

**Via Christi Hospital – Wichita (VCH-W)**  
**2017 – 2019 Implementation Strategy Plan**  
(Approved by Board of Directors on November 3, 2016)

## Implementation Strategy Narrative

### Hospital Mission

Mission: Inspired by the Gospel and our Catholic tradition, we serve as a healing presence with special concern for our neighbors who are vulnerable.

Via Christi Hospital – Wichita (which encompasses Saint Francis, Saint Joseph and the Behavioral Health Center campuses) enriches the broader community, by providing access to hospital care and behavioral health services for those living in Wichita and surrounding communities. In addition, VCH-W takes part in educating medical students, nurses/nursing students and other health care providers, and providing emergency care and support to people in need. VCH-W further supports our Catholic mission with a community board, open medical staff, and an emergency room available to patients regardless of ability to pay.

### Overview

Via Christi Hospital – Wichita (VCH-W) is accredited by the [Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations](#) and holds memberships in the [American Hospital Association](#), the [Kansas Hospital Association](#) and the [Catholic Health Association](#). Our hospital is currently training associates to become a High Reliability Organization to increase safety for patients, visitors and employees.

#### **Via Christi Hospital – St. Francis Campus features include:**

- Emergency room and trauma care
- Pediatric care
- Cancer care – including Via Christi Cancer Institute in Wichita, Cyber Knife cancer treatment System, da Vinci robotic surgery and Cancer Center in Wichita
- Heart care – including Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, Chest Pain Center, Heart Valve Clinic and Hybrid OR
- Blood and bone marrow transplant program
- Via Christi Regional Burn Center
- Neurocritical care unit
- Advanced Comprehensive Stroke Center

#### **Via Christi Hospital – St Joseph Campus features includes:**

- Emergency room
- NewLife Center for labor and delivery
- Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
- Senior behavioral health
- Forensic Nursing for victims of sexual assault and violence

#### **Via Christi Behavioral Health Center features includes:**

- Via Christi Psychiatric Clinic
- Adolescent psychiatric care
- Partial day psychiatric program

- Intensive outpatient mental wellness care

Service to the poor is a primary value at Via Christi Hospital -Wichita. In 2016, VCH-W contributed nearly \$48.3 million in community benefit. In addition to providing charity care, here are some examples of ways VCH-W contributes time, talent and treasure to Wichita and surrounding communities:

- Provides rent free room space for Case Managers of Kansas working for Medicaid, Medicare and other government funded programs; University of Kansas School of Medicine in Wichita interns and residents during their rotations, Ronald McDonald House, GraceMed Clinic, Gerard House and Rainbows United.
- Provided numerous presentations on a variety of health care topics, diseases, and health care management issues to nursing, pre-med majors and medical students at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Wichita, Wichita State University, Newman University, Hesston College, Hutchinson Community College, Bethel College and Friends University. In addition, provided supervised rotations for students graduating in the areas of nursing, lab technology, radiology, and other allied health areas.
- Served on local, regional and national not-for-profit and professional boards and committees like University of Kansas School of Medicine's Wichita Center for Graduate Medical Education, Wichita State University, Catholic Care Center, Independent Living Resource Center, Southwest Oncology Research Professionals Committee and many others.
- Provided direct assistance with patients requiring assistance with the public benefit application forms for Medicaid and other government subsidy programs.
- Worked with local, state and regional law enforcement officers in developing a program designed to identify and combat human trafficking patterns in Kansas. This program has been so successful that it is getting national attention and is being replicated throughout the Ascension Hospital system.
- Provided training to first responders and critical care hospital staff in preparing transport of burn victims to the Via Christi Burn Center in order to maximize the victims' chances for survival.
- Oversees and assists physician/medical students with their biomechanics and orthopedic research projects for publication in professional journals to advance medical research.
- Hosts and participates in regularly scheduled American Red Cross blood drives.
- Provides transportation to and from the Via Christi Lodge for low income and out-of-town family/caregivers of patients who cannot afford transportation and/or hotel accommodations.

## **Community Needs Assessment Overview**

In 2016, Via Christi Hospital - Wichita, along with Via Christi Hospital – St Teresa and Via Christi Rehabilitation Hospital participated with United Way of the Plains and the Sedgwick County Health Department in a six-county community needs assessment. Surveys were mailed to 695 community leaders, 262 not-for-profit and government agency executives and 7,600 randomly selected households. Subtracting the surveys that were undeliverable, the total number of surveys distributed was 7,712 and 841 returned for an overall response rate of 10.9 percent. Looking at the individual surveys, the response rate for each is as follows: 18.7 percent for community leaders, 46.6 percent for agency executives and 8.9 percent for randomly selected households.

Respondents were asked to prioritize three community issues education, income and self-sufficiency, and health. Community respondents ranked the education community issue area as the highest priority for their local community. Among the educational issues, they ranked school readiness and reading at grade level by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade as the most critical elements.

Community respondents ranked the income/self-sufficiency community issue area as the second highest priority for their local community. Among income/self-sufficiency issues, they ranked employment/job training and housing.

Health issue areas ranked third highest by community respondents. Their areas of concern revolved around access to health care which ran the gamut including health insurance, affordability, availability, medical

practitioners accepting specific types of health insurance coverage; having a sufficient number of medical professionals to serve various geographic areas and medical transportation.

The random sample of community households were asked to review and rate 63 education, health and income concerns and asked to rate whether any of these were a major, moderate, minor or a non-issue for their household or neighborhood. Following are the top ten major health issues that respondents identified as a problem for their household and/or neighborhood.

- 1) Health insurance
- 2) Basic medical care for low-income
- 3) Prescription medicine financial assistance
- 4) Child abuse prevention/education
- 5) Immunization of adults/children
- 6) Human trafficking prevention/education
- 7) Family violence prevention
- 8) Food assistance
- 9) Sexual assault prevention/education
- 10) Counseling/mental health services

## **Major Identified Needs Being Addressed by VCH-W**

### **Health Insurance**

**Goal: To support the expansion of Medicaid in the State of Kansas and encouraging patients to participate in the Accountable Care Act insurance exchange programs**

In concert with Via Christi Health leadership team and board of directors, VCH-W continues to be a strong proponent in the need to expand Medicaid across Kansas. Affordable health care, in our Catholic tradition, should be a right given to all but especially for those who are poor and vulnerable. VCH-W continues to offer charity care to the poor, takes care of those who are recipients of Medicaid and Medicare knowing that the government will not be paying the full cost of that care, and aggressively assisting those who come into its hospital to register for programs to which they are entitled.

### **Basic Medical Care for Low-Income**

**Goal: To improve the patients' understanding on the need for a medical care home**

Basic medical care for all people is a right and responsibility of every community. People who are ill and denied medical care not only jeopardize their own health but may impact others who share their environment. Waiting until one is in crisis to seek medical care is not only dangerous but may have serious economic impact for families, health care providers and hospitals.

Having a medical home, a place where one can call and make an appointment to see a physician and/or a nurse practitioner prior to having an emergency is in the best interest of all, especially the patient who can receive quality preventive care or treatment at the time of illness.

Patients accessing the Emergency Room each time they are in need of care are denying themselves the benefits that come with having a medical home. Having a doctor, nurse or other practitioner who knows your personal medical history will provide patients with the best long-term care. VCH-W case managers work with patients to find medical homes prior to discharge from our hospital.

### **Assistance with Prescriptions for Low-Income**

**Goal: To improve the patients' ability to afford their required medications**

Hospital inpatients, as well as clinic outpatients may be eligible to receive financial assistance in procuring their required medications. Via Christi Hospital - Wichita currently operates a 340B drug pricing program on medication and pays an annual fee to be a Dispensary of Hope Pharmacy as well. Involvement in both of

these programs is to better serve vulnerable patients and to decrease the burden of cost for uninsured patients who are in need of prescription assistance. In addition, VCH-W continues to look for new ways to procure medication discounts for all patients whether they are being discharged from one of its hospitals or is getting outpatient treatment in one of its clinics.

### **Child Abuse Prevention/Education**

**Goal: To reduce the number of child fatalities as a result of abuse or neglect.**

Educating parents on how to properly care for children has shown that these prevention efforts can strengthen families and produce resilient children and in the long run save real, long-term physical, psychological and emotional costs that is inflicted upon children at the hands of their abusers. Children who are victimized may require immediate medical treatment, but their ordeal also has an impact on law enforcement officers, the judicial and correction systems when their abuse is investigated, prosecuted and accused are sentenced for their crime. New parents are not always ready to embrace changes that accompany a new baby. Many young parents have limited first-hand experience with dealing with babies and as a result may inadvertently hurt their child even though they love that child. That is why VCH-W offers traditional parenting classes in addition to non-traditional training like Boot Camp for New Dads.

### **Immunization of Adults/Children**

**Goal: To reduce morbidity and mortality from vaccine-preventable diseases.**

In 1991, when the U.S. Public Health Service introduced national goals for vaccines of adults to reduce the morbidity and mortality rates from preventable diseases, only 21 percent of 50 to 64 year olds were receiving the flu vaccine. In the USA, an average of five to 20 percent of the population gets influenza; more than 200,000 are hospitalized and nearly 36,000 die from it annually. From September 1, 2013 to January 14, 2014, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment reported 510 deaths in Kansas due to complications from influenza or pneumonia. Influenza and pneumonia was the eighth leading cause of death in 2012 in Kansas. To protect employees from contracting the disease, all Via Christi Hospitals, give free flu shots to those who wished to get one. In 2015, VCH, required employees to get one in order to further protect patients and their workforce as a condition of employment. Those who chose not to participate for religious purposes were required to wear protective face masks to prevent spreading any possible germs they may be carrying and/or to keep them from getting more exposed to the disease through their work schedules.

### **Human Trafficking Prevention/Education**

**Goal: To partner with community organizations to further reach at-risk human trafficking populations by providing consultation, education and support for the organization's identification and response programs.**

Human trafficking is the fastest-growing criminal industry in the world today, often operated by organized crime syndicates. Traffickers use force, fraud or coercion to enslave their victims into situations involving sexual exploitation or forced labor. Human trafficking is a devastating human rights violation, is seen as a form of modern day slavery, and takes place not only internationally, but also here in the United States.

Via Christi Hospital - Wichita has become a national model for Ascension Health in dealing with this vulnerable population. Since VCH-W first initiated this program, over 40 victims have been identified and assisted. The Human Trafficking program staff is working closely with local and state law enforcement agencies and VCH-W's Forensic Nursing Program to address the needs of those identified as human trafficking victims in our clinics or emergency rooms.

Other agencies, in Sedgwick County are also focusing attention and resources on this issue in hopes of educating more businesses on how to recognize possible victims. VCH-W staff, working with a national leader on the subject, has developed tools which are in the process of being distributed throughout the Ascension Health ministries for national awareness of human trafficking victims.

## **Family Violence Prevention**

**Goal: To prevent unintentional injuries and violence within families**

Family violence prevention is a serious public health problem, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. From infants to the elderly, it can affect people in all stages of life regardless of race, religion or economic status. Many victims survive the violence but suffer physical, mental and or emotional health problems through the rest of their lives. VCH-W treats these victims in their Emergency Department and goes to great lengths to separate the victims from their abusers to encourage the victims that help is available. Research has shown that over 40 percent of Kansas City, Missouri domestic violence related homicides over a five year period presented themselves to an emergency room two years before their deaths. So, Emergency Department clinical staff are very much aware of the important role they play when it comes to family violence prevention and actively collaborates with their social work and security departments to keep the victims safe and offer them immediate referrals to organizations in the community whose sole goal is to help these women and their children escape this environment.

## **Food Assistance**

**Goal: To ensure that families in need of proper nutrition are able to receive it and encouraged to work with related organizations who can provide assistance on a more long-term basis.**

Via Christi Hospital – Wichita provides nutrition to those who are poor and vulnerable in several ways. Associates participate in food drives throughout the year, primary caregivers whose family member is an inpatient and are identified as low-income and in need of proper nutrition are given free meal tickets to ensure they are able to maintain their strength while assisting with the care of their loved one. Case managers, who are aware of the patient (and many times their family) needs, will assist in getting the patient signed up for Medicaid and/or Food Stamps if they determine the patient meet the criteria. The patient is also given information about community resources to assist with food needs until government assistance is available. VCH-W hospital also reviews the menu choices available to their employees to ensure proper nutrition is a standard throughout their ministries.

## **Sexual Assault Prevention/Education**

**Goal: To educate and work with other community organizations, schools, law enforcement agencies and others to reduce the number of sexual assaults, making Sedgwick County a safer community.**

Sexual assault occurs when consent is not obtained or given freely by one individual to another prior to sexual contact. Nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population has experienced some form of violence. Sexual violence is a major cause of injury and trauma. According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), Nearly 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men in the United States have experienced an attempted or completed rape in some time in their lives. Most victims of sexual assault know their attacker. Nationally, 73 percent of victims knew the attacker, in Kansas 90 percent knew the attacker (NSVRC and KBI data).

VCH-W supports the work of the many agencies in the community, funded by United Way, that address this problem through their One Community Campaign and they certainly work closely when victims are identified when brought to the Emergency Department for medical treatment. VCH-W's Forensic Nursing program is located on the St. Joseph campus and it works collaboratively with all victims of sexual assault by providing immediate medical care, forensic examinations, advocacy, patient follow-up and assistance with criminal justice services in an ethical and compassionate manner. These forensic nurses provide care to approximately 350 patients per year. While the majority are victims of sexual assault, they also work with victims of child abuse, domestic violence, elder abuse, human trafficking and any other violence-related injuries.

VCH-W employs four nurses who are nationally certified as Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners through the Forensic Nursing Certification Board, with one also being certified in pediatric sexual assault examinations.

Training is regularly provided for nurses from other communities in Kansas who are establishing SANE/SART programs.

### **Treatment for Life-Threatening Diseases**

**Goal: To improve the patients' understanding on how best to manage their diseases in order to avoid re-hospitalization.**

Patients who are admitted through the Emergency Department because of a life-threatening disease which is not being treated by a physician are counseled about the importance of having a medical home so that their chronic and life-threatening diseases can be monitored and treated on a consistent basis. The patient and/or their caregiver is strongly encouraged to work with VCH-W's case management department to find a physician willing to provide long-term care for the patient prior to dismissal to avoid costly ED visits and/or re-hospitalizations. Patients, when appropriate, may be referred to the Via Christi Case Navigator program for future follow-up especially when diagnosed with chronic cardiac and/or cardiopulmonary disease.

### **Counseling/Mental Health Services**

**Goal: To work with the community in finding better ways to identify, treat and keep safe people diagnosed with mental health illness or are in crisis**

According to the Kansas Health Institute, budget cuts to the state's mental health system have been devastating. The Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, which is comprised of 26 community mental health centers issued a statement about the \$30 million in funding cuts that it says its members have suffered in the past 12 months. VCH-W has also been impacted as the waiting time to get people admitted into the state hospitals for treatment has turned into days.

VCH-W has a specially equipped Emergency Department unit designed to protect patients who are brought in by law enforcement, families or friends who are having a behavioral health crisis. Once the patient is stabilized, VCH-W staff work with COMCARE to get the person evaluated and processed for appropriate care. In addition, VCH-W is working in tandem with other Via Christi Hospitals and behavioral health center staff and dual diagnosis mental health/substance abuse providers to develop a long-term strategic plan in dealing with this population.

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

**Preparing Young People for the Workforce** – VCH-W does offer some volunteer opportunities for youth but has limited resources to work with youth in preparing them to join the workforce. VCH-W does sponsor the St. Gianni Academy which is a competitive high school program for junior and senior students attending Bishop Carroll and Kapaun/Mt Carmel High Schools who intend to be pre-med majors in college. These students do receive credit for their work in the Academy as they learn about the various health care professions that are available to them after completing college and start looking for a health care career.

**Tutoring for Children/Youth at Risk of Failure** – VCH-W does participate on a community committee that deals with this issue but isn't directly involved in tutoring children.

**Health Insurance** – while this need is not directly being addressed by Via Christi Hospitals, social workers do assist in getting patients registered while under Via Christi care when they qualify for public programs. Other programs in Sedgwick County also assist in signing residents up for the various insurance programs. There is national health insurance marketplace call centers, as well as state and local agencies willing to assist people in finding an insurance program that fits their need. Drug/alcohol abuse prevention/education – while drug/alcohol abusers are brought to Via Christi Hospitals for treatment, long-term assistance is not currently a focus as it is for other programs in the Wichita area. The Substance Abuse Center of Kansas operates intervention programs, drop-in services, day treatment, counseling, and education/prevention services. The STOP Program is a substance abuse outpatient program that provides counseling, treatment, clinical psychiatric evaluation, marriage counseling, and anger management services.

The Substance Abuse Counseling Program provides counseling, comprehensive outpatient substance use disorder treatment, drug use disorder education/ prevention, alcohol use disorder education/prevention, and support groups. Other local providers of services to address drug/alcohol abuse include Turning Point, Recovery Unlimited, Word of Life Counseling Center, Pure and Simple Choice, Prairie View, Mirror Inc., Pathways, Options Adult Services, The Detox Unit, Recovery House, Valley Hope Outpatient Counseling Center, Mental Health Association of Kansas, Restoration/Knox Center and others.

**Juvenile delinquency/gang prevention** is not currently addressed by Via Christi except when these youth are brought into our hospital as patients. There are currently several juvenile delinquency programs available that address this specific population. In addition, programs like Boys & Girls Club, Street Outreach/Safe Place, BRIDGES, YMCA, Word of Life Counseling Center and others offers activities, mentoring, counseling and other services to address this issue.

**Summary of Implementation Strategy** - Discern psychiatric emergency services care model in Wichita that integrates crisis intervention, treatment and community resources to promote the right care at the right time in the right setting by end of fiscal year 2017.

- This increase service to result in fewer hospitalizations due to physical injuries.
- Provide ministry wide human trafficking education sessions for associates and community partners, resulting in more victims identified and assisted.
- Sustain reduction in hospital encounters for patients enrolled in the Transitional Clinic Program.
- Assist in enrolling eligible people for health insurance to ensure better health outcomes.
- Participate in events in conjunction with the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas to promote Medicaid expansion.

Make the CHNA report Widely Available to the Public – This report is available on the Via Christi website.

To see complete Community Health Needs Assessment go to:

[https://www.viachristi.org/sites/default/files/pdf/about\\_us/2013\\_Community\\_Needs%20Assessment\\_Vol.%2002.pdf](https://www.viachristi.org/sites/default/files/pdf/about_us/2013_Community_Needs%20Assessment_Vol.%2002.pdf)