Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)
Implementation Strategy

BACKGROUND

Windham Hospital is a 130-bed, not-for-profit acute care community hospital providing state-of-the-art comprehensive medical services, personalized attention, and care. The hospital’s mission is “to enhance the lives and well-being of people in the communities we serve by providing quality health care”. Our hospital’s vision is to “be recognized as the outstanding community hospital in Connecticut. Across the generations, our patients and their families will experience healthcare that is consistently high in quality, seamless in transition, and accessible to all. We will be the leader in healthcare and a catalyst for improving the communities we serve”. The hospital seeks to meet the total healthcare needs of people from throughout our 19-town service area in eastern Connecticut. Our service area includes: Andover, Ashford, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Colchester, Columbia, Coventry, Eastford, Franklin, Hampton, Hebron, Lebanon, Mansfield, Scotland, Sprague, Tolland, Willington, and Windham.

For more than 75 years, Windham Hospital has treated patients with the latest high-tech equipment, operated by some of the most skilled and compassionate medical professionals available. Our staff members are proud to live and work in this area. We are committed to providing quality healthcare to all who enter our doors. We provide a vital core of inpatient, outpatient, rehabilitation, and emergency services in a caring and personal community setting in Northeastern Connecticut. The hospital’s medical staff includes 247 physicians and dentists. Through our membership in Hartford Healthcare, our patients have easy access to the best care …here at Windham, at Hartford Hospital, and at other Hartford Healthcare member facilities.

In 2012, 14,547 individuals benefited from Windham Hospital community benefit activities. The hospital invested $4,927,321 in community benefit programs; of which $3,706,321 was contributed to charity care. These funds
were expended for a variety of purposes: to help our community stay healthy, provide ready access to high quality medical care, partner with others to educate our neighbors and strengthen the community, advance medical knowledge, prepare professionals who will care for this and future generations of local residents, and much more.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

In 2011, a consortium of seven healthcare agencies in Windham County, Connecticut was formed to conduct a comprehensive study to provide current statistics and quantitative feedback on the key health issues facing Windham County residents. The organizations involved in the partnership included: Windham Hospital, Day Kimball Hospital, Natchaug Hospital, VNA East, Northeast District Department of Health, Community Health Resources (CHR), United Services, and Generations Family Health Centers.

Consultants were interviewed and The Center for Research and Public Policy was hired to conduct the assessment. Outside funding was sought and each partner contributed toward the fee amount in proportion to the size of their budgets. A total of $60,000 was budgeted for the process; an outside grant from Jewett City Savings Bank in the amount of $1,000 was received. All partners paid at least $1,000 and Windham Hospital’s portion was $19,000.

The primary goals of the Community Health Needs Assessment were to:
- Provide baseline measure of key health indicators
- Inform health policy and health strategies
- Provide a platform for collaboration among community groups
- Serve as a resource for individuals and agencies to identify community health needs
- Establish benchmarks and monitor trends
- Assist with community benefit requirements

**METHODOLGY AND RESULTS TO BE DESCRIBED**

The Health Assessment included seven focus groups, a comprehensive telephone survey, and the collection of secondary data. Focus group sessions were held among First Responders, Latinos, Community Leaders, School Based Health Providers, Boomers, Faith-Based and Youth groups.

The areas for investigation during the focus groups included:
- Perception of community healthcare status
- Current health insurance status, having Primary Care and Oral Health Providers
- Perceptions of current community standard of living
- Awareness of area healthcare facilities and organizations
Strengths and weaknesses of area health care service organizations
Area health care needs: under-met and unmet
Views on emerging needs
Needs specific to Faith Based, School Based, First Responders, and Community Leaders
Views on needs related to addictions, care givers, health/fitness, and mental health; and
Barriers to receiving needed health care in the community

Following approximately 90 minutes of dialogue during each focus group session, participants were asked to review an extensive list of health care programs and services. The programs and services that 80.0% or more of the group suggested as areas of need were as follows:

- Childcare – allowing travel for medical appointments
- Fitness and obesity education and programs
- Transportation to health care services
- Health insurance support
- Veterans health care
- Care giver education and support
- Behavioral risk prevention programs
- Alzheimer’s and Dementia support groups
- Nutritional education
- Food and meals for those in need
- School age bullying prevention services
- Parenting support programs; and
- Behavioral and Mental Health services

In addition, 630 telephone interviews using a quantitative research design were conducted from September 9 to September 19, 2011 among residents of the fifteen municipalities served in Windham County. Residents were contacted between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. weekdays and 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the weekend. Survey input and approval was provided by the Consortium officials. The survey areas for investigation included:

- Health care access
- Physical activity
- Dental care
- Cardiovascular disease
- Tobacco use
- Immunizations
- Falls
- Women’s health
- Prostate cancer screening
- Colorectal cancer screening
- Pre-diabetes and Diabetes
Nutrition
Sleep
Alcohol consumption
Healthy days
Family planning
Visual health and access to eye care
Caregiver
Veteran’s health
BMI’s; and
Demographics

The population-based survey was proportional to population contributions within the state, towns, and known census tract, group blocks and blocks. A super random digit sampling procedure was used which derived a working telephone sample of both listed and unlisted telephone numbers including cell and land lines. Respondents qualified for the survey if they confirmed they were at least 18 years of age and were current residents of one of the qualifying communities. The Center for Research and Public Policy maintained a 70% completion rate on all calls made. Statistically, a sample of 630 surveys represents a margin for error of +/- 4.0% at a 95% confidence level.

In comparison to the Center for Disease Control’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), Windham County was ahead in the following areas:

- Access to pneumonia shots
- Mammograms 40+
- Mammograms 50+
- Pap tests
- Getting pneumonia shots; and
- Colorectal screening

Windham County was neutral in comparison to BRFSS with colonoscopies and fell behind in:

- Health insurance
- Physical activity
- Dental visit
- Heart attacks
- Stroke
- Smoking
- Getting flu shots
- Getting prostate cancer screening
- Diabetes
- Fruits
Vegetables; and
BMI’s

Secondary data was compiled by The Center for Research and Public Policy using CDC and state data bases.

PRIORITIZED COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS

In December of 2011, the results of the study were presented to the Senior Leadership Team.

On January 23, 2012, the results of the survey were presented to the Governing Board of Windham Hospital.

In March 2012, the results of the survey were reviewed with Windham Hospital’s Quality Care Committee (QCC), a subcommittee of the governing board. QCC’s membership is comprised of two Governing Board Members, two Community Representatives, and seven Medical Staff Members. In discussions and review with Senior Leadership and based their professional and community experiences, QCC recommended that Diabetes and Obesity take priority on CHNA Action Plan.

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS

OBESITY
Recognizing the connection between Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease, Fruit and Vegetable consumption, and other chronic conditions to Obesity, Windham Hospital will seek to improve these conditions by focusing education and awareness on promoting healthy weight through diet and exercise. Windham Hospital expects that reducing the prevalence of residents who are overweight or obese will impact the number of residents at risk or diagnosed with Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease, and other chronic conditions.

GOAL: Reduce the prevalence of obesity among Windham County residents through promotion of healthy eating and physical activity

OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce overweight and obesity rates
- Improve diet and nutritional intake
- Increase physical activity and regular exercise among Windham County residents
KEY INDICATORS:

- % of overweight and obese adults based on Body Mass Index (BMI)
- Regular Physical Activity Rates
- Fruit and Vegetable Intake Rates

WINDHAM HOSPITAL STRATEGIES:
Expand educational opportunities to individuals about the importance of eating healthy foods with an emphasis on fruits and vegetables.

- **Health Education, Lectures, and Workshops** - Community lectures, presentations, workshops, and panel discussions on subjects concerning healthy living, prevention, and management of chronic diseases, and health education for the lay person. Community education efforts will expand with additional programs targeting Obesity, Healthy Eating, and Physical Activity as well as bilingual programming.

  **Partners:** Generations Family Health Center and Providers from Hartford Health Care Medical Group

  **Scope:** Windham Hospital service area

Increase availability and access to affordable healthy foods with an emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables.

- **Farm Stand at Windham Hospital** – Farmer’s Market held at last year’s staff picnic will be expanded in frequency to offer convenient access to fresh produce to community out patients, visitors, and hospital staff.

  **Partners:** Local Farms

  **Scope:** The Willimantic Downtown area and Windham County

- **Windham Hospital Meals to the Home** – Current program of meals delivered to the home will be expanded to include luncheons and events at local senior centers to offer consistent access to nutritious meals.

  **Partners:** VNA East and Local Senior Centers

  **Scope:** Windham County

Expand educational opportunities to individuals about the importance of physical activity and increase availability and access to free and low cost physical activity.
Wildcat Marathoners - The prevalence of overweight and obese children has increased dramatically. It is well known that obese/overweight children are at higher risk of remaining obese through adulthood, but childhood obesity is also the leading cause of pediatric hypertension, is associated with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, increases the risk of heart disease, increases the stress on joints, lowers self-esteem and affects relationships with classmates. Key components to a successful obesity treatment program: physical activity, dietary management and behavior modification. A team consisting of hospital dietitians, school nurses, physical education teachers and health teachers will work with the students and parents to promote healthy eating, modify behaviors, and exercise habits to treat obesity.

Partners: Windham Hospital Foundation, Windham Public School Based Health Centers, and Public Schools Systems
Scope: City of Willimantic and Windham County

EXISTING COMMUNITY ASSETS AND RESOURCES

- Windham Hospital Foundation
- Local Farmer’s Markets
- School Based Health Centers at Middle School and High School
- Windham County Public School Systems
- Covenant Soup Kitchen
- VNA East
- Windham County Senior Centers
- Windham County Community Centers
- Windham Hospital Cardiac and Respiratory Rehabilitation Classes
- Windham Hospital Chair Yoga Classes
- Windham Hospital Healthy Lifestyles Classes
- Windham Hospital Nutritional Counseling Classes

DIABETES

Successful community interventions aimed at preventing and managing Diabetes includes both physical activity and diet components. Structured programs of continuous education are most effective in improving patient outcomes. Windham Hospital will seek to improve these conditions by focusing education and awareness on promoting healthy lifestyles, prevention, and management. Windham Hospital expects that reducing the prevalence of residents who have Diabetes will impact the number of residents at risk or diagnosed with Cardiovascular Disease and other chronic conditions.
**GOAL:** Reduce the prevalence of Pre-Diabetes and Diabetes among Windham County residents through proper management of diets and physical activity.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Reduce Pre-Diabetes and Diabetes rates
- Improve diet and nutritional intake
- Increase physical activity and regular exercise among Windham County residents

**KEY INDICATORS:**

- #% of Pre-diabetic and Diabetic adults
- #% of Cardiovascular events
- Regular Physical Activity Rates
- Fruit and Vegetable Intake Rates

**WINDHAM HOSPITAL STRATEGIES**

Expand educational opportunities to individuals about the importance of preventing and managing Diabetes with an emphasis on physical activity and eating healthy foods.

- **Health Education, Lectures, and Workshops** - Community Lectures, presentations, workshops, and panel discussions on subjects concerning healthy living, prevention, and management of diabetes for the lay person. Community education efforts will expand with additional programs targeting Hypo/hyperglycemia, Treatments, Long Term Complications, Dietary Considerations, Carbohydrate Counting, Heart Healthy Eating, Insulin Pump Management, Dining Out Guidelines, Cooking Ideas, and Physical Activity as well as bilingual programming.

  **Partners:** Generations Family Health Center and Providers from Hartford Health Care Medical Group  
  **Scope:** Windham Hospital Service Area

Expand access to endocrinology services to individuals living in the City of Willimantic.

- **Endocrinology Provider Sessions** – Endocrinology Provider appointments will be offered on a routine basis to pre-diabetic and diabetic patients who find barriers to traveling outside of the city.

  **Partners:** Generations Family Health Center and Hartford Health Care Medical Group  
  **Scope:** City of Willimantic
EXISTING COMMUNITY ASSETS AND RESOURCES:

- Hartford Health Care Medical Group
- Windham Hospital Diabetes Education Classes
- Diabetes Update Support Group
- Windham Hospital Insulin Pump support Group
- Windham Hospital Pre-Diabetes Instruction
- Generations Family Health Center
- VNA East
- Windham County Senior Centers
- Windham County Community Centers

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND OTHER IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Windham Hospital, at the time of the survey, owned and operated a small prenatal clinic for uninsured and underinsured woman on its hospital campus. The Clinic’s focus has been on keeping uninsured and underinsured pregnant women healthy during their pregnancies through primary and secondary prevention and psychological and educational support. Subsequent to the completion of the survey and assessment, the one local private Obstetrical and Gynecology practice gave notice to the hospital and local legislators that they could no longer sustain their current practice model with greater than 50% of their practice being Medicaid patients. This created a critical barrier for women to access obstetrical and gynecological care in our community. Reproductive health is a major concern for the community as it is 80% of the work in our School Based Health Center at the local high school.

GOAL: Increase access to quality Women’s Healthcare for Windham County residents with a focus on obstetrics and gynecology.

OBJECTIVES:

- Mitigate and reduce the barriers to accessing free and low cost Women’s Health Services
- Increase number of female residents who have access to obstetrical and gynecological care
- Increase utilization of free and low cost health care services
- Increase coordination of care with primary care provider

KEY INDICATORS:

- Number of female adults who have access to Women’s Health Services
- Number of female adults who have health care coverage
Emergency Department usage for non-emergency obstetrical and gynecology needs

WINDHAM HOSPITAL STRATEGIES:

- **Women’s Health Center** - In providing Women’s Health Services, the hospital has historically worked closely with Generations Family Health Center and Mansfield Ob/GYN Associates in the delivery and coordination of care for Prenatal Clinic patients. Specifically, many of the clinic patients receive complementary primary care services from Generations Family Health Center. Mansfield Ob/GYN currently provides the clinic’s physician and mid-level provider support in connection with the provision of the services. This type of collaboration in this small community better serves the health care needs of its population.

The hospital now proposes to transfer the operational responsibility for the services to Generations Family Health Center. The hospital and Generations Family Health Center will enter into an access and license agreement for use of the same space and facilities, a lease agreement for the professional clinic staff services, and a Community Support Agreement wherein the hospital will provide a three year funding grant to Generations Family Health Center to assist with funding the transition of Women’s Health Services and covering the deficiencies between certain operating expenses and revenues.

Therefore, the clinic’s patients will see very little change other than the fact that the services will now be provided under Generations Family Health Center Clinic license rather than the hospital’s license. Uninsured and underinsured pregnant women will continue to receive the same services at the same clinic location and with the same providers, but with Generations Family Health Center being the provider of record rather than the hospital. Although the Hospital will no longer be providing outpatient prenatal services, it will continue to provide prenatal high-risk, diagnostic, and labor and delivery services to all patients, including the clinic’s patients through a provider contract with Mansfield OB/GYN.

**Partners:** Generations Family Health Center, Mansfield OB/GYN, and Windham Hospital Foundation (Gina’s Friends)

**Scope:** Windham County and Eastern Connecticut

EXISTING COMMUNITY ASSETS AND RESOURCES:

- State of Connecticut CBCC, WISE WOMAN, and Colorectal Programs
- Windham School Based Health Centers
- Planned Parenthood
- Hartford Hospital Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
RATIONALE FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS NOT ADDRESSED

To be the most effective and make the greatest impact on our community, it is understood that not all needs can be addressed at once. The two key priorities areas identified, Diabetes and Access to Care, are expected to also have a significantly influential impact on BMI’s, diets containing fruits and vegetables, physical activity, cardiac disease, and strokes. In order to avoid duplication of efforts, Behavioral and Mental Health issues in our community will be led by the specialists at Natchaug Hospital and United Services. However, the hospital is currently working on a strategic initiative with Natchaug Hospital to develop and implement an inpatient program to identify behavioral and mental health issues as comorbidities to coordinate care and decrease length of stay for the patient.

APPROVAL FROM THE GOVERNING BOARD

The Windham Hospital Board of Directors met on January 28, 2013 to review the recommended Implementation Strategy. The Board voted to adopt the Implementation Strategy as outlined a provided the necessary resources and support to carry out the initiatives therein.