



COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
2023-2025

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BLESSING HOSPITAL

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2023-2025

INTRODUCTION

Blessing Hospital is a 327-bed acute-care hospital in Quincy, Illinois. A not-for-profit, non-tax-supported, independent hospital, Blessing is committed to providing compassionate, high-quality care using advanced technology in state-of-the-art, comfortable facilities. DNV-GL Healthcare fully accredits the hospital.

Blessing Hospital is in Adams County, Illinois is located in the westernmost point of Illinois along the Mississippi River, just south of the intersection of Southeast Iowa, Northeast Missouri, and Western Illinois.

In 2001, the United Way of Adams County, the University of Illinois Extension, and the Adams County Health Department joined together to conduct a Community Needs Assessment and ongoing community planning process to address community health needs. With the enactment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) in 2010, Blessing Health System became more formally active in the collaboration, taking a leadership role in the community-building effort. In 2021, the United Way of Adams County applied for and received an R3 – Restore, Reinvest, Renew grant from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, which provided financial support for the community assessment.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The Adams County Community Building Council (CBC) guides the community needs assessment and planning process through developing programs, partnerships, and collaborations to address the needs identified in the 2021 CHNA. CBC members are community leaders representing workforce/ businesses, foundations, human service providers, faith, law enforcement, media, education, public health, and healthcare- including Blessing Hospital (which is the only local hospital) and outpatient providers, community members, and government. A staff member of Blessing Hospital and the Adams County Health Department co-chair the CBC.

Adams County has been conducting a community assessment for twenty years. In 2021, the Community Building Council opted to dig deeper to paint a more robust picture of Adams County and provide a foundation for problem identification and solving on behalf of the community. The survey instrument was overhauled, and an effort was launched to get a more diverse community representation. Feedback was secured from 861 respondents via two survey instruments. Respondents from the surveys were 93 percent white or Caucasian, 55 percent female, and the ratio of Quincy to rural Adams County residents was approximately 80/20. These demographics generally match the demographics of the Adams county region.

The survey results also included in-depth interviews with 33 key stakeholders on the front lines of community health and social service. These informed stakeholders shared candidly the challenges and opportunities they see for growth. While responses varied, one overwhelming theme throughout the interviews was **an innate hope and optimism** by practitioners in the direct service of our community in areas such as social services, health, education, and safety. In addition to primary data, secondary data were collected and included demographic, physical health, mental health, social, and economic information available from local, county, state, and federal primary sources. The secondary data allowed information on health and social issues on a broader scale and larger context. It included health indicators on a local, state, and national level; data trends; and comparisons among the county, state, and national data. This process allowed us to highlight and isolate areas that need

immediate attention and further study. It also assisted in identifying and leveraging our strengths in the community. In addition to informing county-wide priorities, the assessment serves as a resource for program, grant, and partnership development.

The assessment work began during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact of the pandemic was discussed in every interview and nearly every response. Secondary data presented in this report is the most current available, but almost all secondary data predates the pandemic that began in the community in March 2020. As new data shows just how deep the impact of the pandemic has been on our community, emerging research indicates that the pandemic will only exacerbate the community's greatest challenges.

This assessment brought a few major challenges and threats to the Adams County community to the surface. Over fifty percent of survey respondents reported that the overall health of Adams County residents had declined in the past ten years. Viewing this data through the lens of changing community demographics is important. The population of Adams County has decreased by 2.5 percent since 2010. At the same time, the number of residents aged 65 years and older has increased by 2.8 percent while the working age population of 25 to 34 years old has remained relatively unchanged. Going forward, the lack of population growth and the aging population could limit the potential for economic growth and affect the community's general health.

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) is defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion as 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. Adams County survey respondents identified the following SDOH as one of the top most critical issues facing Adams County residents:

- Economic Insecurity
- Lack of access to healthy foods/lack of nutritional education
- Lack of safe, affordable housing
- Poverty
- Aging Infrastructure
- Inequality
- Transportation

Extensive secondary data is found in this report to underscore these concerns. While the community health challenges identified in this assessment are daunting and, at times, worrying, overall, we witnessed optimism among our community leaders and residents. The assessment highlighted some important strengths Adams County should continue to leverage and build upon, including:

- Social Service Agencies
- Parks and Trails
- Public and Private School Systems
- Ongoing Collaboration, Planning, and Development Efforts
- Regional Healthcare Hub

MAJOR HEALTH NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

A community compression planning session was held to develop strategic priorities and set goals based on the 2021 Community Needs Assessment. The planning session was an opportunity for community leaders and frontline workers in education, social services, and health to come together to identify key community priorities and strategies for each priority. Members determined the priorities based on the magnitude of the problem, the severity of the problem, the need among vulnerable populations, the community's capacity and willingness to act on the issue, the ability to have a measurable impact on the issue, existing interventions focused on the issue and opportunity to intervene at the prevention level. Three community priorities were identified using this process and include:

1. **Housing:** Good health depends on having homes that are safe and free from physical hazards. Poor quality and inadequate housing contribute to health problems such as infectious and chronic diseases, injuries, and poor child development.
2. **Poverty:** Poverty is linked with negative conditions such as substandard housing, homelessness, inadequate nutrition, food insecurity, and under-resourced schools. Poor children and teens are at a greater risk for negative outcomes such as poor academic achievement, school dropout, abuse and neglect, behavioral and socioemotional problems, physical health problems, and developmental delays.
3. **Behavioral Health:** Behavioral health issues significantly impact people, families, communities, and societies. Many factors are linked to behavioral health, including genetics, age, income, education, employment, and environmental conditions. Substance abuse is a chronic but treatable brain disorder. People addicted cannot control their need for alcohol or other drugs, even in the face of negative health, social or legal consequences.

ADDRESSING COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS

Following the compression planning session, three community groups were formed to develop a community health plan containing key strategies and outcomes for each of the three identified priorities. The Community Building Council guides this process. Blessing Hospital identified behavioral health as the area most closely aligned with the organizational goals. This priority area and strategies were determined, considering the hospital's programming, resources, and priorities.

Following is Blessing Hospital's implementation plan with goals and strategies of the identified health priorities that meet community needs. This implementation plan aligns with the hospital's strategic planning initiatives. Many strategies will be implemented collaboratively, recognizing that no one organization affects substantial community change alone, the long-term outcomes identified in this implementation plan will be achieved as community organizations work together for collective impact.

Behavioral Health

Behavioral health issues significantly impact people, families, communities, and societies. Many factors are linked to behavioral health, including genetics, age, income, education, employment, and environmental conditions. Behavioral health provider shortages, overall access issues, and high rates of co-occurring behavioral health disorders and substance abuse issues raise concerns about the state of behavioral health in Adams County. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), behavioral health is essential to the prevention and effective treatment measures allowing individuals to recover from mental health crises. Direct access to health professionals and health services for behavioral health problems enables community residents to obtain proper care and treatment, leading to healthier lives.

Across the nation, mental illness continues to be a major issue for individuals and families. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines mental illness as “collectively all diagnosable mental disorders” or “health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior associated with distress and impaired functioning.” According to the CDC, serious mental illness costs in the United States amount to \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year. Mood disorders, including major depression, dysthymic disorder, and bipolar disorder, are the third most common cause of hospitalization in the United States for youth and adults aged 18 to 44.

A growing concern along with mental illnesses is substance abuse, which refers to the abuse of alcohol, the inappropriate use of prescription medicine, and the use of illegal drugs. According to the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, among people aged 12 and older in 2019, 60.1 percent (or 165.4 million people) used a substance (i.e., tobacco, alcohol, kratom, or an illicit drug) in the past month. In particular, 50.8 percent (or 139.7 million people) drank alcohol in the past month, 21.1 percent (or 58.1 million people) used a tobacco product in the past month, and 13.0 percent (or 35.8 million people) used an illicit drug in the past month. In addition, 0.3 percent (or 825,000 people) used kratom in the past month.

Adams county residents rated the overall mental health of Adams County residents a 5.71 on a scale of 10. This correlates with secondary data highlighting mental health trends. Our community is still battling a stigma around mental health and addiction, a barrier for those who need assistance. Mental health and substance abuse challenges impact all areas of quality of life. A few alarming trends include:

- Over the past five years, 35 percent of Blessing Hospital Emergency Department visits were related to Mental, Behavioral, and Neurodevelopmental Disorders.
- Adams County residents reported an average of 4.5 poor mental health days compared to an average of 3.8 days for Illinois residents.
- 14 percent of Adams County adults reported frequent mental distress (14 or more days of poor mental health per month) compared to 12 percent of Illinois adults.
- Drug overdose deaths in Adams County increased from 11 deaths in 2019 to 41 deaths in 2020.
- Adams County ranks among the highest counties in Illinois for methamphetamine arrests.

COVID Impact

- During the pandemic, about 4 in 10 adults in the U.S. have reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder, up from 1 in 10 adults who reported these symptoms from January to June 2019. Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey, 2020
- Adults reported a 12 percent increase in alcohol consumption or substance use during the pandemic. Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use.

No one factor dictates the overall health of an individual or community. Individuals' actions to improve their health, access to care, and social and economic factors all come into play. This assessment illuminates improvement opportunities and considers that not everyone has the means and opportunities to make healthy decisions. Addressing the issues outlined in this assessment will require a sustained, long-term, and fully resourced County-wide effort.

Adams County Community Mental Health/Substance Use Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve access to behavioral health services, including mental health and substance abuse disorder services.• Increase awareness and normalize treatment of mental health.
Adams County Community Mental Health Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease the percentage of Adams County adults who report 14 or more days of poor mental health per month. Target: 12% by 2025; Baseline: 14%; Data Source: 2021 County Health Rankings, BRFSS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease the number of mentally unhealthy days reported by Adams County residents in the past 30 days. Target: 3.8% by 2025; Baseline: 4.5%; Data Source: 2021 County Health Rankings, BRFSS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease the percentage of emergency department visits for mental and behavioral disorders at Blessing Hospital. Target 30% by 2025; Baseline 35% Data Source: Blessing Health System Data Analytics, 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease the percentage of Adams County 10th graders who report that they experience depression. Target: 38 % by 2025; Baseline 43%; Data Source: 2020 Illinois Youth Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease the percentage of the Adams County population that is at risk for binge drinking (5 or more drinks on one occasion for men, 4 or more drinks on one occasion for women). Target: 15% by 2025; Baseline: 19.2%; Data Source: Illinois County Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 2015-2019.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decrease the percentage of the Adams County population that is at risk for healthy drinking (2 or more drinks per day for men, 1 or more drink per day for women). Target: 6.4 % by 2025; Baseline 6.9%; Data Source: Illinois County Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 2015-2019.

Collaborative Partners (The collaborative partners make up the Community Building Council Behavioral Health Team):

- SIU Health Care Quincy Family Medicine
- Transitions of Western Illinois
- Blessing Health System
- Cornerstone: Foundations for Families
- Quincy Catholic Charities
- Lutheran Child & Family Services
- Recovery Resources
- Quanada
- Quincy Public Schools
- Bella Ease
- Horizons
- Tracey Family Foundation
- Clarity Healthcare
- Quincy Police Department
- Quincy Medical Group
- Addicts Victorious
- American Red Cross
- Adams County Health Department
- Salvation Army

Blessing Hospital Behavioral Health Strategy:

Blessing Hospital develops an internal strategy that aligns with the identified community goals and objectives. Blessing Hospital's behavioral health strategy aims to increase access, reduce behavioral health admissions to the Emergency Department, and increase community participation. Tactics utilized to achieve this goal include:

- Recruitment - add additional therapists, psychologists, PMHNP, and psychiatrists
- Retention- retain existing therapists, psychologists, PMHNP, and psychiatrists
- Marketing/ social media tactics to continue efforts of promoting behavioral health services
- Continue to grow the partial hospitalization program
- Increase telehealth usage for behavioral health services, including the rural clinics
- Utilize the Behavioral Health Integration model to improve the quality of behavioral health services in primary and specialty care clinics
- Crisis stabilization model for Emergency Room- Develop a model for crisis stabilization for patients who present with behavioral health concerns in the Emergency Department
- Evidence-Based Training- Provide training to all staff throughout the service line
- Strengthen clinical intervention strategies and treatment in inpatient units

Blessing Hospital Behavioral Health Measurement:

The following outcomes will be tracked to measure success:

- Number of open provider and therapist positions in outpatient clinics
- Average daily patient census in BEST Self Center
- Utilization rate across the behavioral health service line for providers
- Utilization rate across the behavioral health service line for therapists
- Number of outreach events
- No-show rates
- Time to first available appointment for outpatient services
- Number of patients utilizing the Neuroflow application
- Decrease the 30-day readmission rate for psychiatric units

AREAS NOT ADDRESSED IN THE BLESSING HOSPITAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The remaining priority areas are not being directly addressed by Blessing Hospital, although Blessing continues to support the initiatives and has representation on all of the community solution teams. The reason that Blessing Hospital is not working on these directly is that they don't fit within the strategic priorities of the health system, and there are other entities within the community better equipped to address these important community priorities:

- **Poverty-** The poverty team is co-chaired by the Workforce Development Committee members. The goal is to lift families out of poverty through sustained financial stability. Blessing has three representatives on the committee. Other members represent Quanada, University of Illinois Extension, Bella Ease, Community Foundation, Adams County Health Department, Horizons, United Way of Adams County, The Crossing Church, SIU, Safe and Livable Housing Committee, Western Illinois Works, Quincy Public Schools, First Banker's Trust, Salvation Army, and West Central Childcare Connection.
- **Housing-** A representative from the YWCA and the Great River Economic Development Office co-chairs the housing team. There are two subcommittees- supply and access. The committee's goal is to increase the number of residents in affordable, safe, and livable housing. The key strategies are identifying the number of affordable housing units available to residents in Adams County and increasing and removing barriers to housing for low-income residents. Blessing has four representatives on this committee. Other members represent the Adams County Board, Connect Child and Family Solutions, local realtors, First Banker's Trust, Kroc Center, Quincy Human Rights Commission, Transitions, Quanada Women's Shelter, Two Rivers, Bella Ease, Horizons, Quincy Housing Authority, Quincy Safe and Livable Housing Committee, Salvation Army, and the Adams County Health Department.

SUMMARY

The Adams County community has developed a strong and robust community assessment and planning process that is collaborative and involves a strong partnership of community entities. A Blessing Health System staff co-chairs the Community Building Council, which is responsible for leading the community needs assessment and planning process. The health system has a strong presence on each team responsible for addressing three priority health needs identified in the 2021 CHNA. This alignment of Blessing Hospital with the Community Building structure is key to continuing the efforts of identifying specific objectives toward which our community will work in the coming years.

BOARD APPROVAL

The implementation strategy was reviewed and approved by the Blessing Hospital Board of Trustees at its' virtual January, 2023 meeting.