

Community Health Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan 2014–2016

Buffalo Hospital, a part of Allina Health, cares about improving the health of the communities it serves. To do so, Buffalo Hospital worked with community partners to conduct a community health needs assessment and develop a specific, local implementation plan to respond to the identified community needs.

Executive Summary

HOSPITAL SUMMARY

Buffalo Hospital is a part of Allina Health, a not-for-profit health system dedicated to the prevention and treatment of illness through its family of clinics, hospitals, care services and community health improvement efforts in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin. Buffalo Hospital is a regional medical center located on the western edge of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Each year the hospital provides advanced care to nearly 70,000 patients and their families. Buffalo Hospital offers state-of-the-art facilities, personalized care in private rooms and services that are continuously being expanded. Buffalo Hospital has been repeatedly recognized for quality, safe care and outstanding patient outcomes. Employees overwhelmingly say they are proud to work at Buffalo Hospital and would refer their loved ones to the hospital for care. Buffalo Hospital has won many awards over the past several years which include being the first hospital in the state of Minnesota to be awarded the Pathway to Excellence American Nurse Credentialing, award from the MN Business Magazine for developing wellness programs and MN Hospital Association awards for Patient Safety, Best Workplace, and Community Benefit. The Buffalo Hospital campus includes Allina Medical Clinic – Buffalo and Buffalo Clinic.

Buffalo Hospital conducted its community health needs assessment (CHNA) in collaboration and partnership with community members, community organizations, stakeholders from local public health, and internal stakeholders at Buffalo Hospital. These partners assisted in the development of the hospital's priorities as well as in building the implementation plan.

TARGET AREAS AND POPULATIONS

For the purposes of community benefit and engagement, Allina Health divides its service area into nine regions. The region associated with Buffalo Hospital is known as the Northwest Region and primarily serves Wright County in Minnesota. For the Northwest Region community health needs assessment (CHNA), the focus of inquiry was Wright County.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The needs assessment plan was based on a set of best practices for community health assessment developed by the Catholic Health Association with the purpose of identifying two to three regional priority areas to focus on for FY 2014–2016. The process was designed to rely on existing public data, directly engage community stakeholders and collaborate with local public health and other health providers. The Northwest Region Community Engagement Lead and the Community Health Programs Coordinator guided the effort for Buffalo Hospital.

The Buffalo Hospital assessment was conducted in three stages: data review and setting priorities, community health dialogues and community assets inventory, and action planning. The process began in April 2012 with the development of the CHNA plan and was completed in August 2013 with the final presentation of the assessment and action plan to the Buffalo Hospital Community Benefit Advisory Council and the Buffalo Hospital Board of Directors.

DATA REVIEW AND PRIORITIZATION

The data review and priority-setting phase began with the compilation of existing health-related data. Stakeholders reviewed three datasets, including Stratis Health Minnesota County Profiles, Minnesota County-Level Indicators for Community Health Assessment, and County Health Rankings. They then developed an initial list of priorities. Assessment stakeholders used the Hanlon Method, a systematic prioritization process, to rank the health-related issues based on three criteria: size of the problem, seriousness of the problem, and estimated effectiveness of the solution. Stakeholders were then asked to consider the numerical rankings given to each issue along with a set of discussion questions to choose the final priority issues.

The prioritization process identified the following three priority issues for the community:

1. **Obesity and physical activity**
2. **Chronic disease and chronic disease management**
3. **Mental health**

COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

In spring 2013, Buffalo Hospital held meetings designed to solicit feedback from the community on how the hospital could most effectively address the selected priority issues. These community dialogues were an opportunity for Buffalo Hospital to hear from a broader group of community members, identify ideas and strategies to respond to the priority issues and inform the action-planning phase of the needs assessment. A dialogue report summarizes the findings and will guide the development of the Implementation Plan.

COMMUNITY ASSETS INVENTORY

Between the community health dialogues and the action-planning phase, the Community Engagement lead for Buffalo Hospital developed an inventory of existing programs and services within the region related to the priority areas identified in the needs assessment. The inventory included the location of the program (hospital, clinic or community) as well as the target population and community partners. The purpose of the inventory was to identify:

- Gaps in services and opportunities for new work
- Where and with whom there is a lot of work already being done
- Opportunities for partnership and/or collaboration.

ACTION PLANNING

The final phase of the CHNA process was to develop the implementation plan for Buffalo Hospital. The implementation plan is a set of actions that the hospital will take to respond to the needs identified through the community health needs assessment process. Buffalo Hospital used its Community Benefit Advisory Council to engage with internal and external stakeholders including representatives from Wright County Public Health, Buffalo City Council, the Buffalo Hospital Foundation executive director and board members, and mental health providers over three meetings to develop the implementation plan for FY 2014–2016.

The process included four steps:

1. Identifying key goals, objectives and indicators related to the priority issues
2. Reviewing Community Health Dialogues report and Community Assets Inventory
3. Selecting evidence-based strategies and programs to address the issues
4. Assigning roles and partners for implementing each strategy.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan is a three-year plan depicting the overall work that Buffalo Hospital plans to do to address priority issues in the community. Yearly work plans will be developed to provide detailed actions, accountabilities, evaluation measures and timelines.

In formulating its implementation strategy for each of the priority areas, Buffalo Hospital chose to focus on strategies and programs that would not just educate people about the issues, but also empower people in the community to take action to address these issues. For example, Buffalo Hospital has a history of creating wellness initiatives which are designed to create educational programming that goes beyond providing information to the participants. These programs are based on the belief that self-motivation is essential to making and sustaining positive behavioral modifications. These programs teach participants to discover their true motivation for making lifestyle changes and provide them with strategies and resources on how to sustain their positive behaviors once the changes take place.

Obesity and physical activity

Goal: Reduce obesity and increase physical activity

INDICATORS

- Reduce proportion of adolescents and adults who are overweight or obese.
- Increase the proportion of adults and teens who meet current Federal physical activity guidelines for aerobic physical activity and for muscle-strengthening activity

Buffalo Hospital's strategy to address obesity and encourage physical activity in its community will focus on two key areas: education around the risks of obesity, and providing programs designed to reduce obesity and increase physical activity in the community by encouraging and motivating people to take actions that will improve their overall health. Planned programs include:

- Partnering with local food vendors to raise awareness in the community about healthy eating and venues to access healthy food: raising awareness of local farms, identifying healthy options at restaurants, supporting and promoting community gardens. *Partners: public health, local restaurants, farmers markets, community co-ops*

- Continuing the "Let's Talk Wellness" programming in community worksite settings. *Partners: local employers*
- Continuing and expanding the Healthy Community Partnership initiative. *Partner: public health*
- Creating and supporting programming that combines educational, environmental and behavioral activities at worksites and community centers. *Partners: senior centers, community fitness centers, clinics, employers*
- Enhancing and expanding options for physical activity and nutrition education using the Health Powered Kids developed by Allina Health. *Partners: clinics, local school districts, community programs targeting children*
- Facilitating and promoting nutritional coaching and groups targeting families and children. *Partners: schools, community centers, community programs*
- Continuing to expand the Healthy Eating for Successful Living for people older than the age of 55. *Partners: Senior centers, fitness centers*
- Supporting the Silver Sneakers program in the community. *Partners: Senior centers, fitness centers*
- Organizing and implementing a promotional campaign to encourage healthy choices. *Partners: public health, local health and wellness groups and organizations*
- Providing motivational talks in the community encouraging healthy changes in behavior. *Partners: providers, clinics, public health, local health and wellness groups and organizations*
- Piloting an "Adopt a School Program," which pairs physicians with schools to provide monthly educational talks combined with events and other activities that promote healthy eating and physical activity. *Partners: clinics, schools, public health*

Chronic disease and chronic disease management

Goal: Increase early detection and improve self-management of chronic diseases

INDICATORS

- Increase the number of adults who are screened for chronic diseases
- Increase the number of adults who are able to monitor and manage their chronic conditions.

Buffalo Hospital's strategy to address chronic diseases and chronic disease management in its community

will focus on two key areas: increasing early detection of chronic disease, and encouraging and promoting self-management of chronic diseases. Planned programs include:

- Continuing work with health care providers to implement patient care strategies to detect chronic disease. *Partners: Clinics, hospital doctors, public health*
- Providing education to providers and community members around detection and prevention of chronic disease. *Partners: Clinics, hospital doctors, public health*
- Partnering with local employers to provide workplace screenings for risk factors for chronic disease. *Partners: Clinics, hospital doctors, public health, employers, wellness groups and organizations*
- Continuing to offer Living Well with Chronic Disease workshops for people managing chronic conditions. *Partners: Clinics, hospital doctors, public health*
- Continuing the work of clinical service lines around chronic disease. *Partners: Clinics, hospital doctors, public health*
- Developing referral processes for providers to connect people with chronic diseases to community assets. *Partners: Clinics, hospital doctors, public health*

Mental health

Goal: Reduce stigma related to mental health conditions and increase awareness of mental illness resources

INDICATORS

- Increase the proportion of adults and children with mental health disorders who receive treatment
- Reduce stigma around mental health issues

Buffalo Hospital's strategy to address mental health in its community will focus on two key areas: reducing the stigma around mental health conditions and treatment, and providing and facilitating education around mental health to members of the community and health care providers. Planned programs include:

- Leading a taskforce to help identify resources in the community related to mental health. *Partners: Clinics, mental health providers, public health, police, local mental health centers*
- Developing collaborations that link the community to those resources; developing networks related to addressing mental health in the community. *Partners: Clinics, hospital doctors, public health*
- Partnering with community partners to host depression screenings at community events, workplaces and schools. *Partners: Clinics, hospital doctors, public health, employers, schools*
- Developing and offering classes to the community focusing on recognizing the symptoms related to mental illness, and providing people with the resources and knowledge to help individuals in crisis connect with appropriate professional, peer, social and self-help care. *Partners: Clinics, hospital doctors, public health, mental health advocacy organizations*
- Actively engaging providers in public discussions around mental health and mental illness with the goal of decreasing stigma. *Partners: Clinics, hospital doctors, public health, employers, schools*

CONCLUSION

As a not-for profit hospital, Buffalo Hospital is dedicated to improving the health of the communities it serves. This implementation plan is intended to show that the hospital will partner with and support community and clinical programs that positively impact the identified health needs in 2014–2016. In addition, the hospital will participate in system-wide efforts, as part of Allina Health, that support and impact community health. There are other ways in which Buffalo Hospital will indirectly address these priority issues along with other needs, such as through the provision of charity care, support of Medicare and Medicaid programs, discounts to the uninsured and others. Buffalo Hospital will continue to engage with the community to ensure that the work in the plan is relevant, effective and to modify its efforts accordingly.

The full report for the Buffalo Hospital's community health needs assessment can be found at allinahealth.org.

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