NORTHERN MONTANA HOSPITAL COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT EVALUATION FY 2021

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 2021 Progress

Priority Issue One: Facility and Community Safety

Northern Montana Hospital (NMH) health leaders identified Facility and Community Safety as their top priority. First and foremost, Northern Montana Hospital will provide a safe and considerate work environment for all employees. NMH will have adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on-site and comprehensive policies on its use and disposal. NMH will guarantee that all employees are educated on pandemic protocols including disaster protocols, which will be included in each employee's annual review. NMH will build a structure to increase our adaptability to quickly bring clarity to situations and be able to change priorities as rapidly as necessary.

Throughout FY21 NMH followed federal guidelines and worked with State and local public health officials to keep the facility, staff, and community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hospital staff were educated regarding COVID-19 through *The Bridge* and in-house email communications. This education and communication included COVID-19 signs and symptoms, Proper Masking Protocols, Travel Restrictions, Testing requirement and Policies for NMHC Employees. The community was educated via press releases.

Visitor Guidelines were established and publicized including each revision. The hospital published a series of press releases educating the community on COVID-19. Visitors were fully screened at every place of entry, and everyone was required to wear a mask.

The Hospital sponsored, organized, advertised, and staffed the Community Vaccine Clinics for all community members. Two dates were set aside specifically for community educators, who received over 400 vaccinations.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was maintained at adequate levels, and hospital staff were contact-traced in cooperation with the Hill County Health Department. Special provisions for pay types were made. All employees remained employed despite department closures. A special COVID-19 Hotline was established for exposed/quarantined employees to have regular contact with the Infection Preventionist.

Priority Issue 2: Employee Retention and Recruitment

NMH health leaders identified Employee Retention and Recruitment as their second priority. Maintaining an adequate local workforce ensures safe operations of the hospital while providing high-quality healthcare to the community. Successful recruitment and retention practices will minimize the number and duration of vacancies, which in turn can improve quality of care and ensure that services are provided locally to the community.

At NMH our employees are our number one asset. We believe that employee retention involves strategic actions to keep employees motivated and engaged so they elect to remain with the organization reducing employee turnover.

During FY21, as our employees dealt with COVID-19 daily and tried to find life balance, NMH promoted our Employee Assistance Program to our employees. This program is free to employees and offers confidential solutions and 24/7 access. Through the EAP, employees can get help with personal, family and work issues. Additionally, NMH made available to all interested employees an education and discussion program title "Resilience in the time of COVID-19". Employees were recognized for their safety efforts related to the COVID-19 pandemic with a Summer Safety Award.

NMH made efforts to retain a semblance of traditional services and events for our employees during the height of the pandemic. Virtual visits were provided for our employees to visit with a representative from our employee retirement plan, Open Enrollment was conducted via email, and we took the majority of our Hospital Week activities outdoors. And the Annual Employee Awards Banquet had a virtual twist.

We continue to recognize our employees individually through the C.A.R.E. (Compassionately Achieving Remarkable Excellence) and in the "Pickle Barrel". These are recognition programs that allow employees and patients to recognize our staff members. Additionally, we recognize employees and their family members during the graduation season.

NMH recognized staff members for their commitment to providing quality community healthcare with a celebration surrounding NMH's designation as a Top 100 Rural Hospital. Each designated healthcare professional week is recognized by the organization with individual department celebrations.

NMH believes that some of the best ambassadors for employee recruitment are current employees. We offer referral bonuses to our employees and sign-on bonuses to tour candidates. NMH utilizes social media to promote our open positions and advertises on multiple job boards. Our directors promote and embrace flexibility in scheduling and promote and support an inclusive workplace culture.

New employees are welcomed to the organization through an announcement in *The Bridge.*

Priority Issue 3: Behavioral Health

NMH health leaders identified Behavioral Health as their third priority. Mental health is important at every stage of life and affects how people think, feel and act. NMH has made Behavioral Health a significant priority and is committed to reducing the number of individuals whose overall well-being is negatively impacted by addiction and mental illness. NMH has a variety of services available that can positively influence the community's mental health needs and continues to strategize about services that will influence community members mental wellbeing.

NMH offer substance use disorder treatment for adults and behavioral health services for adults, adolescents, and children.

The providers at the family Medical Center and the Specialty Medical Center use the PHQ-9 screening tool at each visit to assess each patient's depression rating scale. Referrals are made to the behavioral health providers as indicated through the screening tool.