Community benefit introduction

Great Plains Regional Medical Center has a long tradition of improving the health and well-being of the communities we serve. Whether it’s through health education, partnerships with local organizations, financial contributions or through the many hours that Great Plains employees and physicians give annually through volunteering, we are committed to our nonprofit responsibility to positively impact the health and wellness of the North Platte region.

Each year, Great Plains dedicates thousands of dollars to assist nonprofit, 501c3 organizations working on projects designed to improve the health of the communities we serve. In 2012, Great Plains invested nearly $20 million in overall community benefit, showing that Great Plains is dedicated to a healthier community both inside and outside our hospital and clinic walls.

Overview

A comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was conducted by Great Plains Regional Medical Center (Great Plains) from April 2013 to November 2013. Great Plains' study area was defined as Lincoln County, which is located in the West Central District Health Department (WCDHD) Region of Nebraska. The analysis included a careful review of the most current health data available and input from numerous community representatives with special knowledge of public health. Findings indicated that there were five significant needs in the communities served by Great Plains.

The community health needs

Great Plains' leadership prioritized and decided to address all of the significant needs identified in the CHNA. The final list of prioritized needs, in descending order, is listed below:

1. Need for primary care services and providers, including nursing staff
2. Prevention, education and services to address high mortality rates, chronic conditions and unhealthy lifestyles
3. Need for additional local specialty care
4. Teen pregnancy: need for increased education of the importance of prenatal care and increased awareness of available health care resources in the community
5. Need for affordable primary care services for low-income and uninsured populations

The Great Plains leadership team developed the following implementation plan to identify specific activities and services which directly address these priorities. The objectives were identified by studying the prioritized health needs, within the context of the health system’s overall strategic plan, and the availability of finite resources. The plan includes a rationale for each priority, followed by objectives, specific implementation activities, and the anticipated impact and evaluation.

PRIORITY ONE: Need for primary care services and providers, including nursing staff

Rationale: Findings indicate there is a need for access to primary care services and providers, including nursing staff, in Lincoln County. Interviewees acknowledged the need for increased access to and the improvement of primary care services in the area. Interviewees also mentioned aging and retiring physicians, a closing internal medicine practice and a lack of
pediatric providers as possible reasons for patients over-utilizing emergency departments or choosing to seek care outside of the community.

**Objective:** Increase access to primary care services and providers in the community.

**Implementation activities**

- In 2012, Great Plains recruited two pediatricians (Dr. Soogandaren Naidoo and Dr. Grishma Parikh) to its employed pediatric clinic, Great Plains Pediatrics.
- Great Plains will continue to engage with the North Platte Community College to educate and develop future nurses in the region. In the past three years, Great Plains has contributed $1.5 million to the North Platte Community College's Health and Science building.
- In 2013, the Great Plains CEO and CNO oriented sixty new nursing students messaging how nurses’ impact lives, not just through science but through human connection. The Great Plains senior leadership team will continue to be an active part of new nurse orientation each year.
- In 2013, Great Plains helped recruit family medicine provider Dr. Sujay Kumar to an independent family medicine clinic in North Platte.
- Great Plains is currently developing a regional primary care strategy to address areas of deficiencies and solutions for meeting access needs.
- In 2013, Great Plains began pediatric home care services to alleviate transportation and scheduling issues for patients and their families. This service is available to anyone living within the Lincoln County area and will continue in the coming years.
- Great Plains will continue to support the efforts of the Nebraska Action Coalition, whose mission it is to improve healthcare access, quality and cost-effectiveness through nurse-led collaborative partnership. In 2012, Great Plains contributed $2,500 to the program.
- Great Plains will continue to actively recruit primary care, sub-specialists and mid-level providers. Current focus is on the recruitment of the following primary care physicians: internal medicine and family medicine.
- In 2013, Great Plains developed a nurse residency program to ensure continued growth, development and mentoring of newly hired nurses. This program will continue next year and in years to follow.
- To assist with housing for families and friends of patients who are subject to hospital stays, Great Plains has agreements with local hotels for discounted rates. Discounted hotel rates help family members and friends visit and support patients during their hospital care.

**Impact and evaluation**

- Great Plains will track the number of nurses and health care professionals graduating from North Platte Community College and choosing to stay in the North Platte area.
- Great Plains will track the increase in patient volume by the newly recruited pediatricians, Dr. Soogandaren Naidoo and Dr. Grishma Parikh.
- Great Plains will track the number of patients served by the pediatric home care service.
- Great Plains will track the number of partnership initiatives with the Nebraska Action Coalition.
PRIORIT TWO: Prevention, education and services to address high mortality rates, chronic conditions and unhealthy lifestyles

Rationale: Findings indicate that Lincoln County has higher mortality rates than the state of Nebraska in cancer, heart disease and diabetes. In addition, Lincoln County has experienced a dramatic increase in cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 68.2% of respondents in the WCDHD region are overweight or obese and 7.9% have diabetes. According to the BRFSS, almost 17.7% of respondents in the WCDHD region claim to be current smokers and nearly 17.5% of respondents in the WCDHD region reportedly engage in binge drinking.

Objective: Provide, sponsor, support or promote educational opportunities, special events and programs that aim to address high mortality rates, chronic conditions and unhealthy lifestyles in the community. Great Plains will focus on community, fitness, prevention and education.

Implementation activities

- Great Plains will continue to offer the annual Healthy Heart Check event as a community service at no cost to the public. Last year, the event served 225 attendees. A total of 103 EKGs were performed. Of the 225 participants, 41 were identified with high blood pressure and 18 had an abnormal EKG. The event medical team provides:
  - Free blood pressure checks
  - Free EKGs
  - Information about:
    - Risk factors of heart disease
    - Effective CPR methods
    - Exercise advice
    - Heart-healthy recipes
    - Smoking cessation techniques
    - Hypertension information

- Great Plains will continue to offer low-cost heart screenings to employees and the community every Friday morning. As part of the prevention and early identification program, participants pay just $50 for a heart screening that would normally cost around $1,720. The screenings test a person’s blood pressure, body mass index, cholesterol level, blood glucose level and calcium score to indicate if he or she is at risk for heart disease.

- Great Plains will continue to support the Platte River Fitness Series as a community-based fitness initiative focused on encouraging people to live an active lifestyle. The program offers a variety of running events throughout the year, offered for all ages and all walking and running levels. In 2013, the Platte River Fitness Series, with Great Plains as the lead sponsor, offered 21 events with total participants of about 5,000. As one of the original founders of the fitness series and long-time supporter, Great Plains will continue its involvement in ensuring the success of the Platte River Fitness Series in its mission to engage and educate the local community on the importance of physical activity. In 2014, Great Plains will double its financial commitment to the Platte River Fitness Series to help develop a youth running/race program and a quarterly fitness education series offered to the community free of charge.

- In 2013, Great Plains launched a running/walking club (the Get Moving Club) in an effort to inspire personal wellness among employees. In 2014, the club will be launched to the
public and available to all ages free of charge. The club meets every Sunday and offers participation incentives and prizes throughout the year.

- In 2013, Great Plains partnered with the North Platte Recreation Center to offer its first Couch to 5K training. The 12-week education and personal training program was open to all Great Plains employees at no cost. One hundred employees and employee spouses enrolled in the program. Fifty-two finished the North Platte 5K Race for a Cure goal run on Labor Day weekend. In the spring of 2014, Great Plains will open the Couch to 5K training to the public, again at no charge, in an ongoing effort to inspire personal wellness.

- In an effort to reduce the prevalence of head and neck cancers in the area and to promote early detection, Great Plains hosted a head and neck cancer screening in December 2013 in partnership with Maple Park Dental Associates of North Platte that will be held again, in 2014.

- Great Plains has secured the title sponsorship for the 2014 Color Dash North Platte community 5K as part of its ongoing effort to promote family fitness fun.

- Great Plains will continue to offer the IMPACT (Inspiration, Motivation, Performance, Accountability, Commitment, Transformation) Academy to the region. The program features education and resource tracks to three targeted audiences (physicians, nurses and other health care professionals, and the general community). The academy was developed to enhance the region’s health care skillset and educate the general public about specific health-related areas. In 2013, Great Plains offered hundreds of classes through the IMPACT Academy, including:
  - TNCC life support
  - Basic EKG
  - NRP life support
  - Cancer conference
  - PALS
  - ACLS life support
  - BLS life support
  - Paramedic courses
  - Oxygen delivery methods
  - Breast feeding
  - Bariatric surgery education
  - Prepared childbirth and many more.

  IMPACT Academy course schedules are currently being developed for 2014 and will be available for registration at gprmc.com.

- For years, Great Plains has sponsored the annual Kick “Butts” Day as a cancer prevention and tobacco education tool targeting North Platte Area School students.
- To further expand its tobacco education and prevention program in 2014, Great Plains will offer a no-cost smoking cessation program to employees and a low-cost smoking cessation program to the public later in the year.
- Great Plains will continue to offer community support groups for diabetes, bariatric weight loss, cardiopulmonary rehab and breast feeding.
- Great Plains provides significant donations to many community organizations that promote health and well-being in the community. Great Plains plans to continue donations to various local and regional nonprofit organizations in the future. Past recipients have included:
- North Platte Public Schools
- Lincoln Connection
- North Platte Chamber of Commerce
- Salvation Army
- NEBRASKAland DAYS
- Platte River Fitness Series
- American Red Cross
- Buffalo Bill Kiwanis Club
- Mid Plains Community College
- Nebraska Action Coalition
- Mid-Nebraska Community Foundation
- Community Connections
- North Platte Catholic Schools
- Rail Fest
- TeamMates Mentoring Program
- Cattlemen’s Ball of Nebraska
- Bridge of Hope
- Rape and Domestic Abuse Program
- Local schools

- Each year, Great Plains direct mails 17,000 reminder cards to women in the region stressing the importance of mammograms in the early detection of breast cancer.
- Great Plains will continue to have a presence at the Union Pacific Railroad employee health fair. As the region’s largest employer, the Union Pacific event provides Great Plains an opportunity to touch a significant number of lives with sleep apnea and heart health education.
- In 2014, Great Plains will direct mail nearly 20,000 reminder cards educating men and women 40+ about the importance of heart screenings and the risk factors associated with heart disease.
- In 2013, Great Plains hosted an employee fundraiser for the Rape and Domestic Abuse Program. The fundraiser was later rolled out to the community. $2,500 was raised.
- Each year, Great Plains hosts an employee blood drive for the American Red Cross.
- Great Plains offers a comprehensive wellness program to all employees. As participation incentives, employees are offered discounted rates to their health plan.
- Great Plains is a smoke-free facility emphasizing a smoke-free lifestyle for both employees and patients.

Impact and evaluation

- Great Plains will track and report participation in educational opportunities, special events and programs that aim to address high mortality rates, chronic conditions and unhealthy lifestyles in the community.

PRIORITY THREE: Need for additional local specialty care

Rationale: Findings indicate there is a lack of adequate local specialty care in Lincoln County which may be causing gaps in coverage. Interviewees mentioned needs for spine surgeons, pediatric specialists and dermatologists. With some patients forced to travel out of town for certain health services and specialists, transportation can be an issue.
Objective: Increase coverage of and access to specialty care in Lincoln County.

Implementation activities

- Great Plains recently recruited a new dermatologist, Dr. Daniel Mosel, to North Platte. Filling a much needed service in the area, Dr. Mosel opened his independent practice, Greater Nebraska Dermatology, in October 2013.
- In the last five years, Great Plains has added the following new services:
  - Endocrinology clinic
  - Infectious disease clinic
  - Hospitalist program
  - Bariatric program
  - Certified stroke program
  - Cardiovascular including interventional cardiology and vascular services
  - Pulmonary medicine clinic
  - Certified sleep medicine
  - PET imaging
  - Pediatric home care
  - Wound healing center
- Great Plains will continue to offer convenient and quality cancer treatment at the Callahan Cancer Center in North Platte and its seven outreach clinics across the region (McCook, Valentine, Lexington, Imperial, Ogallala, Broken Bow and Grant). Among the many services offered are:
  - Comprehensive cancer screenings
  - Robust chemotherapy programs
  - Surgeries for complex cancers
  - Rehabilitation
  - Radiation therapy
  - Hematology
- In February 2013, Great Plains entered into an agreement with Community Hospital located in McCook, Nebraska, to offer radiation oncology. The program is supported by Great Plains-employed general oncologists and a radiation oncologist.
- Great Plains is working to recruit physicians in the following areas: neurology, psychiatry, cardiology, orthopedic surgery, nephrology and orthopedic spine surgery.
- Many specialists hold clinic hours at Great Plains each month to serve specific patient populations. Specialists include:
  - Neurosurgery
  - Cardiovascular surgery
  - Interventional radiology
  - Plastic surgery

Impact and evaluation

- Great Plains will promote its additional services and track the number of patients for each service.
PRIORITY FOUR: Teen pregnancy: need for increased education of the importance of prenatal care and increased awareness of available health care resources in the community

Rationale: Findings suggest that there are disparities regarding maternal and fetal health conditions in Lincoln County. Lincoln County had higher percentages of low birth weight births in 2009 (8.4%) and 2010 (8.9%) than Nebraska (2009 - 7.1%, 2010-7.1%, 2011-6.6%) before dipping below in 2011 (6.4%). As of 2011, 9.2% of births in Lincoln County compared to 6.8% in Nebraska are births to teen mothers. As of 2011, 15.5% of women in Lincoln County were not receiving adequate prenatal care compared to 14.0% in Nebraska.

Interviewees suggested that teen pregnancy was a concern in Lincoln County. Reportedly, teen parents are underserved, and interviewees discussed how better educating this population might decrease prevalence and resulting health issues.

Objective: Participate in initiatives that increase prevention, education and services to address maternal and fetal health concerns.

Implementation activities

- Great Plains hosts a free monthly “prepared childbirth class” designed for first-time parents to learn what to expect on delivery day.
- Great Plains provides a “Breastfeeding 101” class at no cost for new and soon-to-be parents to learn the basics of breastfeeding, which is proven to be the best option for babies.
- Great Plains coordinates a Junior Ambassador Volunteer Program designed to involve area youth in volunteering. As part of the program, participants are exposed to the inner workings of the health care industry. One rotation includes volunteering on the labor and delivery floor.
- Great Plains provides area schools with handouts highlighting the prevalence and prevention of gonorrhea and HPV. Great Plains pediatricians offer ongoing sexual health education to teens.
- Great Plains provides donations to seven area post-prom parties with the mission to engage teens in a drug-free, parent-supervised, post-prom activity.
- In 2014, Great Plains will be sending 17 personnel from various departments throughout the system to Resolve Through Sharing, a bereavement counselor training and certification course designed to better assist patients who experience fetal or neonatal loss.

Impact and evaluation

- Great Plains will promote mother-baby related classes within the community and track participation.
- Great Plains will track participation in its Junior Volunteer Program.
PRIORITY FIVE: Need for affordable primary care services for the low-income and uninsured populations

Rationale: Findings indicate that there are certain groups in Lincoln County who are at an increased risk for receiving inadequate care, including the low-income and uninsured populations. Interviewees acknowledged the lack of affordable primary care services which negatively impact the indigent and uninsured populations. Interviewees mentioned lack of both access to affordable primary care and cultural awareness as possible reasons for lower income patients over-utilizing emergency departments. Reportedly, there is a gap in availability of services for the working poor who do not qualify for Medicaid or cannot afford insurance.

Objective: Participate in initiatives that aim to increase access to health care for low-income and uninsured populations.

Implementation activities

- Great Plains provides the Great Plains Medication Assistance Program to help those who cannot afford their long-term medications to take advantage of low-cost and no-cost prescription programs. In 2011 and 2012, more than 500 people were provided medication assistance at Great Plains.
- Great Plains actively complies with EMTALA regulations—helping all patients to receive quality care regardless of citizenship or ability to pay.
- Great Plains offers a generous financial assistance program for those unable to pay for emergency medical and non-elective services who meet required eligibility guidelines. Great Plains employs staff to assist patients in obtaining financial assistance through public financial aid. Patients who do not meet required public benefit aid eligibility guidelines may be considered for Great Plains financial assistance and/or charity care program. Below is a chart showing the growing amount of care Great Plains gives at little or no charge to patients who are un- or underinsured.

Source: Great Plains Regional Medical Center internal data. Free care data. 2008-2012.
• Through Great Plains Health Care Foundation, gas cards are offered to patients unable to pay for the fuel needed to get to necessary physician appointments.
• Great Plains offers a dedicated medical interpretation phone line.
• Great Plains serves as the lead sponsor for the NEBRASKAland DAYS annual Kids Fest. Here, children receive hand-washing education, speed and agility instruction, and sports-injury prevention education in a fun, relaxing and educational environment.
• As mentioned under Priority Two, Great Plains will continue to offer the annual Healthy Heart Check event as a community service at no cost to the public. Last year, the event served 225 attendees. A total of 103 EKGs were performed. Of the 225 participants, 41 were identified with high blood pressure and 18 had an abnormal EKG. The event medical team provides:
  o Free blood pressure checks
  o Free EKGs
  o Information about:
    ▪ Risk factors of heart disease
    ▪ Effective CPR methods
    ▪ Exercise advice
    ▪ Heart-healthy recipes
    ▪ Smoking cessation techniques
    ▪ Hypertension information
• As mentioned in Priority Two, Great Plains will continue to offer low-cost heart screenings to employees and the community. As part of the prevention and early identification program, participants pay just $50 for a heart screening that would normally cost around $1,720. The screenings test a person’s blood pressure, body mass index, cholesterol level, blood glucose level and calcium score to indicate if he or she is at risk for heart disease.

Impact and evaluation

• Great Plains will track participation the Great Plains Medication Assistance Program.
• Great Plains will track the number of participants at its Healthy Heart Check event.
• Great Plains will track the number of low-cost heart screenings administered.

Other community involvement and health promotion

• Great Plains will continue to host its annual Footsteps Camp for children who have experienced the loss of a loved one. This grief camp brings together children between the ages of five and eighteen, along with their caregivers, to learn about loss and grief. It is the only camp of its kind in the western half of Nebraska.
• Great Plains offers free sports medicine services to help keep young athletes safe and to promote the proper treatment of sports-related injuries. Each year, our athletic trainers serve approximately 2,700 students in 14 schools throughout the region. In addition to attending sporting events, our athletic trainers teach coaches and players proper prevention techniques developed to help avoid injury during conditioning and training.
Please address written comments on the CHNA and Implementation Plan and requests for a copy of the CHNA to:

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