

NORTHERN MONTANA HOSPITAL COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT EVALUATION FY 2020



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2018-2020

An evaluation of the efforts of Northern Montana Hospital to address the priority community health needs of Hill County, Montana.

FY 2020 Progress

Priority Issue One: Opioid Abuse

NMH Health leaders identified opioid abuse as their most serious health concern. While not specifically identified during the data collection process, there is a national focus on combatting the opioid epidemic. The opioid addiction crisis is now declared a public health emergency.

In FY 2020, the Planning Grant to support prevention of and treatment for substance abuse disorders ended. A joint decision with the Northcentral Montana Hospital Alliance (NMHA) and Northern Montana Hospital to not apply for the sustaining grant was made. The NMHA pursued a grant for Behavioral Health Integration and Chronic Care Management. NMH pursued and obtained a grant for Chronic Care Management Quality Initiatives.

A MedSafe is accessible to the community in the foyer of the second floor of Northern Montana Hospital. MedSafe is a disposal system for unused and expired medication. This system accepts controlled (Schedules II-V), non-controlled and over-the-counter medicines and meets the requirements of the DEA Controlled Substances Act. Our promotion of MedSafe through press releases, website and Facebook postings increases public awareness about the dangers of prescription misuse and the importance of proper storage and disposal of unused medications.

At the Rural Health Clinics a standard question of "Do you have any substance abuse issues" is being asked as part of the screening processes. This is true for adults as well as adolescents.

Priority Issue 2: Substance Abuse

Substance abuse statistics for Hill County led group health leaders to choose substance abuse, specifically; illegal drug and alcohol abuse as an area of concern will also be addressed in the current planning cycle. Hill County residents who responded to the community health survey also indicated that addressing illegal drug abuse and alcohol abuse was of high importance. Based on the County Health Rankings of 2017, alcohol-impaired driving deaths in Hill County ranked 12% higher than the state of Montana.

During FY 2020 NMH approached substance abuse through focused efforts which included community events, sponsorships and educational outreach opportunities.

NMH participated in sponsoring the fourth annual Veteran's Stand Down event in November. This event afforded the opportunity to reach out to the veteran population with information on our available programs including Chemical Dependency Treatment Services.

NMH and NMCC continues to host Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in their facilities. NMH also offers Prime for Life classes to the Hi-Line community. Prime for Life is a program designed for people who might be making high-risk choices and is court mandated for MIPs and DUIs in Hill County.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, NMH was able to offer Tele-Medicine in lieu of in-person visits. As substance abuse counseling is considered an essential service, NMH will be able to continue offering Tele-Medicine to patients in circumstances where transportation is an issue.

Parenting Montana provides easy-to-use parenting tools to support children's success from kindergarten through the teen years. NMH participates in this program by displaying signage, providing handouts and advertising on our flat screen televisions and Facebook. Two areas of special significance discussed in this program are "Establishing Rules for Alcohol" and "Mixed Messages About Alcohol." These programs are especially beneficial in helping to de-glamorize alcohol consumption.

Priority Issue 3: Tobacco Use

Tobacco abuse is also considered a top priority issue among the hospital's group health leaders. The CDC reported in 2013 a Hill County tobacco use rate of 30%; the state-wide rate at that time was 18%. 78.5% of the Hill County community health survey respondents ranked tobacco use as an issue within our community.

In FY 2020, NMH pursued and obtained a grant for Chronic Care Management Quality Initiatives to improve patient healthcare outcomes focusing on clinical indicators for management of chronic diseases including a reduction in obesity and smoking.

Primary Care Providers at the Rural Health Clinics conduct tobacco use screening assessments routinely as part of the office visit. Patients aged 12 and older are screened; if tobacco use is present, they are offered assistance from the Montana Quitline by nursing staff. And smoking cessation is recommended by the provider. The CDC has concluded that tobacco use screening and intervention is one of the most cost-effective clinical preventive services and is an important component of a comprehensive strategy for increasing tobacco use cessation and reducing tobacco use.

Christen Obresley, VP, Regulatory and Community Services, is on the Board of Directors of the Boys & Girls Club of the Hi-Line and HELP Committee. In this role she serves on the Tobacco Use Prevention Committee providing the health care perspective. The major component of the Committee's philosophy is that we must concentrate our efforts on the younger generations in order to instill values that do not condone the use of tobacco, alcohol and other illegal substances. NMH is an active participant in the summer HELP Camp.

Christen Obresley represents NMH at the North Montana Tobacco-Free Coalition. The North Montana Tobacco-Free Coalition works to promote healthier and safer communities by promoting tobacco-free lifestyles and smoke-free environments. The most recent focus of the Coalition is to change the “norms” regarding tobacco use and public health. The committee is working specifically to address the “national epidemic” of e-cigarettes (vaping) locally. The committee worked successfully with other committees across the state to prohibit the sale of flavored vaping products.