

Wamego Hospital Association (WHA) 2015 – 2018 Implementation Strategy Plan Attachment E

Implementation Strategy Narrative

Overview

Service to the poor is a primary value at Wamego Hospital Association. In 2015, WHA contributed over \$612.4 thousand in community benefit; this included \$65,000 specifically to community benefit initiatives. Some examples of ways WHA has contributed include:

- Physicians volunteering at Community Health Ministries' Clinic
- Offering a free sports medicine clinic and concussion awareness program to all USD 320 athletes
- Providing the support of Licensed Clinical Therapists to Community Health Ministries' Clinic clients
- Coordinating Get Fit Wamego

In an effort to gain insights from the community for the purposes of planning and community improvement, Wichita State University's Center for Community Support and Research (CCSR) was contracted to conduct a community-wide needs assessment for Pottawatomie County, which included both secondary data and survey data. Secondary data, which is publicly available such as that from the Census survey, Kansas Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), and others, was compiled for the most recent years available as a reference point for community input. Additionally, a community survey was conducted via the internet, mail, phone, and through administration at public locations or meetings to gather input from residents regarding their perceptions of community strengths and needs in 11 different topic areas (Quality of Life, Health, Mental Health, Social Issues, Children and Youth, Education, Aging, Housing, Transportation, Infrastructure, and Economics and Personal Finance). A total of 487 surveys were completed by Pottawatomie County residents. Although significant efforts were made to solicit participation by a representative sample of community members, the survey respondents were largely white, female, middle-aged or older, and more highly educated than the general population. While it is possible that opinions and concerns specific to underrepresented populations were not adequately reflected in the community survey, the overall picture of community perceptions of strengths and needs should provide a good starting point for further discussion and planning.

In the spring of 2015, WHA hosted a community listening session where input from the community was gathered. With community input, WHA identified top community health goals for the next 3 years. The assessment and formal report is in alignment with the federal IRS community benefit reporting requirements that affect all State-licensed 501(c)(3) hospitals. The priorities identified in the assessment have been accepted by the Wamego Hospital Association and Wamego Health Center Board of Directors.

Prioritized Needs

Physical Health (including physical activity, nutrition and tobacco use)

Data from sources such as the 2013 BRFSS indicate that residents of Pottawatomie County show fewer serious health concerns (e.g., hypertension, cancer, etc.) than average for Kansas and better than average rates of healthy behaviors. Additionally, the number reporting fair or poor health or lacking healthcare are lower than state averages. Community needs assessment survey data support this evidence that Pottawatomie County residents report being relatively healthy on average.

Both secondary data and survey data indicate that a large percentage of Pottawatomie residents get less physical activity than recommended, but nearly 60% believe that the community offers enough options for physical activity and that physical activity is valued.

“Get Fit Wamego” is a collaborative partnership in which WHA is a part. Get Fit Wamego is a 7-week program that includes a back to basics approach for a lifetime of health and wellness and is sponsored by WHA, Flint Hills Fitness, Wamego Public Library and Wamego Technology Center. Participants in this program learn the skills and strategies to build a lifetime health and fitness plan. Led by fitness and nutrition specialists, participants are inspired to set and reach their health goals. The program offers wellness training, accountability coaches, screenings (e.g. cholesterol, BMI, blood pressure, assessment by a certified dietician) and fitness classes led by certified instructors.

Secondary data show that Pottawatomie County residents are slightly less likely to consume enough fruits and vegetables than the state average; however, the majority of survey respondents indicate that they eat healthy in general. Responses were mixed on the survey questions regarding whether the community values healthy eating and the presence of adequate access to healthy food.

WHA volunteer gardeners work together to grow produce for those who are low-income and/or elderly who can no longer afford or unable to plant their own vegetable gardens. The Wamego Community Garden is located at the site of the First Baptist Church. Gardeners work together to grow produce and extra produce realized is donated to the local food pantry, WIC and nearby low-income housing communities. WHA assisted in writing a grant proposal that was funded and allowed for the construction of a greenhouse so that vegetables, hearty fruits and spices could be grown year-round.

Secondary data show that the number of persons who smoke in Pottawatomie County is slightly lower than state average (17.7% for Pottawatomie; 20% for Kansas). A relatively small number of survey respondents (8.6%) reported being current cigarette or tobacco product users, but 7.4% of respondents did not answer this question.

The top ranked needs for physical health in Pottawatomie County were facilities for physical activity (including parks, trails, and recreation centers), affordable health services, and affordable health insurance.

Mental Health

Secondary data from the 2013 BRFSS show that the percentage of Pottawatomie County residents who have experienced poor mental health is higher than the state average (12.9% for Pottawatomie, 9.7% for Kansas). The same is true for those who have experienced a depressive disorder in particular (26.6% for Pottawatomie versus 18.1% for Kansas). The community assessment survey also found that 7.6% of respondents had been diagnosed with mental illness of some type, with depression being the most common diagnosis.

Less than a quarter (21.6%) of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “This community has adequate mental health services for people who need them.” Secondary data support this concern about a lack of accessible services.

The top needs related to mental health were focused on affordability and access to quality services, including more providers of mental health services, affordable mental health services and insurance, high quality services, and increased education and prevention regarding mental health.

In order to address this need, WHA has made its licensed therapists available to work in partnership with the Community Health Ministries’ Clinic through the Heritage Program. This program serves as a mental health clinic for senior adults in the City of Wamego and allows a person access to mental health care without driving to nearby Manhattan or Topeka Kansas in order to gain access.

Children and Youth

Secondary data show that children and youth in Pottawatomie County tend to be less likely to experience issues like poverty, perinatal and neonatal risks, substance use, and dropping out than is typical for the state.

Sixteen percent (16%) of respondents who have children reported that their child has been afraid to attend school or activities due to bullying.

Survey data indicate that while respondents are positive about the child care services and schools their children attend, they have concerns about the availability and affordability of child care, activities for children and youth, and employment opportunities for teens. Respondents also rated the community low in meeting the needs of mothers and children for whom English is not their first language.

Because achieving educational goals is important to the overall economic and health status of every resident living in and around Wamego, WHA is a proud partner in the mentoring program with the school district. Every year, all students entering into the Wamego High School, are assigned a mentor who will stay with that student for their four years of high school. That adult volunteer helps the student to realize their goal of academic success, and many times steers their career aspirations, into areas the student never thought about prior to their mentor encounter.

Aging

Although Pottawatomie County has a lower percentage of adults age 65 or older than is average for Kansas (7.3% vs. 14.0%), respondents to the survey were fairly positive about the community being supportive of healthy aging and the availability of resources for older adults. In an effort to make sure all Wamego residents have access to healthy food, WHA associates regularly assist in delivering Meals on Wheels to low income and/or home-bound elderly who are no longer able to prepare healthy meals.

Caregivers of older adults reported that there are not enough services specific to their needs (e.g., caregiver respite); however, respondents did not provide examples of services that might be helpful.

The top priorities as identified by respondents who were 55 or over were related to maintenance of health, independence, and relationships. The top needs as identified by all respondents (regardless of age) were focused on affordable and independent living options, mobility in the community, and affordable prescriptions.

Infrastructure

While the environment (i.e., clean, good air quality) and many of the essential services (e.g., fire department, library) in Pottawatomie County are rated highly, options for navigating the county and lack of affordable housing were again rated lower than many other features; however, even the lower rated services/ features were still considered to be “fair.”

WHA is very concerned about the “green” spaces and keeping them clean. So, in partnership with their employees work to keep a mile of their highway clean by periodically performing clean-up duty to avoid road hazards and sanitary conditions in their city.

Needs That Will Not Be Addressed

Social Issues

Both secondary and survey data paint a fairly positive picture of Pottawatomie County regarding common social issues (e.g., crime, poverty, drop-out rates). Rates of poverty, youth substance abuse, and crime are lower than state averages, but secondary data show a possible issue with adult binge drinking. Survey responses note concerns about substance abuse for youth and adults, manufacture and selling of drugs (e.g., methamphetamine), inattentive driving, and poverty.

While these issues are considered disparities in health care, they ultimately are related to a person's overall wellbeing. However, the cost of directly impacting a person with these co-morbid issues is challenging when substance abuse is identified as a major player. Given the resources the hospital currently has to address this need, becoming a primary player is slim except through community partnerships. WHA is willing to partner with other groups, including law enforcement, on combatting these issues when adequate resources are available; however, the State of Kansas has seen a substantial drop in funding for many programs that fall into this area of concern.

Education

Secondary data from Kansas Action for Children (Kansas Kids Count) show that Pottawatomie County fares well regarding education except when comparing the number of Early Head Start slots and schools offerings to all-day/every day Kindergarten to the state average.

Survey respondents rated the quality of schools and updated technology high. The availability of afterschool activities and the amount spent per student were the lowest rated items. The primary needs as identified by respondents were recruiting and keeping good teachers, increased expectations for students and parental involvement, equality in funding among districts, and more arts activities for students.

Given the high ranking of the schools, and the continued and growing partnership between the district and WHA, future programming was not seen to be a priority need at the present time.

Housing

Housing values in Pottawatomie County are well above average for the state (\$152,900 versus \$129,500 for Kansas). At the same time, residents in Pottawatomie County are more likely than is typical to own their home (77.9% as compared to 68.2% for Kansas).

Over 60% of survey respondents agreed that there is a lack of affordable housing in the community. Variety of affordable housing options was identified as the number one need for Pottawatomie County along with higher quality rentals, neighborhood improvement, and issues related to the maintenance of properties

Housing costs are beyond the scope and financial resources of WHA. While, active in the Chamber, WHA keeps an eye on housing costs but there is relatively little WHA can do to influence the prices to become more affordable when the demand for housing continues to grow in the area.

Economics and Personal Finance

Secondary data show Pottawatomie County to be relatively prosperous with higher than average median household income, median housing value, and per capita sales; however, survey respondents indicate a lack of well-paying job opportunities. The goods and services that are most often purchased in the community are banking, grooming/salon, and medical. The primary needs identified by respondents are related to availability of jobs and small business development, assistance to families for basic needs, assistance in finding jobs, and assistance with personal financial management.

Transportation

Pottawatomie County residents are more likely to have access to multiple vehicles for daily use than is typical for the state, but also experience more commute time alone and issues with traffic safety (i.e., lack of seat belt use, traffic-related injuries and death).

Although few survey respondents reported lack of transportation as a daily impediment, the needs they identified were largely related to increasing transportation options and routes (i.e., for bikes and pedestrians) and the maintenance and improvements of road conditions.

Transportation for medical appointments, when doctors are located outside of Wamego area, can be challenging for elderly drivers. So, WHA is aware of the issue and continues to work with its neighboring hospital (Via Christi Hospital – Manhattan) in providing access to specialists when needed.

Summary of Implementation Strategy

- **Physical Health**

Strategy:

- Low-income households and elderly populations living in and around Wamego will have greater access to fresh vegetables and fruits through the Wamego Community Garden.
- WHA staff, in collaboration with other community partners, will look for additional resources to expand the Wamego Community Garden produce.

Anticipated impact:

- Increase in the number of Wamego residents participating in harvesting the produce at the Wamego Community Garden.
- Increase the percentage of Wamego residents reported eating fresh vegetables and fruits per day in future survey efforts.

- **Mental Health**

Strategy:

- Low-income households who rely on the Community Health Ministries Clinic as their medical home will be able to access mental health services when needed.
- WHA staff, in collaboration with Community Health Ministries Clinic will continue to work together to ensure adequate mental health services are available to people living and/or working in the Wamego area.

Anticipated impact:

- Decrease in the number of domestic violence cases being reported in the Wamego area.
- Increase in awareness that mental health assistance is available through the collaboration between Community Health Ministries Clinic and WHA.
- Decrease in the number of suicides among adults in Wamego area.

- **Children and Youth**

Strategy:

- Continuation and support of the high school mentoring project through the donation of time, talent and treasure.

Anticipated impact:

- Continuation and increase in the number of youth graduating from Wamego High School due to the one-on-one matches of adult mentors when compared to the State of Kansas as a whole.
- An increase in the number of youth registering for college courses and/or technical training.

- **Aging**

Strategy:

- Continuation and support of the delivery of Meals on Wheels to homebound elderly living in and around Wamego.

Anticipated impact:

- Continuation and increase in the number of elderly being able to live independently in their own homes.
- An increase in awareness of other needs that home-bound elderly could benefit from in order to increase their quality of life.

- **Infrastructure**

Strategy:

- In collaboration with Via Christi Hospital – Manhattan, participate in area-wide green team initiatives.

Anticipated impact:

- Increase awareness for people's need to recycle limited resources.
- Increase awareness of the need to keep yards free from debris and trash to keep the community clean, safe and relatively attractive for all who live and visit Wamego.

To see complete Community Health Needs Assessment go to:

<http://wamegohealthcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Community-Needs-Assessment-2015.pdf>