

Geisinger

Geisinger Medical Center
Geisinger Shamokin Area Community Hospital
Community Health Needs Assessment
Update: 2017

Community Health Needs Assessment

In each of the following sections, you will read about regional or system-wide programs offered by Geisinger as a focused effort to fulfill community and patient needs that were identified through the latest Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) surveys.

Geisinger Health System collaborated with outside organizations across a 13-county region to contract Tripp Umbach, a private healthcare consulting firm and nationally recognized leader in health needs assessments. Between October 2014 and March 2015 information was gathered from key community stakeholders using a variety of methodologies including: interviews, hand distributed surveys, and analysis of secondary data.

Some of the programs described in the following synopses are completely operated and/or funded by Geisinger and some are offered in cooperation with local health and human service agencies. Often, the needs of the communities we serve are similar throughout the areas of Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey where Geisinger providers care for patients. In these cases, we develop system-wide programs to benefit patients throughout our system. For more specific needs found in our local communities, we offer programs to serve patients close to home.

The program synopses are sorted by Geisinger hospital. The services and programs we provide are a response to needs identified in the most recent or, in some cases, past CHNA surveys. The synopses describe how the programs or services we provide fall into one of three broad categories:

Improving access to healthcare

Perhaps the most significant need identified in the CHNA survey was for better, faster, more convenient and less costly access to healthcare services of all kinds. Geisinger is taking innovative steps to address barriers to healthcare and help provide physical, mental, dental, rehabilitative and preventive services to patients, regardless of their health insurance status. The topics addressed include: how to find the right doctor, provider or facility; special services provided to patients with specific needs (such as the elderly or underinsured or uninsured); trauma prevention and treatment; and many others.

Addressing behavioral health and substance abuse

Geisinger and its partners have a wide range of programs aimed at helping patients find healthcare services when they are facing mental, psychiatric, developmental or behavioral health challenges or struggling with addiction. Alzheimer's disease and other aging brain issues as well as alcoholism and opioid abuse are addressed in a large and growing number of programs specifically aimed at expanding services.

Improving healthy behaviors

Prevention is key when addressing lifestyle choices and preventable health conditions. Geisinger has numerous educational programs to help patients get well and stay well. These efforts include classes offered to the community and outreach programs that bring healthcare professionals, education, nutrition and medication to the people. Our goal is to assist patients with their health before a serious problem arises that sends them to the hospital.

For more information about Geisinger Health System or to read the 2016 CHNA brochures, please go to <http://www.geisinger.org/chna>

Geisinger Medical Center (GMC)

GMC, an award-winning regional leader in patient care, serves more than two million residents in central and northeast Pennsylvania. We have recruited top physicians from across the country and around the world in virtually every medical field to provide patients with the most innovative healthcare available. With 505 beds and some of the most advanced technology in the country, GMC is home to a Level I trauma center, the region's only pediatric trauma center, the renowned Janet Weis Children's Hospital, the state-of-the-art Hospital for Advanced Medicine and clinical research facilities.

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Improving access to healthcare

A reason to smile: Convenient, affordable dental care

One of the most neglected parts of healthcare for people who are struggling financially is dental care. Finding a dentist who takes state-funded health insurance — or in some cases, just getting transportation to remote dental offices — is a challenge for many in central Pennsylvania. Geisinger Medical Center (GMC) is working with local healthcare groups, independent dentists and community organizations to help individuals and families get the dental care they need.

Geisinger Dental Medicine has taken several important steps to ensure that families receive high-quality, low-cost oral healthcare close to home, including:

- Accepting Pennsylvania Medical Assistance insurance programs that many providers do not
- Working with transportation officials to expand routes to oral healthcare centers
- Exploring the creation of mobile dental centers that visit schools, nursing homes and community centers
- Recruiting young dental professionals to live and work in our area

GMC has expanded its pediatric dental health program to provide excellent care for kids closer to home. At the Geisinger Milton dental medicine clinic on Arch Street in Milton, Natalie Stinton, DMD, sees young patients in a relaxing, upbeat setting that offers a waiting room filled with puzzles and books and features the latest dental technology, such as a panoramic X-ray machine. Geisinger has also partnered with the Susquehanna River Valley Dental Health Clinic in Sunbury, whose dentists are helping provide quicker care for qualified pediatric dentistry patients waiting for dental appointments and procedures.

Geisinger will continue to assess community needs and take positive action to make a difference in dental care for all the families of our region.

Community clinics are a lifeline for the uninsured and underinsured

From treating routine illnesses and injuries to diagnosing more serious health conditions, community clinics are making a real difference in the lives of families who struggle with healthcare costs. Geisinger helps uninsured and underinsured families get access to the care they need by donating vital monitoring and diagnostic services to these clinics. In addition, Geisinger providers volunteer countless hours of their time and talent to caring for clinic patients.

Geisinger Medical Center (GMC) helps support two area clinics. One, called A Community Clinic Inc., is located at 335 Market St. in Sunbury, and provides healthcare for uninsured and underinsured residents of Montour, Northumberland, Snyder and Union counties. The other, Columbia County Volunteers in Medicine, at 310 E. Third St. in Mifflinville, provides treatment for working uninsured and underinsured residents of Columbia and southern Luzerne counties. Both clinics offer one consult visit each year, plus laboratory and radiology services.

Community clinics respond directly and immediately to the need for better access to healthcare by providing low- to no-cost care with no federal funding. Geisinger's partnerships with community clinics help to improve the delivery of healthcare services and create a culture of caring that never depends on a person's income.

Trauma services deliver lifesaving care when disaster strikes

Rural communities can be especially vulnerable to traumas such as motor vehicle crashes, natural disasters and agri-

cultural, ATV or firearm incidents because many residents live in remote areas not easily reached by emergency medical services. The Level 1 Trauma Program at Geisinger Medical Center (GMC) — the only Level 1 program in our region — is here to provide lifesaving care when disaster strikes.

The GMC trauma program is committed to delivering advanced trauma services to all residents of central Pennsylvania and beyond. The trauma team is staffed around the clock, 365 days a year, and is trained to handle multiple, complex trauma cases simultaneously using the latest techniques in traumatic and post-traumatic care. GMC specialists use every tool available to save lives, including rapid medical ground transportation; Geisinger Life Flight®, a fleet of seven aircraft operating from five strategically placed locations; and telemedicine for remote diagnosis and care.

Children are especially vulnerable in traumatic situations. Geisinger is proud to offer the only accredited pediatric trauma center in north-central Pennsylvania — and one of only six statewide — at Geisinger Janet Weis Children's Hospital.

Geisinger believes that education can help avert risky behaviors and, as a result, prevent many traumas. We work closely with communities to stop catastrophic injuries before they happen, with programs that promote safe behavior and decision-making. For our children, teens and young adults, we offer programs on helmet use, gun safety, alcohol awareness, ATV safety and the dangers of distracted driving. We're also educating older adults in ways to avoid falls and how to drive more responsibly.

The GMC trauma program is accredited by the Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation.

Primary Health Network meets community needs

Residents in the Shamokin area now have a new option for affordable primary care at Geisinger. Thanks to the partnership between Geisinger Shamokin Area Community Hospital (GSACH)* and Primary Health Network (PHN), Primary Health Network's Shamokin Community Health Center is now open. The center is located on the GSACH campus inside the Ressler Center building. PHN was founded in 1984, and has grown to include over 45 locations throughout 16 counties.

In Shamokin, as in many areas of the state and country, high unemployment rates and an aging population have led to a large percentage of residents who are uninsured or underinsured. Chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease, have a high prevalence and are still on the rise in the Shamokin region. Many residents struggle to find ongoing preventive care in the area's private medical practices, especially when they don't have adequate medical coverage. To make matters even more challenging, Shamokin has one of the highest rates of uninsured residents statewide — approximately 20 percent.

As a Federally Qualified Health Center, PHN's Shamokin location accepts all insurance plans and offers a sliding fee scale for those who qualify. The center offers family and internal medicine, led by Geisinger physician Amanda Leicht, MD, and PHN certified nurse practitioner Nicole Morris.

Addressing needs related to behavioral health and substance abuse

Helping abused children on their path to recovery

The quality and immediacy of care provided to child abuse victims is crucial to their overall health. Geisinger believes that investing in children's health, especially after abuse or neglect, will improve the long-term health of the communities it serves. That is why Geisinger Medical Center (GMC) established the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) of the Central Susquehanna Valley.

CAC of the Central Susquehanna Valley provides coordinated services to abused children and their families in a safe and secure environment. It serves families from more than six counties across central Pennsylvania, and is the only center of its kind within a 50-mile radius.

CAC offers forensic interviews, specialized medical exams, trauma screenings, crisis intervention counseling, advocacy services, case tracking and referrals — all in a welcoming, child-friendly environment created to help healing begin for children and their family members. CAC's multidisciplinary approach to care helps reduce re-victimization and increases the likelihood of offenders being prosecuted. All services are free of charge to victims and their families.

In late 2015, CAC relocated to a new facility in Sunbury, Pa. Designed for privacy, the completely renovated facility includes a private therapy room, two interview rooms, a private waiting area and a large conference and training room. CAC also invested in new conference equipment for large group training events with staff and partner agencies including local police, Child Protective Services and medical professionals.

Breaking down barriers to psychiatric care

A shortage of psychiatrists in our region and a large percentage of patients who are unlikely to follow up with recommended behavioral healthcare has led Geisinger to explore creative new ways of bringing psychiatric services to residents in need.

Behavioral health clinicians from Geisinger Medical Center (GMC) and Geisinger Shamokin Area Community Hospital (GSACH)* are currently sharing their services with two county mental health clinics; the Columbia Montour Snyder Union Clinic in Montour county and the Northumberland County Mental Health Clinic. Having additional well-trained, experienced behavioral health professionals on staff is helping the clinics manage the high number of psychiatric patients in the region, many of whom also struggle with addiction issues.

Using an integrative approach that's being embraced by hospitals across the country, GMC and GSACH are offering services at specialty practices throughout the region to ensure convenient and seamless evaluations when needed. For example, psychologists are on site at GMC's Bariatric Surgery Center to assess the mental stability and preparedness of patients before weight-loss surgery.

Behavioral health staff members are playing similarly important roles in specialties as diverse as women's health, cardiology, trauma, pain management, endocrinology, rehabilitation and sleep disorders, and in the region's aging brain and cleft palate clinics. When a specialist identifies a patient who could benefit from evaluation, the patient can be immediately introduced to a psychologist or social worker on site, greatly increasing the likelihood of the patient receiving behavioral health care quickly and efficiently.

In addition, Geisinger has been awarded a Centers of Excellence grant to treat opioid addiction in the central Pennsylvania area covered by GMC, GSACH and Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital. The program will include physician-directed, medication-assisted treatment, as well as care management that helps patients with housing, insurance enrollment, financial issues, finding primary care providers and other everyday challenges.

Improving healthy behaviors

Fresh Food Pharmacy: A prescription for healthy eating

The Geisinger Fresh Food Pharmacy is a pilot program being offered to selected diabetic patients at Geisinger Shamokin

Area Community Hospital (GSACH).* Supported by GSACH's wellness initiative, the program is exploring a somewhat revolutionary concept: What if doctors could prescribe a specific, healthy diet as a standard component of diabetes treatment?

"Food as medicine" is a growing trend among physicians, who have long understood the connection between poor diet and obesity-related illnesses like diabetes, but have had a hard time getting patients to follow through with lifestyle changes. A low-sugar, low-fat diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats has been proven to lower blood sugar, reduce obesity and improve heart health. But these fresh foods can be costly for many Shamokin residents, 20 percent of whom live below the poverty line.

The Fresh Food Pharmacy is currently working with six diabetic patients with poor blood sugar control. By providing prescriptions for five dinners' worth of healthy groceries, plus staples for breakfast and lunch, the Fresh Food Pharmacy gives patients the power to take home foods that will boost their health while building healthy eating habits.

A meal plan of simple, healthful recipes, designed by Geisinger dietitians, comes with the grocery prescription. Participants must have their blood sugar checked regularly and attend classes that cover topics including how to shop for healthy foods, the benefits of exercise and basic to advanced food preparation. A health manager follows up with patients regularly to address their questions and concerns.

When the Fresh Food Pharmacy site is completed, GSACH, in cooperation with the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, will be ready to accept approximately 188 additional patients for food distribution. Enrollment of these patients is already in process.