



Gifford Health Care

Implementation Strategies to Improve Community Health: 2018

As a community health center and medical home, Gifford Health Care's mission is to improve the health of the people we serve by providing and assuring access to affordable, high-quality health care, and by promoting the health and well-being of everyone in our service area.

Every three years Gifford conducts a formal Community Healthcare Needs Assessment (CHNA). Designed to fulfill the requirements of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, these assessments identify and prioritize issues and needs to help Gifford provide services to improve the health of our community.

The priority community health problems identified by this 2018 CHNA are preventative health/access to health-care services, substance abuse counseling, obesity, and dental care. The following work has been done in response to this survey, and Gifford will continue to be responsive.

Preventative Health Care

Gifford has joined forces with RiseVT, allowing for greater community engagement to improve health now and for the future. The partnership enables us to increase our outreach with local municipalities, schools and workplaces to raise awareness about wellness through nutrition and activity, and supports mini-grants for organizations that are striving to make changes to make Vermont a healthier state in 10 years.

Gifford looks forward to collaborating with small businesses to implement wellness programs in the workplace to ensure their staff members are taking preventative measures to ensure health. In addition, our outreach in the school will continue to be a top priority as we strive to educate youth on the importance of physical activity and healthy eating habits to help them grow to be healthier adults. Education and prevention must start at a young age to break the cycle of escalating health-care costs.

Gifford continues to work closely with local senior centers to provide free lunches and education opportunities to raise awareness about services available to help seniors prevent or manage illness. Topics so far have included tick safety, memory loss, wound care and prevention, fall prevention, and strength training. In 2018 we offered free clinics for skin screenings, gait analysis, diabetic foot screenings, and prostate screenings. These screenings are made available in clinic locations throughout our area to increase accessibility.

Substance Abuse Counseling

In 2017 Gifford added an Addiction Medicine section to our Behavioral Health program, hiring a board-certified psychiatrist—certified in addiction medicine—and a licensed drug and alcohol counselor to focus on our community's growing substance use disorder issues. They see patients in our medication assisted treatment (MAT) program, and work with primary care providers on pain medication guidelines and care for patients tapering off opioids prescribed for chronic pain.

Gifford continues to work with our regional prevention partnership as well as Green Peak Alliance on outreach efforts to raise awareness about alcohol and addiction. We also work closely with the Vermont Department of Health on outreach initiatives related to addiction.

Gifford continues to support the Law Enforcement Against Drugs (LEAD) program with the Orange County Sheriff's Department. With our investments the curriculum grew and enhanced the focus on trending drugs that are evolving and changing. Gifford will take our own expertise into the local schools to educate children on the

dangers of vaping. We also partnered with the Randolph Technical Career Center (RTCC) to bring in speakers from New England poison control for education on e-cigarettes.

In January 2018, Gifford installed a take-back kiosk in the hospital's main lobby for the safe disposal of prescription drugs. More than 1,000 pounds of drugs were safely disposed in the first 14 months. In addition, postage-paid mailing envelopes were made available in all Gifford clinic locations, local police stations, and the local library. The take-back program helps keep our neighbors and environment safer.

In January 2018, Gifford received grant funding to host a six-week series focused on addiction. Topics included signs and symptoms of addiction, how to talk to your kids about drugs, the science behind drugs, recovery options, and how you can help. In addition, we partnered with Kimball Public Library to host a viewing and discussion of "Heroin(e)," the Netflix documentary about West Virginia's devastating opioid epidemic.

Gifford is now a naloxone distribution site; rescue kits are offered at no cost and with no questions asked.

Nutrition/Obesity

Taking advantage of our internal expertise, Gifford will host a free community series on nutrition that will include cooking demonstrations, shopping at the farmers market, and cooking for wellness. Gifford also will partner with Kimball Public Library and the Randolph Recreation Department to host a series of nutrition and cooking demonstrations for area youth with an eye on healthy snacks, healthy dinners that kids will enjoy, as well as getting kids involved and helping them understand why it's important to eat healthy.

In partnership with the Randolph Area Food Shelf, Gifford is ensuring access to food with the placement of bags of nonperishable goods in our clinics. Our goal is to ensure our patients do not have to make the choice between prescriptions and food.

In May 2019, Gifford will begin a partnership with VeggieVanGo, a program of the Vermont Foodbank. Once a month all area community members with any food insecurities will be invited to Gifford to pick up vegetables at no cost. Each event will include a demonstration of how to prepare one of the available veggies, and additional health resources and outreach will be available.

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 partnered with HealthHub, a local nonprofit with a mobile dental trailer. The trailer travels to a variety of locations, including area schools and Gifford, to offer screenings, X-rays, examinations and cleanings by a dental hygienist. The service is available to adults and children and has a sliding-fee scale, offering care for free or for a \$5 copay. In 2018, HealthHub offered services to 541 individuals.

Gifford will continue to promote this service at our primary care clinics and help with advertising. In the food bags noted above, we include information on HealthHub, our Blueprint for Health team, and area food shelves.

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