

# Via Christi Hospital - Manhattan Implementation Strategy Plan

## Implementation Strategy Narrative

### Overview

Service to the poor is a primary value at Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan, Kansas. In 2015, Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan (VCH-M) contributed over \$4.46 million in community benefit; this included \$981,511 specifically to community benefit initiatives. Some examples of ways VCH-M has contributed include:

- Providing Riley County with a SANE/SART Program Coordinator to assist with care, treatment and processing of forensic evidence for victims of sexual assault,
- Providing security transportation of patients to state mental hospitals when they have been brought into the ER and determined to be a danger to themselves or to others,
- Providing the clinical support for Flint Hills Community Clinic,
- Regularly holding child safety seat checks in partnership with the Manhattan Fire Department location on Denison Ave
- Providing diagnostic services to Riley County Health Department
- Serving as a partner in the 2014-2015 Community Health Needs Assessment effort
- Serving as a practicum site for student nursing doing clinical rotations from area colleges

In an effort to gain insights from the community for the purposes of planning and community improvement, Wichita State University's Center for Community Support and Research (CCSR) was contracted to conduct a community-wide needs assessment for Riley County, which included the compilation of selected secondary data, administration of a community survey, key informant interviews, and focus groups with persons who were underrepresented in the survey. Secondary data, which is publicly available such as that from the Census survey, Kansas Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), and others, was compiled for the most recent years available. Additionally, a community survey was conducted via the internet, mail, phone, and through administration at public locations or meetings to gather input from residents regarding their perceptions of community strengths and needs in 11 different topic areas (Quality of Life, Health, Mental Health, Social Issues, Children and Youth, Education, Aging, Housing, Transportation, Infrastructure, and Economics and Personal Finance).

A total of 1,126 surveys were completed. Although significant efforts were made to solicit participation by a broad sample of community members, the survey respondents were largely white, female, middle-aged or older, educated, and had higher incomes than the general population. In order to gain additional insight on the issues addressed in the survey as well as any other topics of concern, key informant interviews were conducted with 25 community members representing a wide range of interests and professions (e.g., ecumenical, business, healthcare, social service, education). Additionally, a focus group was held for each of the three populations that were underrepresented in the survey – young adults (18-24 years old), persons with low income, and Hispanics/ Latinos. The primary strengths and needs that were identified for Riley County were remarkably consistent regardless of method of data collection.

### Prioritized Needs

#### **Lack of Accessible and Affordable Child Care**

According to the Department for Children and Families (2013), the funding for child care assistance in Riley County has decreased over the past few years as has the number of children receiving this benefit. This is another area that appears to be of particular concern for those who have low incomes; however, 11% of the survey respondents, who tend to have higher incomes than average, report having lost or quit a job due to child care issues. Over 40% also indicate that child care is not affordable.

In an effort to address this need VCH-M offers classes for baby, toddler and child caregivers that strengthen their skills in caring for this most vulnerable population. From Daddy Basics and Breastfeeding Basics to Safe Sitters and First Aid for Children classes, new parents and caregivers can learn the best way to respond to children and their daily needs or in emergency situations.

### **Lack of Accessible & Affordable Mental Health Services**

Respondents to the community survey rated access to and affordability of mental health services in the community as their top concern related to mental health. This need was echoed frequently in key informant interviews and focus groups. Mental health services appear to be particularly difficult to access and afford for persons with low income and those who do not speak English.

Besides meeting with the Riley County Commissioners and other government representatives to discuss the current status of mental health services, VCH-M was successful in recruiting an adolescent psychiatrist to provide services in the area. When residents are brought into the ER for immediate treatment for crisis situations that are beyond the capability of VCH-M resources, than appropriate referrals are made and secure transportation is arranged when necessary to make sure these patients get the help they need in order to ensure their safety. Many times these individuals are without insurance or government assistance, so the hospital ends up footing the bill for the secure transports.

### **“Invisible” Population with Significant Needs**

As Riley County grows and prospers, those who have fewer resources or who are outside the mainstream (e.g., non-English speakers, those with disabilities or mental illness, persons with low income) have a sense of being forgotten or pushed aside. This population was described by one participant as “invisible” because they are easy to overlook in the midst of general prosperity. They have significant issues with housing, transportation, and access to necessary health and mental health services that are surpassing the decreasing funding for such necessities. Persons in the military and students are affected by this issue as well given that they are often lower income but not thought of as being in need of assistance. The effect is an expanding divide between those who have resources and those who do not.

One of the “invisible” populations in Riley County concerns those who do not have access to healthy foods or who may not have the knowledge associated with good nutrition. As a result, VCH-M is focusing its resources to increase access to healthy foods and to raise nutritional awareness starting in its own facility and in working with others throughout the community. VCH-M has met with representatives from the school districts and Park and Recreation to discuss partnership opportunities in teaching nutritional values to students through creative ways to make them more conscious of the association between food intake and physical exercise to reach their maximum healthy goals. Menu choices, including snacks offered, at the hospital are reflective of this new approach to healthy eating as the hospital serves the community daily through visitors, patients and employees.

### **Growth**

Riley County is experiencing a “boom” of sorts with the likely addition of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility as well as other business development efforts. While this is seen as a positive by many, others are concerned that the “bottom will fall out” as one participant noted and that the community does not have the infrastructure to support such rapid growth. VCH-M is involved in the community through various outreach efforts and continues to recruit additional health care providers to relocate to improve health access to all should population growth continue to be an issue.

### **Needs That Will Not Be Addressed**

#### **High Quality of Life**

Riley County generally offers a high quality of life due to such factors as good schools, safety, a clean environment, and a strong sense of community. Through daily contact with the outside community, VCH-M believes it is well integrated with the faith, business, government and social service providers and has no plans to make major changes in their level of support to these various groups. In fact, the opposite is most likely to happen as VCH-M wants to ensure these various organizations that they are a responsible stakeholder in the Riley County area and want to make sure that various constituents are comfortable in asking for their help and guidance on health related issues. So, VCH-M welcomes opportunities to engage their associates through community networking events and projects.

### **Spirit of Community and Collaboration**

While the needs may be great for many in Riley County, service providers and others in the community are oriented toward working together to leverage resources and bridge gaps for those most in need. The work of the Riley County Council of Social Service Agencies (RCCSSA) was highlighted as a key catalyst for cooperation and collaboration. Kansas State University and other organizations and businesses are also seen as constructive partners in efforts to address needs and better the community. Again, VCH-M continues to support community wide efforts and is always looking for an opportunity to become more involved within limited resources, especially when dealing with health related issues.

### **Lack of Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing is a major issue across the community for students, low income, and even middle class persons. Secondary data show that the average value of an owner-occupied house in Riley County is much greater than for the state of Kansas (\$174,900 versus \$129,500). There is a sense of an inflated value being placed on housing, including rentals, by those who are selling and leasing properties.

## **Summary of Implementation Strategy**

- **Increase in Primary Care Physicians for Riley County**

**Strategy:**

- Assist with recruiting new health care providers to the area
- Meet and work with government representatives to discuss key issues, especially with Medicaid populations and uninsured needing access to health care services.

**Anticipated impact:**

- Increase in the number of Riley County residents being able to access health care services during the next year.
- Decrease in the number of non-emergency visits to the Emergency Room.

- **Expansion of Behavior Health/Mental Health Providers**

**Strategy:**

- Be actively involved in the recruitment of mental health providers who are willing to relocate their services to the Riley County area..
- In collaboration with other organizations, government representatives, and current mental health providers, work together to refine the mental/behavioral health needs of the local population in order to maximize resources..

**Anticipated impact:**

- Increase in awareness that mental health assistance is available through increased collaboration between current providers, law enforcement and clinicians.
- Decrease in the number of suicides in Riley County area.

- **Increase the Level of Physical Activity & Healthy Eating**

**Strategy:**

- Identification of plausible partnerships that support healthy eating and targeted physical activity.
- Active participation with local programs that promotes healthy eating and physical activity, especially with youth (e.g. Be Well Bergman).

**Anticipated impact:**

- Decrease in the number of youth reported as being overweight in the Riley County area.
- Decrease in the number of youth being diagnosed with juvenile diabetes.

To see complete Community Health Needs Assessment go to:

[http://www.rileycountycommunityneedsassessment.org/uploads/4/1/4/2/41422627/final\\_riley\\_county\\_community\\_needs\\_assessment\\_january\\_2015.pdf](http://www.rileycountycommunityneedsassessment.org/uploads/4/1/4/2/41422627/final_riley_county_community_needs_assessment_january_2015.pdf)