



Gifford Health Care

Annual Progress Report

Implementation Strategies to Improve Community Health: 2016

Gifford's mission is to provide accessible, quality local health care to every person who walks through our doors. In 2015, as part of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, we performed a Community Healthcare Needs Assessment in part through surveying community members in multiple area towns. In 2016, this assessment was reviewed and modified as required by the federal mandate.

Gifford has strategically worked to address the community's need within its role as a health care provider. Areas initially identified as health problems include: preventative health /access to health care, substance abuse counseling, obesity, and dental care. This update outlines areas of ongoing focus in 2016:

Preventative healthcare/access to healthcare

To facilitate an increased focus on preventative health care and improve access to care, Gifford has implemented a new primary care team model that pairs a physician with nurse practitioners and physician assistants who are specially trained to help patients with preventative and primary care (seven mid-level providers joined our staff in 2016).

Substance abuse counseling

As a Federally Qualified Health Center Gifford's Behavioral Health and Blueprint for Health team specialists offer counseling and one-on-one patient care at all Gifford primary care locations. A newly-created Addiction Medicine program, fully staffed with a board-certified psychiatrist certified in addiction medicine, and a licensed alcohol and drug counselor, offers ongoing suboxone treatment for patients with complex needs; suboxone provider support, education,, and consultation; and therapy to help patients rebuild lives damaged by opioid use disorder.

Obesity

Gifford's primary care team has long been a proponent of healthy lifestyle choices for good health and the prevention of disease and obesity. BMIs are determined at annual health screenings and patients are guided by providers and Gifford's registered dietitians on healthy diets and portion control. Discussions in support group settings (such as diabetes and other chronic conditions) often focus on healthy choices to reduce and prevent disease. Patients are strongly encouraged to be physically active.

In 2016 Gifford took the childhood obesity epidemic discussion outside of the doctor's office by giving local elementary and high schools grants to support increased healthy exercise initiatives

and the purchase of physical education equipment; we also supported the farm-to-school food program to encourage healthy food habits.

Dental care

Gifford's Federally Qualified Health Center designation has brought resources that help us support local dentists as they strive to better care for the under- and uninsured. To increase awareness of dental health, we have offered free medical and dental health screenings and distributed information about community resources that can help with access to dental care. At a free Medical and Dental Health Access Day offered in 2015 those without ongoing primary care were connected with Gifford providers to ensure that dental care would continue to be part of ongoing preventive health efforts. Gifford is now partnering with two dentists to provide needed dental care.