renal Nutrition Class - A monthly two hour class for patients diagnosed with Chronic Kidney Disease (3, 4, & 5).
 - Advanced Nutrition Class - A two hour class occurring twice per month offering practical application of nutrition skills.
 - Gestational Diabetes -A two hour group education class. Includes follow up.
 - Support Groups for Type I & Type II - Once per quarter (free).
 - Insulin Pump Users Support Group
 - Partnering with DEO Clinic at St. Marks Church to offer a mini-class for those who are unable to afford the 6.5 hour diabetes education class. This will be two-hour session held once per month. This class will provide an opportunity for educational outreach to the underserved populations.

- Self-care tools and community resource book for indigent care available in the Diabetes and Nutrition Center office.
- Free speakers twice per year for Diabetes Awareness Day.
- Participation in health fairs throughout the year.
- Educate school nurses and bus drivers every year, as needed.
- On-site employer diabetes education as part of the employer's wellness program.
- Northwest Georgia Healthcare Partnership (NGHP) (partner agency):
 - Promotoras (Community Health Workers) - Help patients with diabetes understand their physician's orders. Promotoras also go to HMC's Diabetes and Nutrition Center twice per week to work as Spanish translators.
 - Received grant in 2013 from Appalachian Regional Commission for Diabetes outreach in Murray County (including testing and helping patients get their diabetes under control).

Measure

Hamilton will monitor attendance at classes and events. For Take it to Heart and Dare to Care, Hamilton will monitor the frequency of visits to the hospital for cardiac and vascular reasons in the six months following a patient's participation in the program.

The NGHP provides an Executive Summary of their Outcome Projections, and within, they monitor the monetary benefits to our community for promoting good health through their Promotoras Program.

Priority Health Issue #2: Access to Care - Providers & Facilities, Free and Reduced Cost Care

The CHNA process identified Access to Care, including access to facilities and providers, as well as free and reduced care. Focus was placed on free or reduced cost care, affordable and convenient transportation, more pediatric specialists, insurance education and awareness, more Medicaid vision and dental providers, and a centralized resource directory.

Hamilton Strategy

Hamilton will continue to be heavily involved in meeting the Primary Care and Specialty Care needs of Whitfield and Murray counties. Since the last CHNA, Hamilton has recruited 24 physicians. HMC has opened an additional Convenient Care location in Whitfield County. Additionally, a new facility is under construction in Murray County that will be more centrally located for residents. The new facility will house Hamilton Primary Care - Murray as well as Hamilton Internal Medicine. Hamilton also has recruited midlevel providers. With these additions, Hamilton has expanded the ability to serve the primary care needs of the entire family, including pediatric patients. Several locations are available for same day appointments.

Beyond additional providers and locations:

- The hospital will also continue to provide screenings and health events at community locations, as referenced in Priority Health Issue #1.
- Hamilton Sports Medicine provides athletic trainers to all high schools in Whitfield and Murray counties for all sports. Any athlete who needs their care throughout the season can see them.
- Hamilton recognizes the need for education and counseling regarding insurance coverage. The hospital's Central Business Office and Financial Services departments provide assistance regarding insurance questions and in determining qualification for financial assistance. This information is posted on the hospital website, <http://www.hamiltonhealth.org>.
- The hospital provides a resource listing of insurance payers with which the hospital is in network on its website.
- The hospital also operates a Physician Referral Line for callers to find providers in the area that are accepting new patients, and that accept their insurance.

Partner Agencies and Roles:

- Northwest Georgia Healthcare Partnership (NGHP) offers:
 - Child Health Advocates - Assists families through the Medicaid/PeachCare enrollment by providing streamlined and convenient assistance.
 - Promotoras (Community Health Workers) will drive patients to doctor's appointments out of town, if needed (ex. If a pregnant mom needs to see the high-risk doctors in Chattanooga, they have been known to drive the patient to the appointment).

- The Healthy Baby Program in partnership with a midwife from a local OBGYN practice one day a week at the Health Department. Medical services are provided to pregnant women who are uninsured.
- A bridge between the community and health system (provide assistance in accessing the health promotion, disease prevention, and self-management of chronic diseases).
- Culturally appropriate health education and information (teach concepts of health promotion, disease prevention, and self-management of chronic diseases).
- Assistance in obtaining needed services (care management, referrals, and follow up).
- Informal counseling and social support (individual support and forming/leading support groups).
- Advocacy for individuals to help them meet their healthcare needs.
- Health Department
 - Whitfield County Health Department has a Medical Access Clinic and Children's Access Clinic that offers income-based fees on a sliding scale.
 - Operates Whitfield County MedBank Services - An effort to secure prescription drugs from the patient assistance programs of pharmaceutical companies. Medications are free; MedBank services are \$15/month.
 - Operates Murray County MedBank Services - An effort to secure prescription drugs from the patient assistance programs of pharmaceutical companies. Medications are free; MedBank services are \$10/month.
- The Dalton Episcopal Outreach (DEO) Clinic offers free medical care and social work assistance two nights per week at a Dalton location.
- Partnership HealthCenter (Whitfield County) and Georgia Mountain Health (Murray County) are full-service family practices that target patients without any type of health coverage, but will also accept Medicaid/Medicare/Private Insurance.
- United Way provides a regularly updated online and printed community resource listing which includes available health services available within the community. The comprehensive list includes everything from basic needs to legal assistance and Latino services, and is not limited to United Way services.

The CHNA identified a need for more vision and dental providers that accept Medicaid. It is outside the hospital's mission and financial resources to recruit dental and vision providers. However, NGHP does provide enrollment assistance with Medicaid and the additional support services listed above.

Measure

Hamilton monitors attendance to free screenings, call volume to the Physician Referral Line, and traffic to hamiltonhealth.com. Hamilton Sports Medicine tracks services provided to athletes.

Northwest Georgia Healthcare Partnership, in addition to the Executive Summary described in Priority #1, measures the success of the Promotoras program by estimating the total prevented costs to our community for prenatal care, diabetes, and breast health.

Priority #3: Cancer

The CHNA process identified needs related to the screenings, diagnosis, and treatment for cancer. Specifically, there is a need for more education and awareness, free and reduced cost care, reliable and low cost transportation to meet healthcare needs.

Hamilton Strategy

Hamilton is committed to providing comprehensive cancer care to Whitfield and Murray counties and the surrounding communities. In January, 2016, Hamilton unveiled plans for new construction of the leading edge, 40,000 square-foot Hamilton Cancer Institute. The Institute will offer patients expert care with state-of-the-art technologies, easily navigated services, and collaborative oncology and emotional support in a healing, patient-centered environment. Completion is targeted for early 2018.

In addition, Hamilton provides community cancer awareness events, as well as free screenings. In October, several breast cancer awareness events will be held in various locations in the community. In the spring of 2016, at the annual *For Her* event, breast exams were provided by a Hamilton Primary Care physician, who also provided education on self-breast exams. Similar screenings will be offered at the event in future years. Skin cancer screenings are provided multiple times throughout the year, including at the *For Her* event. Prostate Cancer is the focus at the annual Men's Health event typically held in September. A local urologist provides educational information and screenings. This is co-sponsored with the Bradley Wellness Center, a division of Hamilton. Hamilton is planning an additional Men's cancer focus in November with an awareness promotion.

As referenced with previously listed Priorities, partner organizations such as Northwest Georgia Healthcare Partnership and the local Health Department provide free or reduced cost services as well.

- Northwest Georgia Healthcare Partnership (NGHP) offers:
 - A bridge between the community and health system (provide assistance in accessing the health promotion, disease prevention, and self-management of chronic diseases).
 - Culturally appropriate health education and information (teach concepts of health promotion, disease prevention, and self-management of chronic diseases).
 - Assistance in obtaining needed services (care management, referrals, and follow up).
 - Informal counseling and social support (individual support and forming/leading support groups).
 - Advocacy for individuals to help them meet their healthcare needs.
- The Dalton Episcopal Outreach (DEO) Clinic offers free medical care and social work assistance two nights per week at a Dalton location.

- Partnership HealthCenter (Whitfield County) and Georgia Mountain Health (Murray County) are full-service family practices that target patients without any type of health coverage, but will also accept Medicaid/Medicare/Private Insurance.

Hamilton recognizes the identified need for affordable transportation, but it understands the limitations of resources as a hospital. Whitfield and Murray counties offer government-funded, low cost non-emergency transportation services to various locations including medical appointments, Senior Center, grocery stores, development centers, and errands. Southeastrans, Inc. is also available for qualified Medicaid clients.

United Way provides a regularly updated online and printed community resource listing which includes available health services and transportation available within the community. The comprehensive list includes everything from basic needs to legal assistance and Latino services, and is not limited to United Way services. Hamilton will post the link to this resource periodically on its social media pages and website.

Measure

Hamilton will monitor attendance at screenings and events. The NGHP provides an Executive Summary of their Outcome Projections, and within, they monitor the monetary benefits to our community for promoting good health through their Promotoras Program.

Priority Health Issue #4: Cardiovascular Disease

The CHNA process identified the need for more education and awareness on the prevention, signs, and symptoms of cardiovascular disease, risk, and treatment. The CHNA also identified the need for more *resources following cardiovascular surgery for rehabilitation and aftercare*.

Hamilton Strategy

Hamilton recognizes that cardiovascular disease, particularly heart disease and hypertension, are prevalent health concerns in Whitfield and Murray counties. As in the previous CHNA, this has been identified as a community health priority. The local physicians and the hospital want to continue to help the community take a more proactive approach to heart and vascular health.

Hamilton currently offers two programs that provide education and screenings for heart disease and hypertension. These are free to the community and typically reach approximately 350 people per year. Our goal with these programs is to reach the population of Whitfield and Murray counties not under the care of a physician, but who may be at risk for heart disease and hypertension.

- Take it to Heart - A two-part education seminar and cardiac risk assessment. Free to anyone who has a family history of heart disease and is not currently being treated by a cardiologist. Offered four times per year.
- Dare to Care - A two-part cardiovascular disease program and screening. Free to anyone over the age of 60 or those over the age of 50 with vascular risk factors. Offered four times per year.

Additionally, Hamilton will continue to offer free blood pressure screenings throughout the year at various health and wellness events. Cholesterol screenings will also be offered either free or at a reduced cost at various events throughout the year.

During the month of February as a part of Heart Month, Hamilton provides education booths and screenings at locations throughout the community, including City Hall, senior centers, and other public venues.

Hamilton Health magazine, which is distributed throughout Whitfield and Murray counties and the surrounding community on a quarterly basis, provides health and wellness articles, recipes, and tips, many of which are related to heart health and prevention. Frequently included are signs and symptoms of a heart attack. In addition to providing education in printed publications, Hamilton will utilize social media and the hospital's website as channels of distribution for health and wellness information.

Bradley Wellness Center (BWC), a division of Hamilton, is a full-service wellness facility offering a wide range of classes for cardio, yoga, cycling, life fit, weight training, water aerobics, and much more. BWC is active in the community promoting health and wellness, in collaboration with Hamilton Medical Center.

Hamilton offers a 12-week, medically supervised cardiac rehabilitation program designed for patients with the following conditions: heart attack, heart surgery (by-pass, valve replacement), stent placement, congestive heart failure, angina, angioplasty, or heart transplant. Medicare and most insurance plans cover the cost of the program. The program includes monitored

exercise, educational sessions, dietary consults, and behavioral change interventions. The goal of this program is to equip the patient with the necessary tools to be able to make the appropriate choices and changes to help increase his/her physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

BWC also offers nutrition and dietary classes outside of the cardiac rehabilitation program.

Measure

Hamilton and its entities will continue to track attendance and participation, as well as outcomes in the cardiac rehabilitation program, to monitor impact and effectiveness of each program offered throughout the year.

Priority Health Issue #5: Adolescent Lifestyle - Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs and Teen Birth Rate

The CHNA process identified issues related to adolescent lifestyle as a priority health need. Specifically, there is a need for education and awareness surrounding healthy lifestyle choices related to alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. There is a need for early education and awareness for adolescents concerning sex education and contraceptive use. There is a need for more after school activities for adolescents.

Hamilton Strategy

Hamilton recognizes the concerns associated with adolescent lifestyle choices, such as substance abuse and teen pregnancy. We are also aware of our limitations as a hospital and defer to community resources to provide education and awareness for these issues. Hamilton is a sponsor and active participant in the annual Teen Maze event for area high school sophomores. The event focuses on such adolescent lifestyle issues as teen pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, driver safety, and DUI.

Within the community, the Boys & Girls Club of Northwest Georgia is open daily to provide local youth programs for development, recreation, and safe, productive outlets.

Measure

Hamilton and the community organizations supporting Teen Maze track and monitor attendance at the event. The event continues to be updated based on feedback each year and will continue to be offered to address adolescent health concerns.

Priority Health Issue #6: Mental Health

The CHNA process identified a need for education and awareness on mental health issues. There is a need for more services, providers, and specialists in the mental health care field. Services are needed for adolescent drug and alcohol abuse, as referenced in Priority #5, as well as step-down services for those dealing with addiction.

Westcott Behavioral Health is a division of Hamilton and offers inpatient stabilization and detoxification. Westcott also has an outpatient office which provides evaluations and referrals, individual counseling, family and couples counseling, and substance abuse/addictive behavior therapy.

In addition, Hamilton Psychiatry, part of Hamilton Physician Group, provides services in an outpatient office setting. We are currently recruiting additional behavioral health providers to help meet this need.

Within the community, Carter Hope, Highland Rivers, and Providence Ministries provide mental health assistance.

- Carter Hope provides adult drug and alcohol rehabilitation and support services.
- Highland Rivers provides adult, adolescent, and child outpatient mental health services.
- Providence Ministries is a residential, 6-month faith-based drug and alcohol rehabilitation program for men ages 18 and older. The cost is \$115 per week.

Measure

Westcott Behavioral Health Programs and Hamilton Psychiatry track utilization and patient outcomes. Hamilton will continue to monitor the community need for additional providers and continue to recruit accordingly.

Priority Health Issue #7: Senior Health

The CHNA process identified a need for education and awareness for senior health issues/resources across the healthcare continuum. Also, there is a need for convenient transportation for seniors, as well as more mental health assistance for seniors that live alone.

Hamilton Strategy

Hamilton recognizes the unique challenges seniors face and offers free health and wellness screenings throughout the community, including at the Senior Centers in Whitfield and Murray counties. Many of the publications and educational materials published by Hamilton address common senior health concerns, such as cardiac health, stroke, blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, nutrition, and exercise. Additionally, the Take it to Heart and Dare to Care programs previously mentioned in Priority #1 are disease education and screening events that are frequently attended by seniors. The hospital will market these programs to Senior populations to increase outreach and education for this special population group.

Hamilton also understands our limitations as a hospital and defers to community resources to provide transportation and basic needs assistance. There are also community resources for Alzheimer's support, adult day service, and mental health needs. United Way provides a regularly updated online and printed community resource listing of available services within the community, including non-United Way agencies.

Measure

Hamilton will track participation in community events and screening programs. For Take it to Heart and Dare to Care, Hamilton will monitor the frequency of visits to the hospital for cardiac and vascular reasons in the six months following a patient's participation in the program.

Priority Health Issue #8: Accidents

The CHNA process identified a need for more education and awareness regarding automobile safety, accident prevention, distracted driving, and car seat safety. More education and awareness related to head injury prevention and sports related accidents are also needed.

Hamilton Strategy

While the hospital recognizes the significant need for greater awareness and more education on automobile safety, the hospital is limited in what it is able to do to address this concern. Automobile safety, including car seat safety, is periodically featured in the Hamilton Health magazine and will continue to be featured in future publications. Additionally, content related to automobile safety will be a part of our digital and social media program with tips and articles appearing on Hamilton's social media sites and website. Hamilton sponsors and participates in the annual Teen Maze event attended by area high school sophomores. Driver safety is a key focus.

Hamilton will continue to provide athletic trainers to each of the area high schools to screen and treat injuries on the field, as well as to offer injury prevention education.

Hamilton Health Magazine will feature articles on injury prevention, including head injury. The Hamilton website and social media channels will also provide education and encourage awareness by engaging followers in injury related topics and discussions.

Measure

Hamilton will track participation in Teen Maze and gather attendee feedback on the event. Athletic trainers track injury occurrence, treatment outcomes, and participation in educational events. Hamilton will track and monitor audience engagement analytics for topics related to accidents and injuries featured on the website and social media channel.