



2019

Hamilton Health Care System Implementation Plan

- Murray and Whitfield Counties, Georgia -

*Paper copies of this document may be obtained at: Hamilton Medical Center
1200 Memorial Drive, Dalton GA 30720 or by phone 706-272-6000 or via the hospital website
<https://www.hamiltonhealth.com>*

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Perspective / Overview

Creating a culture of health in the community



Action Cycle Source: the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings website: <http://www.Countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/action-center>

The Action Cycle shows how to create healthy communities. The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) uses systematic, comprehensive data collection and analysis to define priorities for health improvement, creates a collaborative community environment to engage stakeholders, and an open and transparent process to listen and truly understand the health needs of Murray and Whitfield Counties, Georgia.

From the CHNA report, implementation strategies have been developed and are outlined here for actionable steps to work toward improving the health of the community.

2019 Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan

This document is a hospital facility-specific Implementation Plan based on the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) for Hamilton Medical Center. See the full CHNA report in the separate document link titled, “CHNA 2019” on the Hamilton Medical Center website, <http://www.hamiltonhealth.com> for more information on the CHNA process and needs identified.

Hamilton Medical Center as the sponsors of the assessment, engaged national leaders in community health needs assessments to assist in the project. Stratasan, a healthcare analytics and facilitation company based out of Nashville, Tennessee, provided the analysis of community health data and surveys, facilitated the focus groups, conducted the interviews and facilitated discussions to gather community input into the priorities and brainstorm goals and actions the community could take to improve health.

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- ✓ Starting on October 1, 2019, the CHNA report has been made widely available to the community via Hamilton Medical Center’s website <https://www.hamiltonhealth.com> and paper copies are available free of charge at Hamilton Medical Center, 1200 Memorial Drive, Dalton GA 30720 or by phone 706-272-6000.
- ✓ Hamilton Medical Center’s board of directors approved this assessment on September 26, 2019.
- ✓ **This 2019 Implementation Plan was approved by Hamilton Medical Center’s board of directors on January 23, 2020 and is available on Hamilton Medical Center’s website and via paper copies, beginning January 27, 2020.**

Results of the CHNA: Criteria and Prioritized Health Needs

Prioritization of Health Needs

Prioritization Criteria

Hamilton Health Care System Leadership Team used the following criteria to prioritize the most significant community health needs.

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| Magnitude / scale of the problem | How big is the problem? How many people does the problem affect, either actually or potentially? In terms of human impact, how does it compare to other health issues? |
| Seriousness of Consequences | What degree of disability or premature death occurs because of this problem? What would happen if the issue were not made a priority? What is the level of burden on the community (economic, social or other)? |
| Feasibility | Is the problem preventable? How much change can be made? What is the community's capacity to address it? Are there available resources to address it sustainably? What's already being done, and is it working? What are the community's intrinsic barriers and how big are they to overcome? |

Most Significant Community Health Needs

Hamilton Health Care System executive leadership team reviewed the primary and secondary data and individually ranked the health priorities. Their individual responses were then combined into one priority list and reviewed by the team. Not surprisingly, the list is very similar to 2016.

1. Lifestyle – Nutrition and activity
2. Chronic Diseases
 - Diabetes
 - Cardiovascular disease and Hypertension
 - Cancer
3. Mental Health
4. Access to care
 - Access to providers
 - Access to free and reduced cost care
5. Substance Use – including tobacco
6. Social Determinants of Health - socioeconomic, housing, family dynamics, food insecurity

Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Lifestyle – nutrition and activity

❖ Improve Nutrition and Increase Physical Activity

- ✓ Develop, increase, and expand lifestyle education and enrichment activities to build engagement in making healthy lifestyle choices throughout the community.



- ✓ Through partnerships with population health and wellness groups such as Live4It, provide community events, mobile applications for wellness, nutrition and activity tracking, and physical activities that are fun, able to be reproduced in daily life, and connect attendees with resources in the community for healthy nutrition and activity.
- ✓ Partner with community physicians and providers to educate and engage patients and their families with healthy nutrition and physical activity options according to the Live4It principles, or pillars.
- ✓ Post content and track engagement on Hamilton's website and social media channels.



Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Lifestyle – nutrition and activity

❖ Improve Nutrition and Increase Physical Activity (cont.)

- ✓ Address nutrition and activity needs with community physicians for their own personal wellness, to then share their journey with their patients and improve provider physical and mental wellness, including reducing provider burnout.
- ✓ Enhance the current employee wellness program at Hamilton Health Care System, in conjunction with Live4It, so as to “start at home” with our own Hamilton family which will then carry over to their personal families and reach larger groups within the community.
- ✓ Provide nutrition classes for the community in partnership with Hamilton’s Bradley Wellness Center and other organization entities.
- ✓ In partnership with Live4It, evaluate and develop strategies with local restaurants encouraging the community to make healthy nutrition selections when eating out.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for safe, accessible, equitable, and engaging physical activity. Through our fitness and wellness center, Bradley Wellness Center (BWC), Hamilton offers outings such as group hikes, walks, couch-to-5K programs, among other activities. Hamilton will continue to partner with BWC and community parks and trails to expand these offerings and develop new opportunities, such as developing a “Hike Around Murray” program similar to the existing “Bike Around Murray” creating a more equitable and accessible option.



Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Chronic Diseases – Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease & Hypertension, Cancer

❖ Increase education, prevention, and treatment options for chronic diseases.

✓ Diabetes

- Over the past year, HMC has increased the number of outreach events where glucose screening has been offered. HMC will continue to increase glucose screenings and related diabetes screenings and provide education about diabetes, pre-diabetes, risk factors, and early intervention.
- HMC will partner with Live4It programs and community providers, to offer employees and community members, and their families, health events and education for ways to eat healthier while living their desired lifestyle with food choices available to their families. HMC and Live4It program partners will track attendees and educational engagement.
- Hamilton is a supporter of the local dialysis program for uninsured residents. Additionally, Hamilton is a supporter of the Health Department in Whitfield County and the Dalton Episcopal Outreach (DEO) Clinic, and as such will provide assistance for primary care, including prenatal and gestational diabetes testing and prevention.
- Hamilton recently recruited endocrinologists and has expanded endocrinology services. These efforts will continue, including education classes for newly diagnosed diabetic patients. Services for pre-Diabetic patients are also offered. Hamilton Diabetes education and treatment providers track enrollment, attendance and outcomes for all services provided. In conjunction with the Live4It program, Hamilton will partner to monitor and adjust community outreach and services according to patient outcomes and community needs.

Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Chronic Diseases – Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease & Hypertension, Cancer

❖ Increase education, prevention, and treatment options for chronic diseases.

✓ Cardiovascular disease and hypertension

- Through community outreach activities, Hamilton provides blood pressure screenings throughout the year. Most notably, though not limited to, such screenings are routinely offered across the region through Heart Month events in February, at the For Her women's health expo in April, and at the Men's Health event in September.



- Quarterly, Hamilton offers Take it to Heart, a two-part education seminar and cardiac risk assessment. It is free to anyone who has a family history of heart disease or other qualifying risk factors. Attendance at this event has been consistently high, and overall, the event regularly identifies participants with moderate to high risk cardiovascular disease. This education and early intervention has had life-saving results and Hamilton will continue to provide this service.
- Vascular screenings have previously been offered through our Dare-to-Care program. So as to better meet the needs of the community, this program has been evaluated and will be offered in a modified version beginning in 2020. Tracking and monitoring of attendees and outcomes will be conducted and the program will be adapted according to need. With the high prevalence of cardiovascular disease and comorbidities associated with these diagnoses, Hamilton feels this is an important program to further develop and implement in the following year.

Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Chronic Diseases – Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease & Hypertension, Cancer

- ❖ Increase education, prevention, and treatment options for chronic diseases.
 - ✓ Cardiovascular disease and hypertension (cont.)
 - Hamilton has added several cardiologists during the previous CHNA period and will continue to focus on recruiting in this service line to fill the need for increased cardiovascular services in our community. In line with this, and in coordination with existing cardiology services, Hamilton was recently awarded a Certificate of Need for open heart surgery. Hamilton will recruit cardiovascular surgeons, clinical staff, additional cardiologists, and support staff to meet this need. Patients and families will benefit from the additional services this allows Hamilton to provide and will allow patients and their families to stay close to come for a comprehensive continuum of care and the opportunity for better outcomes.



Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Chronic Diseases – Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease & Hypertension, Cancer

❖ Increase education, prevention, and treatment options for chronic diseases.

✓ Cancer

- On January 6, 2020, Peebles Cancer Institute welcomed its first patients. This new state-of-the-art facility at Hamilton Medical Center provides cancer diagnosis, treatment, and support services all under one roof. Services and facility development included suggestions from the input received from focus groups within the community and is a direct reflection of the needs of those whom Hamilton serves. This new facility and the expanded services will allow Hamilton to advance cancer care in the region, including comprehensive support for the full healing of mind, body and spirit. Hamilton will continue to recruit oncology and radiation therapy clinical staff and providers. Additionally, community outreach has expanded and will only continue to do so in order to build awareness in the community about cancer prevention and early intervention for the best outcomes.



Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Chronic Diseases – Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease & Hypertension, Cancer

❖ Increase education, prevention, and treatment options for chronic diseases.

✓ Cancer (cont.).

- In conjunction with Hamilton's Committee on Cancer and in accordance with national guidelines, Hamilton will track, monitor, and provide outreach, education and screenings, evaluate outcomes within the committee, and modify outreach accordingly so as to have the greatest impact on cancer prevention and treatment in our area.
- Existing outreach will continue to be expanded at our ongoing health events, such as the For Her women's health event which feature guest speakers from Hamilton's oncology and general surgery teams. The



annual Pink Day event provided breast cancer awareness and prevention information, as well as screenings and fun activities. The Men's Health event once again provided lab testing and prostate cancer education and physician exams by area urologists. Both events have been well-attended. Hamilton also offers skin cancer screenings and education throughout the year, as well as Low Dose CT (LDCT) for lung cancer screening as community outreach, but also ongoing as a regular service covered by most insurances for qualifying patients.

- In the past year, Hamilton has expanded mammography and other diagnostic service times so as to provide more convenient opportunities to have regular screenings, such as nights and weekends. Hamilton will evaluate opportunities to provide this again during the following year so as to assist our community to have their regular screenings.

Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Chronic Diseases – Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease & Hypertension, Cancer

❖ Increase education, prevention, and treatment options for chronic diseases.

✓ Cancer (cont.)

- In July 2019, Hamilton Medical Center completed construction on the Bandy Endoscopy Center so as to provide greater access to gastrointestinal (GI) diagnostics and treatments, as well as other services. Additionally, this new center will offer screenings and work with other service lines and area partners to provide community outreach for the education, prevention, and treatment of GI cancers. Hamilton will track attendance at these community events, monitor abnormal screening results and outcomes.



Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Mental Health

❖ Increase awareness and available behavioral health services

- ✓ Hamilton will continue to increase education and screening opportunities in the community through health and wellness events, partnership with Live4It organizations and community providers.
- ✓ Hamilton will continue to support the Whitfield County Health Department and DEO Clinic as they provide primary care assistance to those in need which will serve as a means for regular screening and intervention during check-ups and wellness visits, as well as when a patient presents with a specific medical or mental health problem.
- ✓ Hamilton is a supporter of United Way and will continue to support organizations and services United Way partners with to help those dealing with socioeconomic, social, or emotional needs. Through this partnership and others within the community, Hamilton will be a community partner in education and early diagnosis and treatment, assisting with removing barriers to care and stigmas associated with mental health needs.
- ✓ Hamilton also has recently expanded its psychiatry and psychology services through its recruiting efforts and expansion of services provide by Hamilton Physician Group – Behavioral Health. Hamilton provides ongoing inpatient care through Westcott Inpatient Services within Hamilton Medical Center. This is an important service as many in need first present in the Emergency Department in crisis and need stabilization within the inpatient setting. Outpatient services can continue through Hamilton Physician Group or other community providers. Hamilton Physician Group primary care providers are also trained in screening for areas of mental health needs and often are the first line of assistance when symptoms or needs arise at medical appointments. Hamilton is recruiting additional primary care and specialists to address the growing need for mental health treatment.
- ✓ Hamilton regularly provides educational and awareness materials on its social media channels and website, such as videos, to reduce the stigma about mental health needs and to provide information for assistance. These efforts will continue and will be expanded. Tracking and monitoring of views and click-thru rate will be used to measure response, as well as, appointment scheduling and census rates through our providers at Hamilton Physician Group – Behavioral Health and Westcott Inpatient.

Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Access to Care

❖ Access to Providers and Access to Free & Reduced Cost Care

- ✓ Within the last 5 years, Hamilton has recruited over 60 providers and will be heavily involved in continuing to recruit primary care and specialty providers to meet the need of the community.
- ✓ As referenced in previous sections, Hamilton recently completed the Peebles Cancer Institute and the Bandy Endoscopy Center. Additionally, Hamilton was awarded a Certificate of Need for open heart surgery. In April 2019, Hamilton Health Care System also opened the Anna Shaw Children's Institute, serving children with developmental delays and other treatment needs, including Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, and many others. Services will continue to expand in all of these areas, and while many providers in these areas have already been recruited, more are being sought out.
- ✓ Hamilton now has primary care locations spread throughout Whitfield, Murray, Gordon and Catoosa counties, and in many instances, offering extended hours on nights and weekends. Specialty care has also been expanded at these locations and will continue to be expanded to meet the needs of the community.
- ✓ As mentioned previously, Hamilton provides free health screenings throughout the year. The hospital will continue to develop outreach opportunities to provide screening to those in need for early intervention and to assist with connecting with appropriate healthcare resources.
- ✓ 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.com>.
- ✓ The hospital provides a resource listing of insurance payers with which the hospital is in network. This is available at <http://www.hamiltonhealth.com>.
- ✓ The hospital operates a Physician Referral Line for callers to find providers in the area that are accepting new patients, and that accept the patient's insurance. This service will continue and call volumes are recorded.
- ✓ 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 may see them

Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Access to Care

- ❖ Access to Providers and Access to Free & Reduced Cost Care (cont.)
 - ✓ Community organizations provide assistance in various ways, including facilitate transportation for patients to attend appointments when circumstances necessitate doing so.
 - ✓ Community partners provide culturally appropriate health education and information (teach concepts of health promotion, disease prevention, and self-management of chronic diseases).
 - ✓ Community partners assist with obtaining needed services for patients needing such resources (care management, referrals, and follow up).
 - ✓ Whitfield County Health Department has a Medical Access Clinic and Children's Access Clinic that offers income-based fees on a sliding scale. The Health Department also operates Whitfield County MedBank Services – an effort to secure prescription drugs from the patient assistance programs of pharmaceutical companies. A similar program is available in Murray County as well. Medications are free; MedBank services are provided for a nominal fee.
 - ✓ The Dalton Episcopal Outreach (DEO) Clinic offers free medical care and social work assistance throughout the week at a Dalton location.
 - ✓ United Way provides a regularly updated online and printed community resource listing which includes available health services in the community. The comprehensive list includes everything from basic needs to legal assistance and is not limited to United Way services.

Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Substance Use – including tobacco

- ❖ Continue and expand community outreach activities to educate on critical substance misuse and increase awareness of substance misuse resources
 - ✓ Areas of focus are based on community needs surrounding opioid/prescription medications, illicit drug use, vaping/e-cigarettes, and tobacco use. Content specific to the education on the dangers of substance misuse, including tobacco and vaping will be featured regularly to build awareness for all demographics, including adolescents and their parents.
 - ✓ Hamilton will work with community partners, government agencies and first responders to develop strategies for addressing the opioid crisis that is in our community as it is in so many others. This will be an ongoing strategy and is heavily dependent on community partners due to the broad scope.
 - ✓ Within the community, Carter Hope, Highland Rivers, and Providence Ministries provide mental health assistance which is often focused on substance misuse and alcohol dependency. 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, faith-based drug and alcohol rehabilitation program for men ages 18 and older. There is a nominal cost for the program.
 - ✓ Hamilton provides education and content to increase awareness about substance misuse – including tobacco and vaping via the website, <http://www.hamiltonhealth.com>.
 - ✓ Social media content posts are regularly made on the hospitals pages, including videos, photos, and resource listings according to health education calendars and featured outreach events. One such feature time is during the “Great American Smoke-out” in which Hamilton posts about the risks of tobacco use, the importance of Low Dose CT (LDCT) screening for smokers, and a variety of other related content topics. Views and clicks are tracked, as well as the number of LDCT screenings scheduled during these awareness promotions.
 - ✓ Hamilton provides education, screening, and awareness at health and wellness events throughout the year. Attendance is tracked and any corresponding referral counts will also be tracked.

Implementation Plan for 2019 CHNA Prioritized Health Needs

FY 2019 – 2021 Strategies

Social Determinants of Health - socioeconomics, housing, family dynamics, food insecurity

❖ Provide support through collaboration with community partners to reduce inequities caused by social determinants of health

- ✓ Hamilton is actively involved in areas of economic development and building a stronger, safer community for all residents. Through those partnerships, Hamilton will work with government and local community organizations to develop opportunities to reduce gaps in socioeconomics.
- ✓ Hamilton Health Care System operates Whitfield Commons, 40 apartment homes operated exclusively to provide seniors and disabled person on lower or fixed-incomes with affordable housing facilities.
- ✓ Hamilton's Whitfield Place is a 48-apartment homes property. Like Whitfield Commons, Whitfield Place is operated exclusively to provide seniors and disabled persons on lower fixed incomes with housing facilities.
- ✓ Hamilton is also currently involved in the development of Class A apartment homes to meet the growing housing need in the community. These projects are to encourage recruitment and retention of not only providers, but also businesses and residents who may want to consider moving to the community. Based on community surveys conducted within Whitfield County, there is a housing shortage and the shortage will have an ongoing impact on economic development of the community unless addressed.
- ✓ As mentioned previously, Hamilton is among a group of community partners involved in Live4It which is a population health initiative developed to address the health and wellness needs of the community. Social Determinants is a key piece of a healthy community and is a primary focus of the program. Initiatives of Live4It are currently being evaluated and developed.

Community Health Needs Assessment for Murray and Whitfield Counties

Completed by Hamilton Health Care System in partnership with:

Stratasan

