



SPRINGFIELD HOSPITAL 2022 COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT (9/30/22)

(Approved by Springfield Hospital Board of Directors 2-13-23)

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY UPDATE – JUNE 2024

The 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment can be found online at the following link:

<https://springfieldhospital.org/community-health-needs-assessments/>

The following strategies respond to community health issues found on pages 2 and 3 of the report.

COST OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES, AFFORDABILITY OF HEALTH INSURANCE, PHARMACEUTICALS (RX)

- Evaluate the current Financial Assistance Policy, update as approved by Board of Directors.
Financial Assistance Policy has been reviewed and revised to comply with Act 119 requirements. The new policy was approved by the Board of Directors on April 9, 2024.
- Promote the availability of Springfield Hospital financial assistance program.
The Financial Assistance Program information is made available on the hospital website, posted at patient access points of entry, and is also referenced in press releases and advertising.
- Establish on-site training program for financial assistance counselors to visit the relevant hospital departments to review financial assistance programs and the referral processes.
Springfield Hospital has a full-time Financial Counselor who meets with staff on an ongoing basis to make information available regarding the financial assistance program and the application process. Our Financial Counselor is a certified assister for the State of Vermont and is referred to patients needing assistance.
- Collaborate on public relations efforts regarding community services, raising awareness for ACA premium subsidies, free vaccines (including shingles and Tdap), insulin cap costs, and other community support services to help alleviate financial burden.
Springfield Hospital uses social media on an ongoing basis to help spread the word regarding community education, support, and outreach activities.
- Explore opportunities for patient experience focus groups regarding service access and patient satisfaction.
Scheduled for implementation in FY25.
- Explore financial assistance for Adult Day programs for non-Medicaid and out-of-state clients.
The Adult Day financial assistance policy has been reviewed and updated. We are currently researching options for additional financial assistance for NH Medicaid through the Choices for Independence program, and for Vermont residents through the Moderate Needs Program which covers those not Medicaid eligible but within an eligibility window for assistance.
- Review fee schedule for Adult Day financial assistance.
The fee schedule for FY'25 is set and information distributed. See above regarding financial assistance.

AVAILABILITY OF PRIMARY CARE AND SPECIALTY MEDICAL SERVICES

- Collaborate with primary care providers regarding improving access to primary care services.
Springfield Hospital and North Star Health work closely together regarding access to primary care services. North Star Health has recently added several new primary care providers to improve access.

The hospital is also an active participant in the monthly Community Health Team meetings, and also in the Community Collaborative which meets quarterly, led by North Star Health. The most recent meeting focused on informing the community of new providers and access to primary care and walk-in care within the region.

- Conduct further data analysis regarding barriers to and opportunities for improving ‘access to specialty medical care.’
Planned for FY25.
- Review of referral process eligibility criteria in VT regarding appropriate level of care.
This work is ongoing, focusing on facilitating appropriate referrals and transfers for higher level of care from our Emergency Department.
- Research solutions to EMS transport challenges regarding availability and payment guarantees.
Resources are limited for local EMS and other ambulance services, presenting transport challenges when the local services cannot meet the need to transport, especially longer distances. We have established standard payment documentation authorizing staff to enlist emergency transport when necessary.

AVAILABILITY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Evaluate admission, referral and promotional processes for The Windham Center.
Review of criteria and processes has been completed.
- Collaborate with primary care, regional agencies and schools regarding improving access to mental health for children and adults.
Ongoing. We work closely with our local Designated Agency (HCRS), Brattleboro Retreat and our local FQHC network. We are also participating in the local Project Action effort to help improve access to services when needed.
- Explore opportunities for a CMS waiver regarding limitations on distinct part units for critical access hospitals.
The issue has been raised with several parties, both Federal and State, and distinct part unit requirements continue to limit DPU’s for critical access hospitals to two – and they cannot be more than one mental health.
- Develop an analysis tool regarding the effectiveness of mental health and substance use disorder referrals and continued level of patient engagement.
Springfield Hospital works closely with Turning Point, the local recovery agency. All data is entered into a statewide databank, and quarterly reports are reviewed.
- Raise awareness for local support groups regarding mental health needs.
Springfield Hospital promotes local support groups through its social media and website.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AFFECTING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, SUCH AS HOUSING, HEALTHY FOODS, AND AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE.

- Continue to participate in offering monthly food deliveries to assist area residents.
Veggie VanGo is offered in Springfield on a monthly basis in collaboration with the Vermont Foodbank. Approximately 500 families receive food assistance each month. We are also seeking grant funding to establish a food pantry to assist patients being discharged from our emergency department or inpatient care unit until they can be connected with other community support services.
- Support local housing and childcare initiatives.
Affordable housing and childcare continue to be in short supply locally. There are local community groups working on these initiatives and we are fully supportive of those efforts to improve access to these services.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

- Collaborate with local health care providers, schools and other social service agencies to improve access to services.

We have active participation on the Board of Directors for Turning Point, and are working on collaboratively implementing some community outreach programming involving education for prevention and access to services.

- Work with local agencies to help overcome gaps in services – for example detox, residential treatment, and recovery housing.

See above – We continue to research opportunities for grant funding to help meet these needs.

- Raise awareness for local support groups for drug and alcohol use prevention, treatment and recovery.

Ongoing through web and social media; working on community outreach with Turning Point.

AFFORDABILITY AND AVAILABILITY OF DENTAL CARE SERVICES

- Work with local primary care and dental offices to refer Emergency Department patients for preventive dental care services.

For patients needing dental care, the Emergency Department staff provides patients with a referral list of available dentists in the area and what insurance they accept.

- Collaborate with community resources to increase awareness for assistance they offer for access to dental services.

Ongoing – North Star Health offers dental services in Ludlow and Chester and awareness of North Star offices and other local services is raised through our emergency department, the community health team efforts and Valley Health Connections.

HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

- Explore options for grant funding for education and training initiatives. *Ongoing*
- Collaborate with area educational institutions regarding healthcare training programs. *We have done some outreach to area facilities, but resources are presently limited. We continue to work on this.*
- Explore statewide initiatives and distance learning opportunities for health care jobs training. *Ongoing*
- Continue Springfield Hospital's scholarship program for health care career education. *Ongoing*
- Develop creative offerings including flexible scheduling, bonuses, etc. *We have an attractive referral bonus program and offer flexible scheduling as workload and patient care needs allow. We continue to search for any programs we can implement that are cost effective and help with recruitment and retention of staff.*
- Continue ongoing review and implementation of compensation/benefits packages within budget availability. *Ongoing with budget limitations.*