

Community Health Needs Assessment Executive Summary and Implementation Plan

2015

Executive Summary

Emerson is a 179-bed hospital with more than 300 primary care doctors and specialists, located in Concord, Massachusetts. Emerson Hospital provides advanced medical services to more than 300,000 people in 25 towns. The Hospital's core mission is to make high-quality health care more accessible to those who live and work in our community.

Emerson Hospital has undertaken a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) from October 2014 through September 2015 to better understand and address the health needs of the Emerson Hospital community and to meet all provisions of section 501(r) of the Affordable Care Act which requires hospitals to conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) and adopt an implementation strategy at least once every three years.

The CHNA report contains secondary data from existing sources, such as the U.S. Census, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the CDC Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, Data, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, among others. This report also includes input from key informant interviews with community residents and stakeholders, particularly those with special knowledge of local and state public health departments, representatives from Councils on Aging, Housing Authorities, local schools, and representatives of medically underserved, low-income, and minority populations.

Utilizing the dominant themes gathered from the data collection and key informant interviews; Emerson Hospital Management has prioritized the health needs identified by the community. The key focus areas identified through the process are as follows:

- 1) Cancer Prevention, Detection, and Care
- 2) Mental Health and Substance Abuse Care
- 3) Care Coordination for Elderly Patients
- 4) Domestic Violence Awareness and Advocacy
- 5) Health Care Services in Maynard, Massachusetts.

The full report presents supporting data for each identified need, as well as additional indicators related to each area of focus. This report was used by Emerson Hospital in developing implementation strategies to work towards improving their community's health over the next three years.

CHNA DATA AND KEY FINDINGS

1. Population Cohort: Service Area Adult Population

Target Issue: Cancer

Data Findings: An average of 1,000 service area residents were diagnosed with cancer every year from 2006-2010. Cancer is the top cause of death in the Emerson Hospital service area. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death, followed by colorectal cancer. Five types of cancer account for 60% of cancer incidence: Female Breast (18%), Male Prostate (18%), Lung Cancer (9%), Colorectal Cancer (8%), and Melanoma (6%).

Interview Findings: Skin cancer prevention education for youth is needed.

2. Population Cohort: Service Area Population

Target Issue: Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Data Findings: The percentage of adults who reported binge drinking, or consuming five or more drinks for men or four or more drinks for women, on any one occasion in the past month, is similar to state average. Admission rates to substance abuse treatment programs are lower than state average. The rate of hospitalization related to substance abuse is lower than state average. Middlesex county has the highest number of opioid related deaths in Massachusetts and the percentage increase in deaths from 2013 to 2014 was 38%.

Through the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Emerson Service Area youths report experiencing high levels of stress due to academic workload and events in school. High School students in Emerson's area report considering suicide at a rate equal to the state average. Use of alcohol and illegal drugs are decreasing from prior years.

The percentage of older adults (60+) in the primary service area reporting chronic or long-term heavy drinking (60 drinks a month for men, or more than 30 drinks a month for women) is higher than state average (8% vs 5%).

Interview Findings: The Emerson Hospital Community needs promotion of available mental health services and education to inform and remove the stigma of treatment. There is a perceived need for physician education on drug interactions and substance abuse, and screening for substance abuse. The Acton Boxborough United Way CNA notes that

substance abuse, especially opiate addiction and overdoses and mental illness are a prominent and daily concern. The report notes that since January 2012 there were 40 Acton OD calls resulting in 5 deaths.

Stress among teens in the service area is very high. There are very high expectations of teens in the service area. Girls and Asian teens are seen as more vulnerable. The Acton Boxborough United Way CNA reports that stress among young adults and unhealthy coping mechanisms were the top concerns of residents.

There is a need for more substance abuse programs (residential and outpatient) for youth under age 18. There is a need for transitional programs for youth who have been hospitalized for suicidality. There is a need for prevention education for parents and youth about drugs and social host liability. The community needs to be more educated on prescription drug abuse in youth.

Depression, anxiety, dementia, loss of function, and the stresses of family care giving are all prominent issues with the elderly population in the Emerson Service Area. There are concerns around alcohol use, overuse of pain medications, and mixing alcohol with medications in the elderly population. Geriatric psychiatric services are limited in availability and geriatric psych providers in the market are aging as well. Violent behaviors sometimes appear in people suffering from dementia. Isolation, particularly in winter is a problem for service area elders

3. Population Cohort: Elderly Population

Target Issue: Isolation

Data Findings: 30,000 people comprising 16% of the current Primary Service Area, 12% of the Secondary West Service Area. This group is the fastest growing population group in the Service area, projected to grow by 27% or 8,000 people from 2015-2020. By 2020 over 18% of service area residents will be age 65 or over.

a) Care Coordination

Interview Findings:

There is a perceived lack of collaboration with multiple health care providers and social service providers. Elderly patients need better transition planning to prevent confusion upon hospital discharge and to prevent readmissions; Medication management for elderly residents is lacking. Service area needs caregiver respite programs, or better promotion of those that exist.

b) Transportation is a barrier to accessing health care

Interview Findings: The towns in Emerson's service area were designed for cars, not pedestrians. As the physical demands of driving become more challenging with age, transportation is a barrier to care for many elders in Emerson's service area. Co-locating services so that driving is less necessary would be helpful. Elderly need pharmacies and grocery stores with delivery services.

4. Population Cohort: Service Area Population

Target Issue: Domestic Violence & Abuse

Data Findings: There were 558 Primary Service Area residents served by the Domestic Violence Support Network from July 2013-June 2014. 33% of these were in the town of Acton and 13% in Maynard.

Interview Findings

There is a perceived need for hospital staff training on domestic violence issues specific to the immigrant communities in the service area. Domestic violence is easier to hide in less dense neighborhoods with larger homes. Immigrant populations, especially Southeast Asian women married to professionals, are at risk for domestic violence. Women are afraid of deportation if they leave their marriage. Emotional abuse is prevalent. Mental health and substance abuse are typical issues for abuse victims. Alcohol use exacerbates domestic violence. Victims need legal services, transportation, and mental health services. Children in these families need counseling. The Acton Boxborough United Way CNA notes that domestic violence and financial scams are prominent and daily public safety concerns.

Target Group: Maynard residents

Data Findings: There are 10,500 residents of Maynard, projected to grow 4% from 2015 to 2020. Maynard is the only town in Emerson's Primary Service Area where the school age population (age 5-17) is growing. The 55+ population is projected to grow 16% in 5 years, compared to 21% in Emerson's total service area. Median household income is \$80,000 which is the lower than average in the Emerson PSA. There are 582 people below the poverty level in Maynard

Emerson has a 59% market share in Maynard based on FY2012 inpatient data. There is one Emerson affiliated Internal medicine provider and a CVS minute clinic in Maynard.

Interview Findings: There are very few health services located within the town of Maynard; residents have to travel and many lack transportation. The Maynard Council

on Aging is a new program in need of programming. The community could benefit from outreach/on-site wellness checks at Open Table in Maynard.

5. Population Cohort/Target Group: Youth Population/Age 0-9

Data Findings: 22,000 people comprising 11% of the Service Area. This group is projected to grow by 4% or 1,000 children from 2015-2020, but will remain steady at 11% of the total service area population.

Interview Findings: School nurses would like opportunities for professional development/updates/networking. There is a need for mental health services for children, especially those living in homes experiencing violence and trauma. The Acton Boxborough United Way CNA highlights challenges from more children with special needs, specifically ADD/ADHD, anxiety, and Autism Spectrum Disorders, and the lack of pediatric medication providers, including child psychiatrists.

6. Population Cohort/Target Group: Low Income residents

Data Findings: 1 in 5 households in Emerson's Primary Service Area has an income under \$50K 1,700 families in the Service area below poverty levels. Concord, Acton, and Westford have the highest number of families below poverty with children. Maynard, Westford, and Acton have the highest number of families below poverty without children. The Acton Boxborough United Way CNA notes that "Acton has consistently had more households earning less than \$50,000 than those earning more than \$200,000 (\$50,000 is about 2x the federal poverty level for a family of 4)...Seniors are one of the population groups...with the highest rate of poverty".

Interview Findings: Vulnerable populations are families who have low incomes due to medical issues or job loss, single mothers who are underemployed, and non-professional immigrants working in service jobs. There is limited affordable housing. There is a need for transportation to medical appointments, particularly for the non-elderly populations. Emerson's Primary Service area lacks local, affordable eye exams and glasses, affordable dental care, and affordable access to hearing aids. The Metro West Free Clinic is located in Sudbury, but only 10% of its patients are from Emerson's PSA. There is a perceived need for more training on how to access Mass Health.

CHNA FINDINGS PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

The key community health needs identified through this process were reviewed by Emerson Hospital Management. The health needs were prioritized based on the following criteria:

- The resources needed to address the finding align with Emerson Hospital's mission, infrastructure, and financial resources.
- The need has a significant prevalence in the Emerson Hospital Community so that resources are used to improve the lives of many people
- The health need contributes significantly to the morbidity and mortality in the Emerson Community
- Emerson has the ability to make a lasting impact over a long period of time
- Emerson Hospital has the ability to measure the impact of its plan to show improved health of the community

KEY FOCUS AREAS IDENTIFIED

Using prioritization criteria listed above to review the findings from data collection and key stakeholder interviews; Emerson Hospital plans to focus on the following five community needs:

- 1) Cancer Prevention, Detection, and Care
- 2) Mental Health and Substance Abuse Care
- 3) Care Coordination for Elderly Patients
- 4) Domestic Violence Awareness and Advocacy
- 5) Health Care Services in Maynard

RATIONALE FOR FINDINGS NOT ADDRESSED

There are many needs that were found but are driven by issues outside of Emerson Hospital's control. For example, Emerson Hospital does not have the resources or expertise to greatly influence the transportation infrastructure in the service area. However, Emerson will explore involvement with Crosstown Connect to understand how access to Emerson's locations can be improved.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

To address the 5 key focus areas identified in this Community Health Needs Assessment, Emerson Hospital will implement the following strategies over the next three years:

1. Cancer Prevention, Detection, and Care

- Emerson will continue its annual Family Health and Wellness Expo, where residents can access free cancer screening programs. Results show that the program has contributed to early detection of cancers in the service area.
- Because lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the service area, Emerson Hospital will offer Low-Dose CT Lung Screening to help diagnose lung cancer at earlier stages.
- Emerson Hospital will continue to assist patients seeking smoking cessation assistance by actively promoting the Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation & Prevention Program.
- To address higher incidence rates of melanoma in the service area and to educate the community about skin cancer prevention, Emerson will seek to donate/install three sunscreen dispensers at public areas in Concord, Acton, and Westford.

2. Mental Health and Substance Abuse Care

- Emerson Hospital will continue its collaboration with local school districts to sponsor the biannual Emerson Hospital Youth Risk Behavior Survey so that mental health, substance use, and other trends can continue to be understood and addressed by individual communities. The next YRBS will be conducted in 2016.
- Emerson Hospital will participate in the Massachusetts initiative to decrease opioid abuse through education and alternative pain management.
- Emerson's Emergency Department has signed a State-wide pledge to limit narcotics prescriptions, limit number of doses, and utilize the Massachusetts Online Prescription Monitoring Program.
- Emerson will continue to sponsor local school districts in providing teach-the-teacher Extra Edge workshops, adapted from the Benson-Henry Institute for

Mind Body Medicine's Education Initiative. This research-validated program brings stress-reduction and life-management skills to students. 45 Concord teachers and 25 Westford teachers have been trained through Emerson's sponsorship to date. Emerson will build on this success by sponsoring 25 teachers from Acton-Boxborough and 25 teachers from Maynard in this program.

- Emerson Behavioral Health employees will provide community education on mental health and substance abuse topics. At least one educational event on issues pertaining to adolescents and at least one event on issues pertaining to the elderly population will be presented each year. Possible topics will be How to Identify Alcohol Abuse, Caregiver Anxiety and Stress, Seasonal Depression, and How to Recognize Signs and Symptoms of Dementia.
- Emerson Hospital will conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the possibility of expanding inpatient geriatric psychiatric services.
- Emerson Hospital will conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the possibility of providing an outpatient drug and alcohol rehab program for adolescents.

3. Care Coordination for Elderly

- Emerson Hospital will launch the CHART initiative to reduce readmissions among high-risk patients while improving care. This program will provide high-risk patients with medication reconciliation, referral to a psychiatric transitional social worker, and palliative care or hospice care if needed,
- Emerson Hospital will coordinate with community partners to plan a Senior Summit to facilitate a discussion among community service providers on best practices in serving the complex needs of their clients and ways to coordinate efforts as a community
- Emerson will fund COAs with grants to provide transportation vouchers to low income seniors.

4. Domestic Violence Awareness and Advocacy

- Emerson will build upon Domestic Violence Service Network training that has already been provided to 80 Emerson patient care employees in the Emerson Hospital Emergency Department. Obstetrical Services and Pediatrics patient care staff will be the focus for the next phase of training.

5. Health Care Services in Maynard

- Emerson will initiate a planning process and feasibility study to define what health care services are most needed by the Maynard population.
- Emerson will participate in a minimum of one health fair/health screening event in the town of Maynard each year.
- Emerson will expand its Council on Aging grants to include the Maynard COA.

APPROVAL OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Emerson Hospital's Community Benefits Advisory Committee met on September 17, 2015 to review the key findings, focus areas, and approve the recommended priorities and implementation plan.

The Emerson Hospital Board of Directors reviewed the findings of the CHNA and approved the recommended priorities and implementation plan on October 27, 2015.