

Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategy

Rainy Lake Medical Center
December 2013



In association with Essentia Health

Rainy Lake Medical Center's Implementation Plan has been developed based on the findings and priorities established during the Community Health Needs Assessment conducted during 2013 as a result of the collaborative efforts of RLMC and the Koochiching County Health Department. During the assessment process, four major groups were consulted to provide opinions on what they identified as the health needs of the community. These groups were:

- Koochiching County Public Health staff;
- RLMC Executive staff;
- International Falls Key Stakeholder forum; and
- Greater Koochiching County Key Stakeholder interviews.

The following health needs were identified as health needs during the Koochiching County Public Health Meeting held February 21st, 2013:

1. Obesity rates and low rates of physical activity.
2. Cancer screening and death rates.
3. Access to care, and lack of providers.
4. Smoking rates among teens.
5. Delayed prenatal care.

The following health needs were identified during the Rainy Lake Medical Center Executive Staff Meeting held May 30th, 2013:

1. Lack of providers including dentists/delayed access to care.
2. Cancer death rates/low cancer screening rates.
3. Obesity/low rates of physical activity.
4. Chemical dependency: smoking among teens and overuse of alcohol.

The following health needs were prioritized during the Key Stakeholder Meeting held at the AmericInn on June 19th, 2013:

1. Obesity/lack of physical activity.
2. Chemical dependency.
3. Lack of providers/underserved.
4. Mental health issues across the age spectrum.

The following health needs were identified during the Key Stakeholder Interviews with greater County residents held during the month of July, 2013:

1. Access to care/lack of providers/lack of coordinated care.
2. Availability of health-related support services.
3. Physical activity, nutrition and other lifestyle factors.
4. Mental health providers and programs (Alzheimer's, PTSD, other mental health needs).
5. Substance abuse (alcohol and drugs).

Prioritized Needs

The RLMC - CCO, the Koochiching County Public Health Director and the Koochiching County Public Health Department Educator met to review the community needs that each group had identified. Using the criteria described in Appendix 13 of the Community Health Needs Assessment document, the following health needs were identified as priorities:

1. Access to Care.

The underlying issues in order of priority included:

- a) Lack of both physicians and dentists and an inability to get an appointment.
- b) The high cost of healthcare and lack of health insurance.
- c) Lack of mental health practitioners.
- d) Transportation.
- e) Access to health-related services such as meal programs, home care and Alzheimer Support programs.

2. Absence of Healthy Behaviors.

The underlying issues in order of priority included:

- a) smoking rates among teens;
- b) overuse of alcohol;
- c) drug abuse;
- d) lack of physical activity;
- e) nutrition as it relates to access to fresh fruits and vegetables;
- f) numbers of obese and overweight residents;
- g) lower than average disease screening rates;
- h) the impact of geographic isolation on mental health and the desire to be healthy.

3. Coordination of and access to mental health care.

The underlying issues in order of priority included:

- a) access to local mental health providers as well as regional treatment facilities;
- b) perceived lack of coordination among both local and regional providers.

Although Rainy Lake Medical Center recognizes the importance of all the needs and underlying issues that have been identified during the Community Health Needs Assessment process, this organization will not directly design and implement strategies for all due to limited resources, expertise, duplication of effort or lack of correlation to Rainy Lake Medical Center's mission and vision.

Rainy Lake Medical Center's Strategies to Address Community Needs

1. Access to Care Action Plan:

Rainy Lake Medical Center has made the recruitment of medical and dental providers a priority initiative and plans to take advantage of any medically underserved or health

professional shortage designations available during the recruitment process. RLMC will open a Rural Health Clinic in 2014 to increase the number of medical providers available in its service area and offer services on a sliding fee scale for those who qualify. RLMC believes this strategy will directly address the high cost of healthcare for low income residents of the County who are uninsured or underinsured.

Access to health-related services is not related to RLMC's mission.

Although strategies to improve transportation options to health appointments within the County and to outside specialists is not within its mission, RLMC will collaborate as appropriate, in any strategies undertaken by KCHD or any other community agencies to address this problem. As part of its recruitment strategies, RLMC is working to increase the number of specialists who provide services locally, thereby diminishing the need for out of county travel to attend medical appointments. In 2014 RLMC will explore funding to install telemedicine services in its emergency room to enhance its ability to diagnose and treat patients with emergency medical conditions. One of the benefits associated with emergency room telemedicine services is a decline in emergency transfers, thereby lessening the need for patients and families to travel to tertiary hospitals.

2. Absence of Healthy Behaviors Action Plan:

As a result of the close collaboration that existed between RLMC and the Koochiching County Health Department during the Community Health Needs Assessment process, both organizations were able to explore each others mission and vision and discuss plans for intervention. Promotion of healthy behaviors within the community of Koochiching County directly relates to the mission and vision of the Koochiching County Health Department (KCHD). RLMC will collaborate in KCHD strategies developed to promote physical activity and proper nutrition, as well as interventions to lower rates of obesity. RLMC will also work to promote physical activity and proper nutrition on an individual basis as part of the provider-patient relationship.

Although preventing smoking among both teens and adults is within its mission, because of limited resources, RLMC has not currently identified any community-wide strategies to address this issue. RLMC will continue to promote smoking cessation on an individual basis as part of the provider-patient relationship.

Preventing and/or treating alcohol or drug abuse are not within the scope of RLMC's services, nor does RLMC have the expertise to undertake such as assignment.

Promoting improved disease screening rates is within the missions of RLMC and KCHD. RLMC installed digital mammography and will continue to market this technology throughout Koochiching County to improve breast screening rates, especially in rural areas.

RLMC will continue its 2013 strategies to expand and promote its colonoscopy screening services by recruiting medical providers to the area who perform colonoscopies.

Strategies to promote cholesterol, blood pressure, and prostate cancer screening will be collaboratively developed between RLMC and KCHD in 2014.

3. Coordination and Access to Mental Health Care Action Plan:

After the Rainy Lake Medical Center Clinic Campus returns to the ownership of Essentia Health in early 2014, the provision of mental health services will no longer be within the

scope of services provided by Rainy Lake Medical Center and therefore this organization will be unable to promote improved access to mental health providers. It is RLMC's understanding that additional mental health providers will be employed by Essentia Health to address the issue of access. Patients suffering from mental health issues are often seen in RLMC's emergency department, so this organization does have a role in the overall continuum of care for mental health patients and would be willing participants in any collaborative effort initiated by direct mental health care providers to discuss or improve the coordination of mental health services within the Koochiching County service area.

Rainy Lake Medical Center will consider input from written comments received regarding the adoption of this Implementation Plan. Comments on these implementation strategies can be emailed to the Chief Compliance Officer of Rainy Lake Medical Center at ltrautlein@rainylakemedical.com.