

# Wamego Health Center

## FY 2021-2023 Implementation Strategy

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Pottawatomie County  
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September 29, 2020

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**Ascension**

## **Wamego Health Center**

### **FY 2021-2023 Implementation Strategy**

#### **Table of Contents**

General Information	<a href="#"><u>3</u></a>
Overview	<a href="#"><u>4</u></a>
About Ascension and Wamego Health Center	<a href="#"><u>4</u></a>
About the Community Health Needs Assessment	<a href="#"><u>4</u></a>
About the Implementation Strategy	<a href="#"><u>5</u></a>
Purpose of the Implementation Strategy	<a href="#"><u>5</u></a>
Process and criteria	<a href="#"><u>5</u></a>
Prioritized Needs	<a href="#"><u>6</u></a>
Health needs that will be addressed	<a href="#"><u>6</u></a>
Implementation Strategies	<a href="#"><u>7</u></a>
Measurement and evaluation	<a href="#"><u>12</u></a>
Health needs not being addressed	<a href="#"><u>12</u></a>



## General Information

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### **Dates of Board Approval:**

Wamego Hospital Association (dba Wamego Health Center)  
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## Overview

### About Ascension and Wamego Health Center

Ascension Via Christi (AVC) is a Catholic healthcare organization dedicated to providing high quality and innovative services to transform healthcare delivery across the continuum of care. AVC is the largest provider of healthcare services and has over 100 years of experience serving the people of Kansas, particularly those individuals living in poverty and underserved communities. Affiliated with AVC, Wamego Health Center (WHC) is a 25 bed Critical Access Hospital located in the center of the Wamego community in northeastern Kansas. WHC provides access to an array of services including laboratory services, heart care and cardiac rehabilitation programs, the Heritage Senior Behavioral Health outpatient program, home sleep studies, imaging services, nutritional services, a swing bed program, and an Emergency Department that provides care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. WHC also houses the Heartland Rehabilitation Center, Specialty Clinic, and Wamego Family Clinic.

### About the Community Health Needs Assessment

AVC conducted a community-wide needs assessment in fiscal year 2020 to gain insight into addressing the needs of Pottawatomie County residents. The Pottawatomie County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was conducted by Wichita State University's Center for Applied Research and Evaluation (WSU-CARE), under the direction of the Flint Hills Wellness Coalition. The needs assessment included the compilation of selected secondary data, administration of a community survey, community member interviews, and focus groups. For information about the WHC CHNA process and for a copy of the report please visit <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA>.

The geographical area of Pottawatomie County was chosen for the CHNA because it is where WHC is located and where a majority of patients live or work. Pottawatomie County is located in the northeast portion of the State of Kansas. The population estimate on July 1, 2018 reported by the United States Census Bureau was 24,277.<sup>1</sup> Wamego is the largest city in the county with a population of 4,762 (2018 Census Population Estimate). According to the 2010 United States Census, Pottawatomie County has a total area of 841 square miles.

The following list summarizes the needs identified in the 2020 CHNA for Pottawattamie County.

#### Physical Health

1. Affordable health services
2. Affordable health insurance
3. Facilities for physical activity
4. Affordable prescriptions
5. Access to healthy food options

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<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau, QuickFacts, Pottawatomie County, Kansas, downloaded on Jan. 22, 2020 from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/pottawatomiecountykansas,KS,US/PST045219#qf-flag-NA>

**Mental Health**

1. Affordable mental health services
2. Affordable health insurance that includes mental health care
3. Increased number of mental health providers
4. High quality mental health services
5. Children's mental health services

**Children (birth to age 12)**

1. Child care for children 0-5 years
2. After school programs
3. Recreational activities
4. Parenting education/skills development
5. Mentoring programs for children

**Teens (13 to 18 years)**

1. Employment opportunities
2. Workforce training
3. Mental health care
4. Financial skills training
5. Substance abuse prevention/treatment

**Older Adults**

1. Affordable prescriptions
2. Independent living
3. Medical care
4. Affordable housing
5. Home health care options

**About the Implementation Strategy****Purpose of the Implementation Strategy**

Federal tax law set forth in the Internal Revenue Code section 501(r) requires hospital facilities owned and operated by organizations described in Code section 501(c)(3) to conduct a CHNA at least every three years. The federal tax law also requires the adoption of an Implementation Strategy that outlines plans to address some of the community health needs identified in the CHNA. This Implementation Strategy was prepared in order to comply with the federal laws and requirements, and describes WHC's planned response to the needs identified through the fiscal year 2020 CHNA process.

**Process and Criteria**

Representatives from the AVC Ministry and the WHC leadership team used a prioritization process to select the Implementation Strategies. The Implementation Strategy process prioritized how well each of the identified health needs align to the Mission and expertise of WHC, the availability of resources to make a measurable difference in responding to the identified need, and support from community-based organizations in executing solutions to address underserved populations. Health needs were prioritized and ranked based on the following criteria:

- Magnitude: the number of people impacted by the problem.
- Severity: the risk of morbidity and mortality associated with the problem.
- Inequities and Disparities: clear inequities and disparities that disproportionately impact the poor, underserved, and vulnerable.
- Leveraging Organizational Assets: WHC can make a meaningful impact based off of existing partnerships, leadership, and/or hospital resources and programs.

## **Prioritized Needs**

### **Health needs that will be addressed**

#### **Access to Care**

Access to high quality and comprehensive health care - including having affordable insurance and prescriptions, transportation, access to specialists, and local care options - is essential for maintaining a healthy and long life. Residents of Pottawattamie County can access primary care physicians and dental providers more readily compared to the State of Kansas overall. The ratio of residents to both primary care physicians and dental providers is higher for Pottawattamie County than the state of Kansas. Over 40% of community members indicated 'it was not too difficult' or was 'very easy' to access healthcare and dental providers. Community members voiced concern over affordability and lack of transportation when it came to access care. Transportation issues were particularly a barrier for the elderly, low-income, and disabled persons. Kansas is also not a Medicaid expansion state which severely limits the ability of low-income, disabled, and other vulnerable groups to receive and access care.

#### **Access to Healthy Food**

Being able to access and afford healthy food is essential to reduce obesity and chronic diseases, and improve overall quality of life. Many Pottawattamie County respondents felt it was easy to access healthy food but are failing to meet the daily recommendations of fruits and vegetables. This might contribute to the higher diabetes rates (11.3%) compared to the State of Kansas (10.5%). Over a quarter of respondents reported that they have experienced some sort of chronic condition such as hypertension, heart attack, heart failure, and high cholesterol, indicating a need for healthier diets. Respondents did report that cost is one reason they do not consume the recommended fruits and vegetables. Food insecurity may impact the ability of families to consume healthy foods. About 10.6% of Pottawattamie County residents are food insecure according to secondary data.

#### **Mental Health**

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has designated Pottawattamie County a geographic Health Care Shortage Area (HCSA) for mental health providers. Both primary and secondary data support the need for improved mental health services including affordability and access, reducing stigma around mental illness, and insurance that includes

mental health services as a covered benefit. Pottawattamie County residents reported having higher rates (15.5%) of poor mental health days for 14 days or more in the past 30 days when compared with the state (11.4%). Over 30% of respondents indicated that they do not access services when they are not feeling mentally healthy, and over 20% reported that stigmatization is a barrier to seeking mental health treatment. Mental health issues were also ranked among the top three social issues for the community. Binge drinking among adults and violent teeth deaths are higher than the state average which may indicate a need for mental health services and education around drug and alcohol abuse, depression, and other mental and behavioral issues.

**Healthcare Workforce Development**

Healthcare workforce development can play an essential role in improving health outcomes. Healthcare can improve quality of care by enhancing the skills, training, and performance of current and future healthcare workers. A common concern among Pottawattamie County residents was the lack of activities and employment opportunities for teens which could add to the higher rates of violent teen deaths and mental health issues. The top three concerns for youth ages 13 to 18 were employment opportunities, workforce training, and mental health care. Engaging youth in career opportunities within healthcare can add value to the economic opportunities for the community as well as address healthcare shortages.

**COVID-19 Response**

Although COVID-19 was not a health issue when the CHNA was conducted, it has become a top need for the community and local and state government. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely strained healthcare and public health, and has far reaching social and economic impacts. Healthcare resources have been limited, leaving many rural and underserved community hospitals and clinics unprepared. It is therefore important to prepare our current and future workforce through cross-training and preparedness, work with under-resourced healthcare facilities such Federally Qualified Health Centers and rural hospitals, collaborate with governmental agencies and community partners, and provide community-wide testing sites to limit the spread of COVID-19.

**Implementation Strategies**

**Prioritized Need #1: Access to Care**

<b>Goal:</b> Improve access to high quality and affordable health care for low-income and uninsured individuals.
<b>Strategy:</b> Advocate for Medicaid expansion for the State of Kansas.
<b>Resources:</b> AVC Advocacy Officer and AVC leadership team
<b>Collaboration:</b> Kansas Hospital Association, AMG Clinics, area hospitals and other health care providers

<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AVC Advocacy Officer will visit with all Pottawattamie County elected legislators in Topeka regarding Medicaid expansion annually until it is passed.</li> <li>• One WHC executive will make a presentation regarding the positive impact that Medicaid expansion has had in other states to a legislative committee in Topeka annually until it is passed.</li> <li>• One WHC executive will publish a Letter to the Editor in a Pottawattamie County newspaper outlining the positive impact that Medicaid expansion has had in other states until it is passed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anticipated Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passage of Medicaid expansion will positively affect access to care, smarter utilization of health services, and increase the affordability of care among the low-income population.</li> <li>• By June 30, 2023, the Kansas State legislature will pass Medicaid expansion.</li> </ul>

**Prioritized Need #2: Access to Healthy Food**

<p><b>Goal:</b> Low-income and vulnerable community members are food secure and have access to fresh, affordable, and healthy food options.</p>
<p><b>Strategy 1:</b> Maintain a community garden and donate produce to food insecure individuals.</p>
<p><b>Resources:</b> WHC staff volunteers</p>
<p><b>Collaboration:</b> First Baptist Church, Wamego Community Garden, local housing communities, the City of Wamego</p>
<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHC staff volunteer to provide gardening services (i.e., weeding and planting) and serve on the Wamego Community Garden committee.</li> <li>• WHC provides vegetables free of charge to community members who are willing to harvest produce.</li> <li>• WHC staff volunteer to harvest and donate excess produce to a local food pantry.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anticipated Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact measurement:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pounds of produce donated to community members who are food insecure or have limited access to healthy food</li> <li>○ # of paid associate hours donated</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy 2:</b> Participate in the Mission Week Food Drive to collect and donate food to local pantries for food insecure families.</p>



<b>Resources:</b> WHC staff volunteers
<b>Collaboration:</b> Community Care Ministry, Chamber of Commerce businesses
<b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHC staff market, organize, and deliver donations to the Community Care Ministry.</li> <li>• WHC staff donate canned goods, personal hygiene products, and cleaning supplies.</li> <li>• Community Care Ministry staff distribute donated items to those that qualify for services based on income along with other qualifying factors.</li> <li>• Encourage other Chamber businesses to participate in a food drive.</li> </ul>
<b>Anticipated Impact:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact measurement: Associate time spent marketing, coordinating, organizing, and delivering donated items collected from the Mission Week Food Drive.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy 3:</b> Deliver meals to elderly who are homebound and food insecure through Meals on Wheels.
<b>Resources:</b> WHC staff volunteers
<b>Collaboration:</b> Meals on Wheels, Wamego Community Center, USD kitchen
<b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify point person to coordinate with WHC departments and Meals on Wheels.</li> <li>• Various WHC departments volunteer to deliver meals monthly.</li> <li>• WHC volunteers deliver Meals on Wheels lunch to individuals on the assigned route for the month.</li> </ul>
<b>Anticipated Impact:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact measurement: # of meals delivered to elderly community members who are homebound and food insecure.</li> </ul>

### Prioritized Need #3: Mental Health

<b>Goal:</b> Strengthen the capacity of mental health professionals and community partners to identify and respond to mental illness and substance abuse disorders.
<b>Strategy 1:</b> Expand Mental Health First Aid train-the-trainer classes to provide hospital staff and community organizations with the skills to recognize the signs of mental illness and substance abuse.
<b>Resources:</b> Heritage Senior Behavioral Health (contracted vendor of Wamego Health Center)
<b>Collaboration:</b> Pottawattamie County Health Department

<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint one associate lead for this strategy.</li> <li>• Engage with community partners to determine interest in training and compile a list of community stakeholders.</li> <li>• Identify Mental Health First Aid instructor to teach at least one course annually. (In-person or virtual as allowed by COVID-19)</li> <li>• Offer Mental Health First Aid course and report in CBISA.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anticipated Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By June 30, 2023, the hospital will train a total of 30 new health care providers and community members in Mental Health First Aid.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy 2:</b> Arrange and pay for secure transportation of qualifying low-income individuals in need of transportation to a different hospital for specialized behavioral health treatment that may not be available locally.</p>
<p><b>Resources:</b> Security Transport Services</p>
<p><b>Collaboration:</b> Area behavioral health centers (e.g., Cottonwood Springs Behavioral, KVC Prairie Ridge Psychiatric Treatment Center, Stormont Vail Behavioral Health Center, VA Medical Center, Osawatomie State Hospital, etc)</p>
<p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital staff identify patients (e.g., uninsured, underinsured, VA, Medicaid, etc.) in need of secure transportation.</li> <li>• Hospital staff identifies location for specialized treatment and arranges transport of patients with Security Transport Services.</li> <li>• Security Transport Services safely transports patients to identified centers and reports in CBISA.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anticipated Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals in need of specialized mental and behavioral health services are able to access the help they need in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Impact measurement: # of secured transports provided for vulnerable persons in need of specialized behavioral health treatment</li> </ul>

#### Prioritized Need #4: Healthcare Workforce Development

<p><b>Goal:</b> Increase economic opportunities for teen and college age students through healthcare workforce pipelines.</p>
<p><b>Strategy:</b> Provide opportunities for students to engage with health care professionals.</p>
<p><b>Resources:</b> WHC Leadership Team</p>

**Collaboration:** Wamego High School, area colleges and universities, Wamego Community Foundation, Wamego USD 320 School District

**Actions:**

- Conduct mock interviews with Wamego High School students going into the healthcare field.
- Mentor Wamego High School students interested in healthcare careers for one hour per month.
- Support students who are pre-med majors, nursing, social work, and physical therapy by inviting them to observe WHC’s healthcare professionals.
- Sponsor area high school seniors going into the healthcare field with scholarships through the Wamego Community Foundation.
- Participate in the Classroom-to-Career partnership to encourage grade school students to think about possible healthcare careers.
- Evaluate activities that can be implemented using virtual technology given COVID restrictions.

**Anticipated Impact:**

- More youth will be interested in healthcare careers which will provide economic opportunities for youth and address healthcare workforce shortages for rural and underserved communities.
- Impact measurement: # students by program

**Prioritized Need #5: COVID-19 Response**

**Goal:** Ensure community members have timely access to testing and care to prevent and reduce morbidity and mortality from COVID-19.

**Strategy:** Improve collaboration across the state between government agencies, nonprofits and community organizations, and healthcare facilities to improve the COVID-19 response.

**Resources:**

- 24/7 Emergency Department within a hospital setting
- Intensive care providing supportive treatment for the sickest patients
- Leveraging telemedicine technologies for treatment and follow-up for patients to reduce ongoing exposure
- Community testing initiatives to understand disease penetration into communities

**Collaboration:** City, County and State government officials, Ascension Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan and other area hospitals and clinics, area schools, local nursing homes, Community Cares Ministry

**Actions:**

- Collaborate with city, county, and state government officials, community organizations, Critical Access Hospitals and other area rural hospitals and clinics for COVID-19 response and preparedness.
- Share resources, donate PPE and other medical supplies, and provide expertise to FQHCs and rural healthcare facilities to ensure underserved communities have access to testing and care.
- Provide training and professional development for clinical and non-clinical staff for the COVID-19 response, including preparedness, cross-training, and providing surge support.
- Support community-wide COVID-19 testing and vaccination events.

**Anticipated Impact:**

- Impact measurement:
  - # of hours spent coordinating and collaborating with external partners
  - # of people tested during community-wide COVID-19 testing and vaccination events
  - # and type of medical supplies donated
  - # of hours spent providing training and professional development for COVID-19 preparedness

**Measurement and Evaluation**

The Community Benefit Inventory for Social Accountability (CBISA) data entry software, developed by Lyons Software, will be used to capture Community Benefit data and activities. CBISA allows WHC to comprehensively measure the organization’s impact on the community. To ensure accountability, selected indicators and data will be collected on each strategy listed in the Implementation Strategy. The data will be aggregated into an annual Community Benefit report that will be made available to the community.

**Health needs not being addressed**

Based on the prioritization criteria, the health needs identified through the CHNA that WHC does not plan to address at this time include:

**Physical Health**

1. Facilities for physical activity
2. Affordable prescriptions

**Mental Health**

1. Affordable health insurance that includes mental health care
2. Increased number of mental health providers
3. Children’s mental health services

**Children (birth to age 12)**

1. Child care for children 0-5 years
2. After school programs
3. Recreational activities

4. Parenting education/skills development
5. Mentoring programs for children

**Teens (13 to 18 years)**

1. Employment opportunities
2. Mental health care
3. Financial skills training
4. Substance abuse prevention/treatment

**Older Adults**

1. Affordable prescriptions
2. Independent living
3. Affordable housing
4. Home health care options

To find a list of resources for each need not being addressed, please refer to the WHC CHNA: <https://healthcare.ascension.org/CHNA>. While these health needs are not the focus of this Implementation Strategy, WHC may consider investing resources in these areas as appropriate, depending on opportunities to leverage organizational assets in partnership with local communities and organizations. This report does not encompass a complete inventory of everything WHC does to support health within the community.