2013-2015

This is the facility specific implementation strategy for Transylvania Regional Hospital and addresses the community health needs identified through a collaborative community health needs assessment (CHNA) process conducted with local and regional partners in Western North Carolina. This document outlines plans for Transylvania Regional Hospital to support specific community benefit efforts as part of a larger community-wide plan.

**OUR COMMUNITY AND KEY PARTNERS**

**Transylvania Regional Hospital**

Transylvania Regional Hospital (TRH), located at 260 Hospital Drive in Brevard, N.C., was established in 1933. TRH is a not-for-profit, critical access hospital which provides inpatient, outpatient, diagnostic, surgical and rehabilitation services for Transylvania County and surrounding communities. Specific services provided by TRH included 24-hour emergency care, obstetric services, medical, surgical, intensive care and monitoring, transitional care, cancer and infusion care, adult mental health, adult day, adult health, cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation, physical therapy, diabetes education, and Home Health & Hospice. Transylvania Regional Hospital employees approximately 600 people, including 25 physicians, and has approximately 150 volunteers. Our community, defined for the purposes of community health needs assessment and this related implementation strategy, is comprised of Transylvania County, North Carolina.
Community Health Needs Assessment

Process and Product
The community health needs assessment (CHNA) was conducted in partnership with the Transylvania County Department of Public Health. This written report describes:

- The community served by the hospital
- Community demographics
- Existing health resources in the community available to respond to needs
- The data collection process for the assessment
- Health needs and issues of uninsured, low-income, and minority groups
- The process for identifying and prioritizing community needs and the services to address those needs
- The process for consulting with persons representing the community’s interests

Sharing of Results
Detailed findings for our assessment are available on the Transylvania Regional Hospital website (www.trhospital.org) and the Transylvania County Department of Public Health website (http://health.transylvaniacounty.org). The CHNA was presented to the Transylvania Regional Hospital Board of Trustees on September 26, 2013 for approval and discussion. Documentation of this board approval is available in the Transylvania Regional Hospital Board of Trustees meeting minutes from September 26, 2013.

Regional Partnership
Transylvania Regional Hospital’s collaborative community health improvement effort is also supported by a comprehensive partnership with other regional hospitals and local health departments. This initiative, known as WNC Healthy Impact, represents 16 counties across the Western North Carolina region working collaboratively to improve community health. Information about this innovative regional collaboration, county-wide community health assessments, and overall regional findings, are made widely available to the public at www.WNCHealthyImpact.com.
PRIORITY HEALTH NEEDS & HOW THEY WERE ESTABLISHED

Prioritization Process
Community Health Assessment (CHA) is the foundation for improving and promoting the health of our communities. Transylvania Regional Hospital partnered closely with the Transylvania County Department of Public Health to conduct a comprehensive CHA. In addition, TRH and the Transylvania Department of Public Health were key partners in the WNC Healthy Impact efforts.

The role of the CHA is to identify factors that affect the health of the residents of Transylvania County and determine the availability of resources within the county to adequately address those factors. The process involves the collection and analysis of a large range of secondary data as well as primary data. The evaluation and prioritization of identified health needs involved teams of representatives from a broad range of health and human service agencies, local non-profit organizations as well as community partners and residents of Transylvania County.

Local Health Departments in North Carolina are required to conduct a comprehensive community health assessment at least every four years. As a part of the Affordable Care Act, non-profit hospitals are also required to conduct a community health needs assessment at least every three years. In order to achieve the requirements for health department and hospital needs, Transylvania County, along with other hospitals and health departments in our 16 county Western North Carolina region, a CHA was completed in 2012.

As part of the collaborative health assessment process in our community, Transylvania Regional Hospital representatives were involved in the county prioritization process and will be involved in subsequent Community Health Improvement Plans. In North Carolina, community-level prioritization is a required part of the community health (needs) assessment process.

Priority Health Needs for Our Community

Transylvania County
In the Transylvania County local priority setting process described above, the following health issues were prioritized for collective community-wide action:

1. Physical Activity/Nutrition (Obesity)
2. Substance Abuse (Focus on prescription drug abuse)
3. Dental Health
HOW THIS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY WAS DEVELOPED

Engagement in a Community-Wide Plan
As a next step following the development of a community health needs assessment (CHNA), which includes prioritization of health needs, Transylvania Regional Hospital collaborated with the Transylvania Department of Public Health and other key community stakeholders to develop a written description of the activities that hospital facilities, public health agencies, and other local organizations plan to undertake collectively to address specific health needs in our community. This collaborative action planning process resulted in the development of a community health improvement plan (CHIP) for our hospital facility’s defined community, which is Transylvania County.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Priority Health Issue #1: Physical Activity, Nutrition, Healthy Weight and Chronic Condition Management

Description of Community Need
Overweight and obesity pose significant health concerns for both children and adults. Excess weight increases an individual’s risk of developing type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers and stroke. Because weight is influenced by energy (calories) consumed and expended, interventions to improve weight can support changes in diet or physical activity. Body Mass Index (BMI), which describes relative weight for height, is significantly correlated with total body fat content. (NC Institute of Medicine – Healthy NC 2020: Physical Activity and Nutrition [http://www.publichealth.nc.gov/hnc2020/])

Based on self-reported heights and weights, Transylvania County self-reported rates mirror regional, state and national estimates that roughly 1 in 3 children and 2 in 3 adults are overweight or obese. While Transylvania County is less obese than the region, state and country; the majority (65%) of our adult population has a BMI of greater than 25. Only 13.3% of Transylvania County residents are eating the recommended minimum fruit and vegetable servings per day.

Other relevant findings from the CHNA include:
- Heart disease mortality is the top cause of death in Transylvania County
- 42.8% of Transylvania County residents have high blood pressure vs 39.4% average for Western NC region and 31.5% average for North Carolina
- 11.8% of Transylvania County residents have diabetes vs 12.6% average for Western NC region and 9.8% average for North Carolina
- 10.9% of Transylvania County residents are in a pre-diabetes/borderline diabetes risk category vs 7.6% average for Western NC region.
Vision of Community-Wide Impact
Transylvania County residents want to see our county become a healthier place to live by improving access to fresh produce and increasing physical activity opportunities. Of those residents that completed the WNC Healthy Impact survey, the majority think it is important for our communities to make the following changes:

• Make it easier for residents to access farmer’s markets and tailgate markets (75.7%)
• Improve the public’s access to physical activity spaces (65%)
• Improve access to trails, parks, and greenways (64.9%)
• Need more indoor physical activity spaces (70.7%)

As a community, we must commit to creating an environment that helps residents make healthy choices and take responsibility for decisions that support good health in our homes, neighborhoods, schools and workplaces.

The goal of the implementation of this plan is to address obesity in the hospital’s service area (Transylvania County) through increased physical activity and improved nutrition. Desirable outcomes include: 1) Lower rates of chronic disease that are associated with overweight/obesity. 2) Lower rates of preventable deaths associated with overweight/obesity. 3) Create and support a culture of wellness and good health within the community through improved access to healthy foods and expanded opportunities for physical activity.

Specific, measurable goals include by December 2015:

• Increase percentage of adults engaging in recommended physical activity from 61% to 65%
• Increase percentage of adults consuming recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables from 13.3% to 19.3%
• Decrease the percentage of adults with diabetes from 11.8% to 9.8%.

Partner Agencies and Roles
Partnering agencies on this strategy include: Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Boys and Girls Club, City of Brevard, N.C. Cooperative Extension, N.C. Department of Transportation, Transylvania County, Transylvania County Public Health, Transylvania County Schools, Transylvania Regional Hospital, Mission Health, WNC Healthy Kids/Western N.C. Hospital Network, Land of Sky Regional Council, Community Transformation Project/Region 1, Physician practices, Worksite wellness sites, Churches, Recreation Facilities, Government Officials, City and County Planning Offices, MANNA Food Bank, and Mountain Area Health Education Center.

Related Hospital Strategy
1. The hospital’s community education and outreach efforts in this area include the deployment of the free Lighten Up 4 Life (LU4L) community weight-loss challenge. This program is available to all members of the community at no cost to any willing participant.
The LU4L web-based format makes it readily accessible to many members of the community. Research indicates advantages for sustained weight loss with team-based weight loss programs such as LU4L.

2. The hospital’s Diabetes Self-Management Education Program provides counseling, education and support to newly diagnosed patients with diabetes/pre-diabetes and patients with uncontrolled diabetes following initial interventions. Outcomes include improvement with glycemic control in patients with all types of diabetes mellitus. This decreases potential for multiple associated chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease. Diabetes self-management also improves compliance with appropriate nutrition choices and needed levels of physical activity as part of weight management strategies.

3. The hospital provides annual financial sponsorship support to the Transylvania Farmer’s Market in downtown Brevard to increase access for the community to local produce and healthy foods. The hospital also conducts multiple free public education programs each year on healthy foods and healthy cooking led by TRH’s Registered Dietician.

4. The hospital, in partnership with the YMCA of Western North Carolina, is exploring the feasibility of constructing a medical wellness facility on the TRH campus in Brevard to provide increased opportunities for year-round physical activity and wellness classes for residents of Transylvania County.

5. To promote increased physical activity for children, teenagers and young adults in our community, TRH has recently teamed with Mission Sports Medicine to provide resources and support the efforts of local schools and athletic programs to promote increased physical activity for students. This includes providing certified athletic trainers at Brevard College as well as at both Transylvania County high schools and both middle schools.
**Priority Health Issue #2: Substance Abuse (Prescription Drug Abuse)**

**Description of Community Need**
Drug overdose death rates in the United States have more than tripled since 1990 and have never been higher. In 2008, more than 36,000 people died from drug overdoses and most of these deaths were caused by prescription drugs.

Although many types of prescription drugs are abused, there is currently a growing deadly epidemic of prescription painkiller abuse. Nearly three out of four prescriptions drug overdoses are caused by prescription painkillers – also called opioid pain relievers. The unprecedented rise in overdose deaths in the United States parallels a 300% increase since 1999 in the sale of these strong painkillers. These drugs were involved in 14,800 overdose deaths in 2008, more than cocaine and heroin combined.

Those trends are consistent with the local experience in Transylvania County. Transylvania Regional Hospital has been tracking the number of overdose cases in the Emergency Department over the last few years. In 2008, there were 122 overdoses, in 2009 – 117, in 2010 – 120 and in 2011 – 131. The leading substances contributing to the overdoses were benzodiazepines, followed by opiates and sedatives/tranquilizers.

**Unintentional poisonings in Transylvania County (primarily drug overdoses) is the 3rd leading cause of death here as compared to a No. 5 ranking for Western North Carolina and North Carolina.**

Relevant findings from the CHNA and national data include:
- Substance abuse was one of three issues referenced by Transylvania County residents as having a significant negative impact on the quality of life in this community
- 2009 mortality rate per 100,000 residents for unintentional poisonings was 29.8, one of the highest in the Western N.C. region
- 2009 Emergency Department visit rate per 100,000 residents related to unintentional poisonings was 645.6, one of the higher rates in the Western N.C. region
- Nationally, the number of Emergency Department visits for prescription drug abuse now equal the number of Emergency Department visits for use of illegal drugs.

**Vision of Community-wide Impact**
Transylvania County residents want to see positive change and have engaged with proactive strategies promulgated through the North Carolina Coalition Initiative (NCCI) which support local efforts through the C.A.R.E. (Community Awareness and Recovery Effort) coalition. Those efforts are also linking with strategies and best practices identified through the Project Lazarus initiative which originated in Wilkes County to address prescription drug abuse.

Local efforts include improving community awareness about the problem; medical community leadership to revise and develop more advanced policies for prescribing associated with pain;
Specific, measurable goals include by December 2015:

- Decrease rate of unintentional poisoning deaths in Transylvania County from 26.9 to 23 (per 100,000, based on 2005-2007 data)
- Decrease the number of unintentional poisonings cases presenting at the Transylvania Regional Hospital Emergency Department (not resulting in death) from current annual baseline of 131 to 99.

**Partner Agencies and Roles**
Improving local outcomes associated with prescription drug abuse will be challenging due to the complexity of the contributing factors and the association with legitimate medical treatment of pain. Many sectors will have to work together to create a unified system of education, awareness and interventions in order to reduce the incidence of unintentional poisonings and deaths due to prescription drug abuse.

Key partners on this strategy include: Community Awareness and Recovery Effort (C.A.R.E.) Coalition, Land of Waterfalls Partnership for Health, Transylvania Regional Hospital, Transylvania County Department of Public Health, North Carolina Coalition Initiative, Medical Community, Pain Management Organizations, Transylvania County Schools, Transylvania County Sheriff’s Office, City of Brevard Police Department, Local Mental Health Services Providers, Substance Abuse Treatment Providers, Transylvania County Department of Social Services, Local Churches, Project Lazarus, Western Highlands Network/Smoky Mountain Center, NAMI – Transylvania County Chapter, Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, and Blue Ridge Community Health Services.

**Related Hospital Strategy**

1. Transylvania Regional Hospital and the medical community will create and revise advanced policies for prescribing practices associated with pain management; identification of high risk patients and consistent utilization of the Controlled Substances Reporting System (CSRS). This will lead to improved consistency with prescribing practices among local physicians and increased patient accountability for the use of pain management medications.

2. Transylvania Regional Hospital, in collaboration with other Mission Health hospitals, will develop specific capacity for comprehensive pain management medical care. This will include a dedicated part-time, pain management clinic on the TRH campus to enhance the quality of care with non-narcotic treatment options for local patients with intensive pain management needs.
3. Transylvania Regional Hospital and its employed physicians will support the implementation of the C.A.R.E. Coalition Strategic Plan (NCCI) in Transylvania County. This plan includes community education and outreach regarding protective and risk factors associated with prescription drug abuse in Transylvania County, promotion of medicine drop campaigns and enhanced security for medications in homes (lockboxes). The integration of this educational effort with previously described direct interventions should raise awareness of the risks of prescription drug abuse and reduce incidence of unintentional poisonings in Transylvania County.

**Priority Health Issue #3: Dental Health**

**Description of Community Need**
Dental health is an important determinant for overall community health in Transylvania County. According to the U.S. Surgeon General’s Report, Oral Health in America, population groups that are disproportionately impacted by dental decay include:

- The poor, particularly young children and the elderly
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Medically and developmentally compromised individuals.

As reported in the Transylvania County 2012 Community Health Needs Assessment, approximately 1/3 of the county’s population has income levels below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level ($46,100 of income for a family of four). **Only 51% of the county’s population of Medicaid-enrolled children ages 1-5 utilizes any dental care services.**

Dental decay is the most prevalent chronic disease for children and yet it is totally preventable. Fluoridation of drinking water supplies is a core public health strategy for improving community dental health. The City of Brevard (largest municipal jurisdiction in Transylvania County) removed fluoride from its water system in 2007.

**Key findings from the CHNA include:**
- Dental pain is the leading complaint for Emergency Department visits at Transylvania Regional Hospital
- From 2008 to 2010, Transylvania County kindergarteners caries free rate dropped from 60% to 56% (during this same time period the N.C. caries free rate improved from 61% to 64%)
- From 2008 to 2010, Transylvania County kindergarteners untreated decay rate increased from 14% to 17% (during this same time period the N.C. untreated decay rate decreased from 18% to 15%)
- From 2008 to 2010, Transylvania County 5th graders caries free rate dropped from 76% to 72% (during this same time period the N.C. caries free rate improved from 74% to 75%)
• Low utilization rate of dental care services by Medicaid populations in Transylvania County, only 45.9% of those less than 21 years of age.

**Vision of Community-wide Impact**
Advance overall community health with improvement in dental health outcomes. This includes comprehensive dental health education, dental screenings and improved access to dental care for adults and children with a particular emphasis on at-risk populations.

Specific, measurable goals include by December 2015:

• Increase percentage of children aged 1-5 years enrolled in Medicaid who received any dental service during the previous 12 months from 51% to 59%
• Decrease the average number of decayed, missing or filled teeth among kindergarteners from 1.75 to 1.1.

**Partner Agencies and Roles**
Key partners to improving dental health in Transylvania County include: Local Dentists, Blue Ridge Community Health Services, Mission Health’s Tooth Bus, N.C. Division of Public Health – Oral Health Section, Smart Start of Transylvania County, Transylvania Regional Hospital, Transylvania County Department of Public Health, Medical Community, United Way of Transylvania County, Transylvania County Schools, and Local Child Care Centers.

**Related Hospital Strategy**

1. Transylvania Regional Hospital and other supporting agencies will coordinate and provide appropriate dental care referrals based on need, payer source and the ability of Blue Ridge Community Health Services to accept new patients. Patients may also self-refer to Blue Ridge Community Health Services’ Brevard Health Center located on the TRH campus.

Transylvania Regional Hospital, along with the Transylvania County Department of Public Health, were strong proponents of Blue Ridge Community Health Services opening the Brevard Health Center in fall 2012 to meet the health needs of the poor and uninsured in Transylvania County. Blue Ridge Community Health Services is a federally qualified health center that provides primary care, behavioral health services and dental care to patients in Transylvania County regardless of their ability to pay. Dental care is provided four days per week at the Brevard Health Center by fully licensed dentists and dental hygienists.

Healthcare providers at the TRH Emergency Department and TRH-owned primary care medical offices will coordinate and make appropriate referrals for dental care based on need to the Brevard Health Center to improve patient health and improve overall community health.
NEXT STEPS

As part of the community health improvement process, Transylvania Regional Hospital will continue to work with community partners in the implementation of our community health improvement plan (CHIP) based on the hospital strategies outlined in this document. The CHIP will be reviewed annually in a collaborative manner with our community partners. We will specifically seek input and approval by the TRH Board of Trustees and assess progress on key community indicators. Updates will be made publicly available in the countywide State of the County Health Reports (SOTCH Report). The next community health needs assessment (CHNA) will be conducted in 2015.

APPROVAL

Review and approval of the Transylvania Regional Hospital Implementation Plan will be conducted by the appropriate Board of Trustees committee(s) and forwarded for formal approval by the full Board of Trustees. This approval will occur as updates are provided and modifications to the plan occur, no less than once per year during the Board’s annual planning cycle. Typically this planning process is concluded just prior to the end of the TRH fiscal year on September 30.

The report was prepared for the August 28, 2014 Transylvania Regional Hospital Board of Trustees meeting and is approved as signed below by the Board Chairperson and Hospital President.

John Holbrook, Chairman
Transylvania Regional Hospital
Board of Trustees

Catherine Landis, President
Transylvania Regional Hospital

8/28/2014
Date