



Bennett County HOSPITAL and NURSING HOME
Serving the Bennett County Community's Healthcare Needs

Bennett County Hospital and Nursing Home
Community Health Needs Assessment

November 30, 2015

Bennett County Hospital is a non-profit, community based facility. It is designated as a Critical Access Hospital with 14 licensed acute care beds and a twenty-four hour dedicated Emergency Room. The Hospital is governed by a five member Board of Directors, consisting of volunteer members of the area's business community.

The Hospital is a single entity, not part of a larger health system or chain. The attached 42 bed Nursing Home is also non-profit, community based and governed by the same Board. There is an attached Medical Clinic space that was formerly leased to a separate medical clinic business entity, Horizon Health Care. The Hospital plans to open its own rural health clinic in this attached clinic space in the spring of 2016.

Data included in this Community Health Needs Assessment has been obtained from multiple sources to provide a broad based picture of the area's challenges and the population's needs. This assessment attempts to represent qualitative and quantitative data, as well as data from both primary and secondary sources. It is done in collaboration with input from Horizon Health Care Clinic, who continue to operate in the community.

Bennett County is a health care provider shortage area (HPSA), with a 2015 updated HPSA score of 19. In the fall of 2015 Weber Medical Clinic, an independent provider based clinic in the community for many years, was sold to Horizon Health and they moved from the Hospital site to the former Weber Medical building. When Weber Medical closed its doors the community lost 1.5 full time advanced practice providers.

Currently Horizon Health Clinic employs three full time Advanced Practice Providers and one Medical Doctor, who works 2 days a month. There is also an Indian Health Services Clinic new to the community last year that has one full time Advanced Practice Provider. Other clinics available for enrolled tribal members exist in Pine Ridge, approximately 45 miles from Martin, or Mission, approximately 50 miles from Martin.

Bennett County Hospital is also an active participant in nationwide quality improvement projects through the South Dakota Foundation for Medical Care, the QIO for Medicare and Medicaid programs in South Dakota. The facility maintains active membership in the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations as well, utilizing the educational and networking opportunities provided through these organizations to encourage current best practice standards of care.

Located in the central part of Bennett County, in south central South Dakota, the Hospital serves a vast frontier area. Bennett County is situated between the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian Reservations. With poverty rates of 41.2% and 33.8%, Todd and Bennett Counties are, respectively, the 5th and 25th poorest counties in the United States. Todd County lies entirely within the Rosebud Indian Reservation and is home to a largely Native American population, with 41.2% of residents living below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. With characteristics similar to Todd County, Bennett County's population is comprised of 55.9% Native American population, and 33.8% have incomes below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. Bennett County Hospital is not, however, on reservation land and is not an Indian Health Services facility.

The Hospital averages over 200 emergency room visits per month, with 88% of these representing Native American population. The facility's bad debt expense, as a percentage of gross revenue, is between 7 to 8%, well above the national average. The Hospital is in constant communication with Indian Health Services for their assistance with tribal enrollees, but despite continued efforts, payment for even life threatening emergency services provided is difficult to obtain and often never forthcoming.

The Bennett County Nursing Home is a 42 bed intermediate level of care facility. The Nursing Home population is comprised mostly of Native Americans. Due to the poverty level of the area, Medicaid is the primary payment source representing between 92 to 95%. In a 2007 Long Term Care Survey, the Bennett County Nursing Home was designated as an "access critical" facility. Later, in 2011, the State legislature put this plan into law designating the Nursing Home as a "high need" facility. During 2011 the South Dakota Department of Social Services assisted with interim payments so the facility would be able to meet payroll. The State Department of Health has assisted with Critical Access Hospital education and 340B assistance with DOH Secretary Hollingsworth supporting and facilitating enrollment in drug purchases.

South Dakota's Department of Health reports a variety of health indicators from South Dakota's 66 counties. The Centers for disease Control and Prevention and the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion monitor several data sets from all 50 states. Using data from these three sources and comparing data to goals established by the surgeon General in "Healthy People 2010 (HP2010)" the target population in the Bennett County Hospital service area demonstrates significant health disparities, compared to other South Dakotans and HP 2010 goals.

At 52.4%, the Diabetes Mortality Rate, per 100,000, (2004-2008) is almost double the rate for the State of South Dakota and 7% above the "Healthy People 2010 Goals." The proportion of adults reporting diagnosis of high blood pressure, a Cardiovascular Disease Health Item (2009), at 31.6%, is 2% higher than the State and double that of the "Healthy People 2010 Goals." The Prenatal and Peri-natal Health Item: Late Entry into Prenatal Care (2004-2008 five year combined percent of live births with entry into prenatal care later than 1st trimester) is 34.7%, which is 8% higher than the State, and three times that of the "Healthy People 2010 Goals."

Elderly (65 and older) comprise 16.1% of the target population compared to 14.3% for the State and 12.6% for the U.S. In addition to facing higher rates of chronic disease, senior citizens are at higher risk for complications and death due to influenza and pneumonia. Immunization screening and implementation strategies provided by the Hospital at point of care can assist in the prevention of these diseases and aid in reducing morbidity and mortality.

Bennett County Hospital has a defined Charity Care Program as part of the Hospital's commitment to meet the community's health care needs. Depending on family size and income, an applicant may be eligible for up to a 100% reduction of their bill. Charity Care Program information is prominently displayed in both of the Hospital's Emergency Room bays, the out-patient treatment room, and the front lobby and full information packets readily available in all of these areas. The policy is also included with all hospital in-patient admission packets.

An independent “healthcare needs” assessment survey tool was distributed to a cross-section of the community by the Hospital with 50% of surveys returned. Areas of need identified on the surveys included:

- Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapies
- Kidney Dialysis
- Mental Health Services
- Specialty Services (cardiac, orthopedic, neurology, diabetes programs, health and wellness, etc)
- Transportation Services
- Drug and alcohol recovery services
- Another health clinic

Obstacles to care identified on the survey tools included:

- Limited community funds for improvement of services
- Difficulty recruiting and retaining professionals (physicians, mid-levels, RNs, radiology & lab techs) to the area
- Hospital struggles financially related to percentage of services delivered to Indian Health Services eligible patients for whom no reimbursement is received from I H S, and number of uninsured patients, and number of Medicaid only patients served
- No public transportation services
- Out-dated facility with limited space to accommodate additional services

In the March 2012 Needs Assessment Survey of the service area, compiled by Horizon Health Care, Inc. (HHC) four major barriers impacting access to care and unmet need for primary health care were identified as follows:

- Population to Primary Care Physician Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Ratio = 6912:1
- Percent of Population at or below 100 percent of Federal Poverty Level = 33.8% for Bennett County and 41.2% for Todd County
- Percent of Population Uninsured
- Transportation – no scheduled transportation or cab service exists in the area

The Bennett County Hospital survey tool very much mirrored the findings of the HHC survey assessment data.

Sustainability of Bennett County Health Care (Hospital and Nursing Home) will be influenced by the following goals and measures implemented:

1. To keep the organization moving by cash flowing to ensure access to emergency, acute, skilled swing bed, home health and long term care for the county and reservation areas.

2. A CPA firm has been involved to ensure cost accounting is maximized for organizational direction.
3. A Consultant to assist with Long Term Care budgeting, and operational assistance continues to be engaged to improve operational success.
4. Successful opening and operation of on-site rural health clinic
5. The organization has implemented an Electronic Health Record system and must continue to meet the requirements and deadlines proposed by the Center for Medicare Services to maximize Quality care and financial reimbursement.
6. The Hospital is assessing the need and sustainability of employing a physician to function specifically on the BCHC team.
7. The facility continues to face work force challenges.

In June of 2014 the Hospital completed the project to add the availability of CT scanning to the services it provides. A modular building, specific to meet the regulatory requirements of housing a CT unit, was purchased and placed adjacent to the Emergency Services entrance to the facility, and a 16 slice CT was installed. This service results in reduced transfers to Rapid City for further diagnostic testing, improved emergent care, and additional income for the Hospital to further improve financial stability. During 2015 an average of 48 CTs per month are performed at the facility, originating both from emergent care and out patient referrals from other health care entities.

Four years ago the Hospital added full time Physical Therapy services, which has been a well received program. The Physical Therapy department, at present, is averaging 129 procedures per month (up 16 procedures per month from the 2012 survey), serving both hospital in-patient, and community out-patient needs. The next closest South Dakota facility providing this service is located in Philip, SD, which is a 90 miles away. The Hospital continues to advertise this service addition and looks to expand the program further.

The Bennett County Hospital Home Health Department provides much needed home care services to this area and has recently expanded services to include the area of Mission, SD as well. For the months of January 2015 through October 2015, this department provided 2690 home care procedures. These services include skilled nursing, physical therapy, homemaker, and cardiac rehab. The Department contracts with the VA to provide services to area Veterans also. The BCH Home Health Department is the primary home care source providing service to this vast area.

As part of Bennett County Hospital's continuing efforts to meet community needs, the Hospital added the services of Occupational and Speech Therapy Consultants during the 2012 year.

The Hospital Board now holds an annual Strategic Planning session to ensure continued viability of the services it provides and forward progress in meeting the needs of the community.

Bennett County Hospital remains firmly committed to its mission statement: Caring people working together, as a team, to provide quality health care and education for a healthier community.

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