



YAVAPAI REGIONAL  
MEDICAL CENTER

*Proudly Caring for Western Yavapai County*

## COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2019 – 2022

November 2019



### West Campus

1003 Willow Creek Road  
Prescott, AZ 86301

### East Campus

7700 E. Florentine Road  
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

## **Introduction**

Incorporated in 1942, Yavapai Regional Medical Center (YRMC) is a 501(c)(3) community healthcare system providing medical care and wellness resources throughout western Yavapai County. YRMC began as a basic community hospital which has since grown into a state-of-the-art primary healthcare system including two hospitals in the adjacent towns of Prescott and Prescott Valley, a network of primary and specialty care clinics, outpatient health and wellness centers, cardiac diagnostic centers, and outpatient medical imaging centers. The mission of YRMC is to provide comprehensive, high quality healthcare consistent with our communities' needs.

The two hospital facilities are approximately 12 miles from one another and both hospitals provide care for the same service area which covers 5,500 square miles. In part, the reason the East Campus was built in Prescott Valley in 2006 was due to the West Campus in Prescott exceeding its capacity and serving a rapidly growing community. The two hospital campuses file a joint IRS 990 return.

In addition to the inpatient care facilities, YRMC also has more than 25 PhysicianCare (PC) clinics that provide primary and specialty care located in Prescott, Prescott Valley and Chino Valley. Clinics are expanding on an ongoing basis and will continue to do so. YRMC also has outpatient imaging services located in Prescott and in Prescott Valley.

The governance for the two campuses and outpatient facilities involves a single Senior Management Team for both hospitals. There is also a single local operating Board for both campuses and the health system. The hospital Board and Senior Management Team have responsibility for both campuses and all YRMC facilities. The Community Benefit function for YRMC is also a single department function that covers both campuses and the surrounding service area.

In 2012, YRMC initiated an engagement with Dixon Hughes Goodman LLP (DHG) to conduct the previous Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) which was completed in 2013. In 2016, YRMC sought assistance from BKD LLP to conduct an updated CHNA and BKD LLP assisted with the current CHNA for 2019.

The CHNA and this Implementation Plan were developed to understand and address community health needs as appropriate for YRMC's mission and resources. The CHNA is a companion document to the Implementation Plan and includes in-depth information regarding needs of people living in YRMC's service area. The CHNA covers findings from extensive secondary research as well as primary research and

electronic surveys. Also included were individual interviews with the Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe and Yavapai County Community Health Services (YCCHS).

The CHNA identified the top twelve needs in our region and YRMC has selected the top five of those needs to address in the next three years. Some of the health needs that were identified were outside the realm of YRMC's expertise and resources. For example, Transportation is regularly a prominent theme in community needs. However, YRMC is best suited to focus on direct health needs such as addressing the need for primary care physicians and helping people choose healthy behaviors and positive lifestyle changes. We do, however, seek collaborative opportunities with local transportation organizations such as People Who Care and Yavapai Regional Transit, as well as local physicians and healthcare providers to address challenging needs.

YRMC has a critical role in providing healthcare services for its community and seeks to utilize best practices and solutions identified by other comparable rural community health systems. The work outlined in the Implementation Plan is focused on the health needs identified in the CHNA. However, there are numerous other essential health programs provided by YRMC that will continue for the underserved outside the purview of this Implementation Plan.

## **2019 Community Health Needs Assessment Summary**

YRMC's 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment was conducted between January and October 2019 with the assistance of BKD LLP. Multiple sources were explored to gain the best possible knowledge of the health needs of YRMC's service area.

### **Definition of the Community Served**

YRMC's service area is composed of 5,500 square miles in western Yavapai County. Most of the population is centered in Prescott, Prescott Valley, Chino Valley and Dewey-Humboldt. There are also a number of people living in sparsely populated areas surrounding these towns. By virtue of the distance involved in covering our service area, transportation can be a challenge for those who do not have ready access to their own personal vehicle. While there are several agencies working on the issue of transportation, it has long been a frequent theme when discussing needs.

YRMC's service area demographics include a predominant retirement community. In fact, according to the Area Agency on Aging, more than 30% of Prescott's population is composed of people over the age of 65. The surrounding areas are also filled with retirees but with a greater mix of younger families. The local economy is heavily dependent on the service industry: tourism, retail, food service and hotels, etc. This often translates into challenges for professionals to find good paying jobs in their choice of careers. The local service-based economy also means there is a predominance of minimum wage earners in non-benefited work which contributes to an underserved population due to financial limitations.

The 2019 CHNA identified twelve significant health needs in the community. These needs are listed below in decreasing order by intensity as indicated from secondary and primary research.

#### ***1. Healthy Behaviors/Lifestyle Changes***

- Although YRMC has provided a wide range of health education programs for decades, there is more work to be done. The underserved are often working multiple jobs and may have children or other family members to support, leaving little time to make healthy choices in food preparation and exercise as examples. A lack of focus on leading a healthy lifestyle can also be a learned behavior or the result of other more pressing priorities for an individual or families.

## *2. Lack of Primary Care Physicians*

- The national primary care physician (PCP) shortage is especially pronounced in YRMC's service area. If a physician's spouse wishes to be employed, this can be a challenge given the local economy and limited industry base. Another element that exacerbates the need for PCPs is that the local population is skewed more towards seniors, the segment that requires more frequent physician encounters.

## *3. Transportation, Especially in Rural Areas*

- Because of the vast area of ranchland and undeveloped space, some areas in the greater community are as many as 30 miles from any basic services. Coupled with the divergent income levels that can add more challenges to transportation, there are some portions of YRMC's service area that are less accessible than others. This is a challenge for people who need to buy groceries, find employment, see a doctor, go to school, etc. There are several local agencies working to address this issue. One way to alleviate access issues for patients in our more rural areas will be to explore expanding availability of telehealth and virtual health visits to increase accessibility.

## *4. Aging Population*

- As mentioned previously, the Prescott community has a larger percentage of people over the age of 65 than the rest of Arizona and the nation. With the graying of America, Prescott offers a glimpse into the future of our country. Many of the retirees moving to the Prescott area are vital and active. However, there are some retirees who have lived here for many years and who face challenges of aging, failing health and lack of family support nearby. YRMC cares for all people from our service area and we see a predominance of people over the age of 65, especially since this age range is typically in greater need of healthcare services.

## *5. Lack of Health Knowledge*

- Health literacy is a national issue and it also affects our local population. The rapidly changing world of health and healthcare engenders a plethora of new terminology that can be confusing. The complexity of healthcare also contributes to the confusion. Patients may be puzzled about medications prescribed or confused and uncertain about how to take them. People are often unaware of their own physiology, a reflection of the decreased emphasis on the importance and funding of overall education. Arizona ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation in funding for education so this is most likely a contributing factor to the low level of health knowledge in our region.

## *6. Physical Inactivity*

- This region and its moderate climate lend themselves to enjoying the outdoors. However, if people are trying to make ends meet and hold down several jobs as well as taking care of family, physical exercise can slip down their list of priorities. Another issue is the frail elderly who are limited in their ability to move and exercise. Sometimes it can also be human nature to leave daily exercise out of one's schedule.

## *7. High Cost of Healthcare*

- The high cost of healthcare is a national problem and affects YRMC's service area as well. Healthcare costs include pharmaceutical costs, insurance costs, the cost of extended care, hospital costs, etc. This is a complex issue that has evolved over decades and involves far more than the hospital industry itself. While YRMC is not in a position to fully address the high cost of healthcare, this organization is very proud of the many ways it provides care for the underserved. YRMC provides many services at no cost to the recipient or services may be provided at a financial loss, underlining YRMC's commitment to the community.

## *8. Lack of Mental Health Providers*

- Compared to the rest of the nation, Arizona ranks at the very bottom in terms of funding for mental health services. One fallout of this underfunding is a demand for care that far exceeds our community's capacity. The local providers that do provide services do their best to meet needs. However, these needs are far greater than the resources available to meet them. One of the fallouts from this situation is that YRMC's Emergency Departments become a holding space for mentally ill patients until a suitable care facility is located and accepts the patient. YRMC has received emergency mental health patients ranging in age from seven years to more than 90 years old. Some patients have had to wait in the Emergency Department for as many as 10 or 12 days before placement can be arranged. It is not unusual for these patients to ultimately be placed in communities as far away as Las Vegas, Nevada or Albuquerque, New Mexico. This is far from ideal for the mental health patient or for YRMC's medical patients who need care.

#### *9. Poverty/Children in Poverty/Lack of Financial Resources*

- As is true in many communities across the country, there are major discrepancies in the financial status of people living in the YRMC service area. Many people come to this region with plentiful resources while others struggle to find food to eat and to pay for housing. In Yavapai Regional Medical Center's service area of western Yavapai County, 25% of children live at or below the poverty level and 38% of the local workforce is considered working poor, meaning that despite active employment, the family is still unable to make ends meet with expenses such as health insurance. This diversity in financial status of YRMC patients is a major consideration in YRMC's Patient Assistance Program, enabling people to receive care regardless of their ability to pay.

#### *10. Uninsured and Underinsured*

- With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, there has been some movement on the scale of uninsured numbers. However, many of the insurance policies that are affordable have extremely high deductibles which put families at risk. YRMC has hosted several

seminars to help people sign up for insurance, whether it is private insurance or Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), Arizona's brand of Medicaid. But the uninsured and underinsured continue to receive care at YRMC.

### *11. Limited Access to Healthy Foods*

- The sheer size of this region and its wide-open spaces create food deserts, areas where there are no grocery stores available. This is especially true in the periphery of our service area. One community only has a Circle K convenience store for food. Other smaller communities have no food sources at all because they lack the population density to support a grocery store.

### *12. Adult Obesity*

- This issue can certainly be attributed to three of the items listed above: Healthy Behaviors, Physical Inactivity and Limited Access to Healthy Foods. YRMC offers outstanding exercise programs for people of all ages and provides top-notch food preparation and cooking classes through its "Your Healthy Kitchen" program. Obesity can be another complex challenge that is generated from a variety of challenges people may face.



## **Significant Health Needs YRMC Will Address**

The implementation strategy outlines the top community health needs described in the 2019 CHNA that YRMC plans to address in whole or in part in fulfillment of its mission. YRMC has selected the top five priorities of the twelve health needs that were identified in the CHNA. The selection was based on priority ranking as well as resource availability and appropriateness to YRMC's areas of expertise. This implementation strategy may be modified as conditions change and as appropriate over the course of the next three years.

For each health need that YRMC plans to address, the strategy describes:

- Actions YRMC intends to take, including programs and resources it plans to commit
- Anticipated impact of these actions
- Planned collaboration between YRMC and other organizations

### *1. Healthy Behaviors/Lifestyle Changes*

YRMC has successfully provided wellness and health promotion programs for decades. These popular programs will provide the foundation for community outreach in the area of healthy behaviors and lifestyles. We anticipate an increase in the number of community members who actively make healthier choices.

- Social media will continue to expand to help meet information needs surrounding good health choices.
- Continue Pendleton Centers' programs on the West Campus and the East Campus that adapt exercise suitable for the age and physical condition of individual participants, e.g., chair exercises for those with limited physical capacity.
- Explore collaboration with Yavapai County Community Health Services and local schools for in-school programs to promote healthy behaviors and educate children on the importance of maintaining their health.
- Explore collaborating with local churches/synagogues for opportunities to provide wellness programs for their congregations.

- In collaboration with subject matter experts, continue the utilization of the widely popular YRMC Speakers Bureau to include the topic of healthy behaviors.
- Promote further collaboration with local housing developments and neighborhoods to provide information and motivation for healthier behaviors.
- Seek out connections with local Chambers, PEO groups, civic groups, etc., for opportunities to present health information.
- Explore collaboration with local retirement centers and assisted living facilities to provide health information and social contact.

## *2. Lack of Primary Care Physicians*

The 2013 and 2016 CHNA plans identified a need for specialists as well as primary care. Since that time, extraordinary efforts have been successful in recruiting physicians and now we have filled many specialties for our community. We still see a need for primary care and plan to address this need accordingly. It is anticipated that more primary care providers will be available for our community.

- YRMC hired a physician recruiter and one priority will be to seek and recruit primary care providers.
- YRMC will use Advanced Practice Providers (Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants) to augment the need for primary care.
- Needs for suitable office space to accommodate additional physicians will be met based primarily on YRMC's Master Facilities Plan and taking advantage of space in our communities that may become available.
- Explore feasibility of options such as walk-in clinics, satellite offices, and extended hours for YRMC PC clinics, etc.
- In collaboration with local schools, YRMC will continue to provide free primary care to uninsured and underinsured school children and their younger siblings through the Partners for Healthy Students program, staffed by Nurse Practitioners and led by a Medical Director.

- YRMC will continue to collaborate with the Arizona Sunshine organization that provides free healthcare in our region for several days annually to help meet the needs of the underserved.

### *3. Lack of Health Knowledge*

Health literacy is defined as a person’s ability to read, understand, evaluate and act upon health information. Low health literacy is linked to poorer health status and more emergency room visits and hospitalizations. An estimated 75 million English-speaking adults in the United States have limited health literacy, making it difficult for them to understand and use basic health information. (Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality). YRMC’s efforts are expected to improve health literacy in our community.

- YRMC will continue to use social media and other electronic methods of reaching out to the community and educating people about health and healthcare.
- Explore utilizing the YRMC Speakers Bureau for providing health information for the community.
- Explore other health literacy programs nationwide and, if feasible, adapt one or more of these programs to the YRMC market.
- Explore the potential for off-the-shelf materials that could be purchased to assist with improving health literacy.

### *4. Physical Inactivity*

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. (Source: American Family Physician, 2016). Thirty-five percent of cardiovascular disease is due to physical inactivity. Approximately 60% of Americans 18 years and older report physical inactivity. The American Heart Association recommends 30-60 minutes of aerobic exercise three to four times a week. As mentioned in the introductory portion of this implementation plan and strategy, our local demographics and economic realities pose some interesting challenges in helping our community recognize the issue and, most importantly, make efforts to improve their activity levels. However,

we anticipate an improvement in levels of physical activity as a result of this Implementation Plan.

- Collaborate with Yavapai County Community Health Services and YRMC's own Employee Health Program, if appropriate, to create more education about the importance of physical activity.
- Collaborate with local schools (many of whom no longer offer free physical education classes or sports opportunities) to include program ideas for brief physical activity within the classroom throughout the day as breaks for children.
- Explore YRMC sponsored hikes/walks for the community and promote them accordingly.
- Educate the community about the health benefits of domestic activities such as gardening, etc.
- Explore further collaboration with groups such as Silver Sneakers for the Pendleton Centers for Health and Wellness and promote such programs and their benefits.
- Explore the value of participants from the Pendleton programs to provide testimonials on social media and other outlets regarding how staying physically active has improved their lives.

##### *5. Lack of Mental Health Providers*

YRMC works closely with local mental health providers. Several local mental health providers regularly come to assess patients in YRMC's Emergency Departments to determine mental health status. Because of the proliferation of mental health and substance abuse problems in our community, YRMC also collaborates closely with local law enforcement agencies. Many patients are brought into the Emergency Departments by law enforcement, especially those exhibiting combative, violent behavior and/or those who are homeless or otherwise without family support.

- Continue collaborating with local behavioral health providers in community presentations to help educate the public about mental health and the fact that it does not deserve to be stigmatized.
- Continue collaboration with West Yavapai Guidance Clinic and other mental health providers in creation of new programs for mental health topics.

- Evaluate additional partnership opportunities with mental health providers as they become available.
- Explore with local law enforcement and mental health providers possible alternatives to YRMC’s EDs as a “holding” resource when no medical need is apparent.
- Explore with Yavapai County Community Health Services regarding mental health service potential from their areas of expertise.
- Further promote philanthropically supported programs to enhance behavioral health services. For example, YRMC’s Partners for Healthy Students (PHS) program launched adolescent behavioral health services in 2019 made possible by community support and generosity. PHS collaborates with Southwest Behavioral Health and is exploring collaboration with Spectrum Health and other providers.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate with YRMC’s Palliative Medicine department and memory care services in the area, especially given our community need for such care and information about these services.

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