

Community Health Needs Assessment | 2021



Our mission is you.



A Letter from our President:

It was because of a call to respond to critical health needs that two courageous Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth women, Sister Mary Balbina Ferrell and Sister Mary Louisa Madden, traveled to the small, rough, western Colorado town of Grand Junction to open a hospital in May of 1896. Their pioneering spirit lives on in the extraordinary people who continue to serve at St. Mary's Medical Center today. Though the challenges we face today are different, the mission of responding to identified community health needs remains the same.

As part of our ongoing commitment to community health improvement, the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) is conducted every three years in collaboration with the Mesa County Department of Public Health and other community stakeholders. This continued pledge calls us to work in partnership with a wide range of organizations who are equally focused on addressing the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those within our geographic boundaries.

As healthcare delivery continues to transform, we remain guided by our Mission to “reveal and foster God’s healing love by improving the health of the people and communities we serve, especially those that are poor or vulnerable.” As we carry on the tradition of the Sisters who came to Western Colorado over 125 years ago, we continue to look forward to the good that is yet to be.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bryan Johnson".

Bryan Johnson President St. Mary's Medical Center

Executive Summary

A Community Health Needs Assessment is a critical tool used to understand the health status of a population or community. It presents information and analysis on important data measures and identifies areas where action and intervention can make a difference. The three primary goals of the assessment are to provide a current snapshot of the health status of Mesa County, to bring attention to areas of concern needing community action, and to fulfill assessment needs for all collaborating partners.

Working with its health partners and community health stakeholders around Mesa County, St. Mary's Medical Center (SMMC) has completed its 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment and identified three priority areas for health improvement programming from 2022 through 2024:

- Education
- Health Implications (Health Behaviors and Health Outcomes)
- Healthcare & Access

This executive summary reflects the assessment steps taken by SMMC to consider the results of the collaborative report along with the hospital's current programs and capacity to impact overall community health improvements.

SMMC has collaborated with Mesa County Public Health and other local healthcare organizations for the past three cycles of conducting the community health needs assessment (CHNA). This approach emphasizes a “*one community*” philosophy and a mission to understand shared interests to improve the health of our communities. To that end, local non-profit hospitals and public health agencies release one comprehensive document every three years. In 2020, St. Mary's Medical Center partnered with Mesa County Public Health, Colorado Canyons Hospital & Medical Center, Community Hospital, West Springs Hospital and the VA Western Colorado Health Care System Center to conduct the collaborative assessment. In 2021, the hospital completed its assessment by identifying priority health needs utilizing the results of the collaborative assessment.

Since the Last CHNA (2018):

In 2018, the last time SMMC conducted a CHNA, participants identified Suicide Prevention; Nutrition, including Food Insecurity and Obesity; and Access to Health Care Service as the top three priorities for Community Health Improvement Planning. These priorities from 2018 remain important to participants in the 2021 CHNA, and are reflected in the three updated priorities. SMMC's prior community health improvement implementation period, from 2018 to 2021, included multi-level interventions aimed at impacting the following priority areas. Highlights include:

Suicide Prevention

In partnership with the Colorado Office of Suicide Prevention and Mesa County Public Health, SMMC has implemented a number of programs to help hospital associates, providers and community members address suicide in Mesa County. Perhaps the most important of these interventions is that the hospital and county partnered to create a Suicide Prevention Coordinator position, which supports the county-wide suicide prevention plan and provides mental health

trainings for community members. The trainings teach participants skills around recognizing signs and symptoms of mental illness, increasing mental health literacy, and how best to support an individual who is experiencing suicidal thoughts. More than 9,000 individuals, including hospital providers and associates, have been trained since the program started. In 2021, Mesa County Valley School District 51 agreed to sponsor the position, and SMMC continues to engage with the program through grant management and other funding support.

Nutrition, including Food Insecurity and Obesity

One of SMMC's largest community programs, Meals on Wheels Mesa County, provides home delivery and congregate meals to older, homebound adults. The program's goals are to reduce food insecurity among older adults and help older adults age in place within the county. The program's participants, all of whom are over age 60, face challenges even in the best of times. About 70% of participants are homebound, and a striking 44% live below 100% of federal poverty. As a result of these factors, about 80% are scored as "high risk" on the Nutrition Score Indicator scale the program uses to assess participant needs. In a 2019 survey, 93% of meal program participants said the Meals on Wheels program helped them stay independent in their own home. Without Meals on Wheels Mesa County, these older adults would likely not have healthy food to eat or would be unable to remain living independently and would require expensive assistance or personal care.

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 and 2021 underscored how vital the program is to the health of older adults who are homebound. In the first six months of 2020, requests for service from the program grew by more than 20%, and by the end of 2020 alone, Meals on Wheels Mesa County had delivered or served more than 165,000 meals, up from about 120,000 in 2019.

Meals on Wheels Mesa County stepped up to meet the demand, by ordering additional food items to create shelf-stable food boxes or frozen meal boxes to ensure that snowstorms or other incidents didn't keep older adults from having healthy food in the house; by increasing their home meal delivery program and adding six additional daily delivery routes and three new weekly routes; and by increasing meal pick-up options for older adults around the county.

SMMC also partnered with Homeward Bound, Grand Junction's homelessness and human services organization, in 2019 to address food insecurity among families who are experiencing homelessness. The hospital created a food recovery program within its own Nutrition Services department, redirecting food that had been ordered or prepared for hospital guests and visitors but that was not consumed each day. In its first year of programming, the hospital provided 7,100 pounds of food, or the equivalent of about 4,260 meals. Donated food typically includes pre-packaged soups, salads, and sandwiches made fresh daily at St. Mary's. In 2020, the hospital increased its support of the program and provided food for 22,000 meals.

Improve Access to Health Care Services

Since 2018, SMMC has implemented new clinics and programs that help more individuals access health and behavioral health services.

In September of 2021, SMMC and SCL Health Medical Group partnered to open a new 22,000-square foot primary care clinic at 2570 Patterson Road in Grand Junction. After the 2018 CHNA showed a deficit of about 26 primary care physicians to meet the needs of the community around Grand Junction, SMMC began planning to develop a new primary care clinic. The new clinic houses nine primary care providers, including doctors and nurse practitioners, to increase access to preventive and primary care services. The clinic is open to the community and accepts all forms of payment, including Colorado Medicaid.

Also in 2021, SMMC donated \$3 million to Colorado Mesa University (CMU) to support the new Health Sciences Center, which will provide academic and practical instruction for students in health professions programs. Students who graduate from CMU are more likely to stay in Western Colorado than graduates of other programs in other parts of the state, so high-quality health professions education can increase the size and preparedness of the local healthcare workforce and thus increase healthcare access in Western Colorado.

Starting in 2019, SMMC's Integrated Addiction Medicine clinic, which is housed under the hospital's Graduate Medical Education program's residency clinics, worked with the St. Mary's Hospital Foundation to secure \$1.2 million in funding over four years to address prevention, treatment and recovery services for people with opioid and substance use disorders. The program includes mental health, healthcare, substance use disorder, and community partner organizations from Mesa, Delta, Garfield, Eagle, and Pitkin counties and aims to increase access to a full and evidence-based continuum of care for substance use disorders. The program has helped train providers to offer medication-assisted treatment in a primary care setting, thus increasing the treatment options available in Western Colorado.

Finally, SMMC launched the Move That Bus! Initiative in 2018. The "bus," a mobile health clinic repurposed to serve as a community resource hub, is a mobile clinic that connects individuals to health where they live, learn, work and play. The Mobile Health van made its debut at a Community Transformation Group event in 2018 in Clifton, helping attendees get information about available health services and giving away fresh fruits and vegetables in partnership with the Community Alliance for Education and Hunger Relief. Pre-pandemic, the bus hosted Mesa County Public Health's WIC (Women, Infants and Children) and Mesa County Human Services SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) representatives at public events, such as Grand Junction's downtown farmer's market, and hosted mobile flu vaccine clinics to increase access to the vaccine in Clifton.

Methodology

SMMC leveraged the approach of the collaborative CHNA process which examined the current status of residents across five key areas – economic stability, education, health care and access, neighborhood and built environment and social and community context. This approach provided comparison data for like communities (e.g. Bozeman, MT, St. George, Utah, and Bend, Oregon) which highlighted areas of strength and areas of action.

SMMC Community Benefit leaders utilized the five areas as the basis for key stakeholder conversations to gather additional insights on how St. Mary's Medical Center might best position its efforts and resources toward impacting the areas of action. Stakeholders representing nonprofit, education, mental health, social services, healthcare, and public health organizations were asked to provide feedback on the following questions: *When thinking about this area of action, what is the hospital's role to impact? Do you know of other organizations that are actively working on this area/issue? Who? How? Are there populations for this area of action that are important for hospitals to target outreach? How would you prioritize these areas of action specifically thinking about the hospitals' role, as well as resources, existing community efforts and the overall ability to impact?*

Identification of Significant Health Needs

The following represents a summary of stakeholder recommendations:

- Continue strong work with colleges and the nursing program as well as other applied sciences. Look for engagement possibilities for students prior to college to help explore healthcare career paths, including non-traditional careers. Trade school opportunities, career track development not only in healthcare, but the business side of hospital as well. Workforce development. Consider lack of childcare options. Need for early (preschool age) screening for cognitive disabilities.
- Support transportation needs and lack of speciality care/providers with regard to health care access. Expand mental health options for care, including stigma reduction. Training for all health workers to integrate mental health with general health to make it a normal part of one's overall health.
- Vaccination trust building, as well as a need to improve vaccination documentation. Healthy behaviors that are accessible, such as taking medications appropriately, but are not being utilized due to lack of resources and barriers.

A summary of the stakeholder feedback and results from the collaborative CHNA process was presented to SMMC executive leaders at a meeting held on November 9th, 2021, for additional analysis, input and prioritization. SMMC has selected *Education; Health Implications; and Healthcare & Access* as priority areas of action for the 2022-2024 improvement period.

Next steps include continuing work with community stakeholders to develop the Community Health Implementation Plan (CHIP) to address identified needs. The plan will present a deep dive review of prioritized health areas looking at specific populations, disparities, and barriers to improve outcomes. It will also highlight organizations currently addressing similar issues and available evidence based

interventions. Strategies developed in partnership with community stakeholders will be summarized in the CHIP.

Priority Health Needs

Working with its health partners and community health stakeholders around Mesa County, St. Mary's Medical Center (SMMC) has identified three priority areas for health improvement programming from 2022 through 2024:

- Education
- Health Implications (Health Behaviors and Health Outcomes)
- Healthcare & Access

The assessment results and proposed action steps are organized under the five key areas of the social determinants of health – Economic Stability, Education, Health Care and Access, Neighborhood and Built Environment and Social and Community Context. Social Determinants of Health are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks. Each of the five social determinant areas includes a list of identified action steps as a guide for prioritizing efforts in the community.

- Economic Stability
 - Household Stability
 - Industry and Occupation
- Education
 - P-12 Education
 - Higher Education
- Health Care and Access
 - Access and Utilization
 - Mental Health
- Neighborhood & Built Environment
 - Assess rates of infractions that impact public safety
 - Explore opportunities to increase food access
 - Determine gaps in housing assistance
- Social and Community Context
 - Conduct survey and focus groups to assess personal relationships and social networks
 - Identify strategies to boost social resources in unincorporated areas
 - Work to address higher levels of bullying among specific sub-groups
 - Improve voter participation in low-turnout precincts

Next Steps

With its top-three community health priorities identified in the CHNA (Education; Health Implications; and Healthcare & Access), SMMC will begin developing a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP will be complete in 2022 and represents the next steps in the community assessment process. This includes continuing work with community stakeholders to develop implementation strategies to address the identified need areas. The plan will present a deep dive of prioritized health areas looking at specific populations, disparities and barriers to improved outcomes. It will also highlight other organizations that are currently addressing similar issues within the community.

About St. Mary's Medical Center

St. Mary's Medical Center (SMMC) is a non-profit, fully-accredited facility with more than 350 beds. SMMC is a Level II trauma center with air emergency transport services, Level III neonatology center, acute rehabilitation, open-heart surgery, brain and spine surgery, and labor and delivery services. SMMC is a certified stroke and chest pain center, as well as an accredited comprehensive community cancer program. The hospital and its associated clinics are also the largest economic contributor to the community of Western Colorado with a \$750 million impact annually. SMMC is the second-largest employer and the highest payroll contributor in the community.

About Mesa County Public Health

Mesa County Public Health, formed in 1948, provides a wide range of public and environmental health services to Mesa County residents. Its mission, to maintain and improve health through assessment of community health status, policy development to support effective programs, and assurance of high quality, effective education and service, is the driving force behind its programming and community collaborations. Mesa County Public Health values Wellness, Excellence, Empowerment, and Community.

*Access the full CHNA collaborative report here: [May 2021 V2_Condensed_Smaller\(2\).pdf](#)

For More Information

To learn more or to obtain a printed copy please contact

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Appendices



Appendix 1. Prioritization Meeting Participants

Community Health Needs Assessment Prioritization, September 28, 29 and 30, 2021

Attendee	Title	Organization
Mike Stahl	Chief Executive Officer	Hilltop
Will Hays	Chief Operating Officer	Hilltop
Hali Nurnberg	Executive Director	Counseling Education Center (CEC)
Kristy Schmidt	Chief Development Officer	MarillacHealth
Patty Simpson	Dental Case Manager	MarillacHealth
Dr. Amy Bronson	Program Director Physician Assistant Program	Colorado Mesa University (CMU)
Derek Wagner	Vice President External Relations	Colorado Mesa University (CMU)
Sarah Johnson	Senior Community Health Planner	Mesa County Public Health Department (MCPHD)
Heidi Dragoo	Epidemiology Program Manager	Mesa County Public Health Department (MCPHD)
Shae Lynn Zastrow Watt	Data Analyst	Mesa County Public Health Department (MCPHD)
Dr. Ona Ridgeway	Clinical Lead, Pathways Family Wellness Center	Homeward Bound