


Geisinger Medical Center
Geisinger-Shamokin Area Community Hospital

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT



GEISINGER



Over nearly a century, Geisinger has been deeply committed to doing what is right for the communities we serve. In fact, Geisinger Medical Center (GMC) opened earlier than planned in 1915 to handle the health care needs associated with a typhoid outbreak.

Although Geisinger Health System is a much different place than GMC was long ago, we remain true to our patient care, education, research and community service mission. As part of this endeavor, we are proud to support and participate in regular community health needs assessments in conjunction with other area organizations.

Community health needs assessments are an important component in our effort to enhance the health and well-being of the people throughout central and northeastern Pennsylvania. Please read the information in this brochure and visit geisinger.org/chna to learn more about Geisinger's ongoing efforts in this regard.

Long ago, our founder Abigail Geisinger set a high standard by stating, "Make my hospital right. Make it the best." We believe community health needs assessments and the actions we take as a result help us achieve that goal.

Sincerely,



Glenn Steele, MD
President & Chief Executive Officer

Getting to Know You Better

Meeting the needs of the communities we serve means understanding those communities thoroughly. And what better way to do that than by talking to the people who live and work there through a Community Health Needs Assessment?

We partnered with ACTION Health and other local non-profit hospitals to bring Tripp Umbach, a private healthcare consulting firm and nationally recognized leader in health needs assessments, to our area. Together, we collected data and interviewed local community members, social service workers, health care professionals, legislators and representatives from schools, businesses, local government, emergency management and faith-based organizations. The study was completed in June 2012 and what we discovered was eye opening.

Geisinger Medical Center and Geisinger-Shamokin Area Community Hospital* serve different communities but their primary needs are the same. On the top of the list in both cases was a need to improve access to healthcare for underinsured and uninsured residents. According to the study, there are a shrinking number of healthcare providers in both areas. The shortfall in the number of physicians will affect everyone, but the impact will be most severe on vulnerable and underserved populations. Northumberland County, served by both facilities, has a substantially lower ratio of physicians in direct patient care (77.9 per 100,000 population) than the state ratio (247.8 per 100,000 population). This fact, combined with a high rate of unemployment and the high cost of health insurance means too many residents were not getting the care they need.

A second crucial need for both communities was education aimed at improving healthy behaviors. By improving nutrition, making better lifestyle choices about smoking and substance abuse, and increasing physical activity, individuals can help to prevent some of today's most prevalent chronic illnesses, such as obesity, diabetes and pulmonary issues. But the study showed that there was a general lack of education regarding nutrition and community members have limited access to healthy food options, due to the cost, limited access to healthy produce, and the prevalence of convenient but unhealthy food options. In Northumberland County, 26% of the population are smokers. And throughout our region, individuals and families have limited access to clean and safe recreational facilities, which contributes to a lack of exercise. Barriers such as these make improving healthy behaviors a challenge for many in our region.

**A campus of Geisinger Medical Center*

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

for Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder & Union counties



The third largest need for both areas was to improve transportation services. Community leaders, key stakeholders, and focus group participants all reported that a lack of transportation, coupled with the predominantly rural nature of our region, made it challenging for many residents to access healthcare. Although multiple community transportation systems are in place, the study showed they are limited and unable to meet the transportation needs of our community, due to program restrictions, lack of funding and increased number of riders. In addition, the growing senior population in our region means demand on existing transportation systems will only increase in the future and can pose a challenge for area seniors to access healthcare.

So now that we better understand the needs of the communities we serve, what are we doing to meet them?

Plenty.

With \$336.6 million put toward community support in 2012 alone, the programs showcased in this brochure are just a small sampling of the ways in which we're working to improve the lives of the people we serve.

Nearly a century ago, Abigail Geisinger had a vision of a hospital that would redefine boundaries and bring world-class health care to rural Pennsylvania. "Make my hospital right. Make it the best." she said. And that is what we continue to strive to do.



Your Community is our Community.

Exceptional healthcare. It's what our neighbors in northeastern and central Pennsylvania have been expecting from us for generations. And after nearly a century, we're meeting, and exceeding, those expectations like never before.

In fact, Geisinger's integrated healthcare system has become a nationally recognized model for delivering innovative, high-quality care that's efficient, effective, and most importantly, compassionate.



The way we see it, we don't treat illness. We treat people.

People like Don, a WWII Veteran who is able to live at home with his daughter and son-in-law because he spends his days with his second family at the LIFE Geisinger Program in Kulpmont.

People like Randy, uninsured and suffering from acute kidney disease but able to get the care and medication he

needs thanks to our partnership with A Community Clinic Inc. in Sunbury.

And all the people in our community who have a way to keep excess medication out of the hands of their children while enjoying cleaner drinking water thanks to our Medication Disposal Project.

Geisinger Health System touches the lives of tens of thousands of people each year. With that many people depending on us, we take our commitment to the communities we serve very seriously. In 2012 alone, we provided community support including free care for patients who could not afford to pay; care for the elderly and poor not covered by Medicare or Medicaid; and numerous community health, education and outreach programs that promote positive, healthy behaviors and encourage early detection and treatment of disease.

We're also proud of the fact that in 2012 the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania reported that Geisinger Health System has an annual \$6.1 billion positive impact on the local, regional, and Pennsylvania economy.

Our non-profit mission allows us to not only make significant investments in community needs, but also partner with other local non-profit organizations to help improve the health of the people we serve in central and northeast Pennsylvania.

Hope for the Hardworking Underinsured

“Any doctor who wants to know what life is really about should volunteer at a clinic like this,” says John Pagana, MD, President and Volunteer Medical Director of A Community Clinic, Inc. in Sunbury.

At Dr. Pagana’s clinic, eligible local residents receive free medical care and something equally important - respect. “I never feel like I’m being judged in any way by anyone here,” says Randy Renard, who has been coming to the clinic for years. “Everyone is wonderful. They go out of their way to make sure I’m comfortable. And the care I get is superb.”

Randy exudes positive energy and looks far younger than his true age. But in reality, Randy suffers from hypertension and acute kidney disease. With only one kidney left, it’s vitally important that he gets the medication he needs and sees his Nephrologist at Geisinger Medical Center regularly.

Luckily, as a patient of A Community Clinic, his medications, lab work, and appointments are free. “We have a long list of specialists who are willing to work with our patients,” Dr. Pagana explains, adding that pharmaceutical companies have been generous too. “Diabetics often go off their medications because of cost. But through the clinic we can offer free, or at most, \$4 prescriptions.”

Dr. Pagana is quick to point out that his clinic’s services are designed for hardworking people who are doing everything they can to make ends meet. “A single working mother of three shouldn’t have to choose between feeding her family for a month and a chest x-ray for a child who may have pneumonia,” he says.

The doctor adds that he knows there’s a fine line between helping and enabling. “If you’re sincerely trying to take care of yourself, we’re here to help,” he says. “In fact, there’s nothing I find more personally gratifying.”

Free healthcare services for the under and uninsured

Our local free clinics are not supported by the federal government. State funds and donations from health organizations like Geisinger help these vital care resources stay in the fight for healthier communities.

Geisinger provides laboratory and radiology services, plus one consult visit each year for under and uninsured residents that utilize this clinic, which serves Montour, Northumberland, Union and Snyder counties.

A Community Clinic
335 Market Street
Sunbury, PA 17801
Phone: 570.988.1270
acomunityclinic.org





Improving Quality of Life for Qualified Seniors

“What we offer is peace of mind,” explains Robb McQuillan, Director of the LIFE Geisinger program. “Peace of mind for the families and peace of mind for the seniors in our care.”

Anyone over fifty-five and eligible for nursing home care can participate in the LIFE Geisinger program. This allows them to receive 24/7 access to in-home care along with the opportunity to spend two to five days a week at the LIFE Geisinger Center—with all transportation provided by the program.

At the LIFE Geisinger Center, seniors are offered physical and occupational therapy, a physician is on hand to meet medical needs, a dietician ensures proper nutrition, and there are activities designed to enhance cognitive skills. But what’s the most important thing many seniors find at the Center?

Friends!

“The people here are great,” says Don Zimmerman, a current LIFE Geisinger participant. “And by that I mean everyone. Staff, patients, doctors, drivers. Everyone.”

At ninety-two, Mr. Zimmerman has been coming to the LIFE Geisinger Center in Kulpmont since 2009. His transportation to and from the Center is fully provided as part of the program so he’s able to spend his nights and weekends at home with his daughter and son-in-law. “I don’t know where I’d be without the Center,” he says. “Probably in a nursing home. I am so thankful to be here instead.”

Mr. Zimmerman says he wakes up each morning eager to participate in the day’s events. “They have so many fun activities for us,” he explains. “And people come to entertain us: guitarists, piano players, dancers—even belly dancers. We take trips, too. We’ve been to the casinos and on hayrides. We even went to an Amish camel farm.”

He says there are also regular group exercise sessions and games to challenge the mind. “But even when they have us working, they also have us laughing. On some days I feel like a teenager again.”

LIFE Geisinger for independent-minded seniors

LIFE Geisinger (Living Independently For Elders) provides additional independence for seniors, their families and caregivers and can help seniors stay in their homes while getting the daily living and health services they need.

Our team of professionals is on call all day, every day, for non-emergencies.

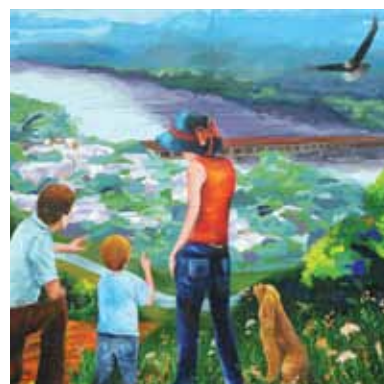
The LIFE Geisinger team is also recognized as a national leader in caring for individuals with dementia disorders such as Alzheimer’s. In fact, we’re designated as an Excellence in Care Dementia Program of Distinction by the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America.



Who’s eligible?

Eligible individuals must have Medicare, Medicaid or be able to pay privately. Additional eligibility requirements include:

- Be at least 55 years of age.
- Live within the designated service territory of Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Schuylkill, Luzerne or Lackawanna counties.
- Meet the clinical nursing home criteria as determined by the Area Agency on Aging.
- At the time of enrollment, be able to safely live in a community setting.



LIFE Geisinger
1100 Spruce Street, Suite 100
Kulpmont, PA 17834
Phone: 570.373.2100
Toll free: 1.866.230.6465
lifegeisinger.org



Protecting our Families and the Environment

If you opened your medicine cabinet right now, would you find medication left over from a past illness, or expired medications? According to John Jones, R.Ph., Vice President Enterprise Pharmacy, if you're like most people, the answer is yes.

Or it should be.

The sad truth is you could very likely open your medicine cabinet and find an empty shelf where you thought that medication would be. According to Jones, it's happening all the time.

Many parents don't realize their teenagers are raiding the family medicine cabinet, bringing prescription pills to parties, and sharing them—even adding alcohol or caffeine to the mix. This can lead to tragic results.

These 'pharm parties' are a big reason Jones created the Medication Disposal Project, a better solution when it comes to disposing of expired and unused prescription drugs.

But teenagers aren't the only ones to benefit from the program. Every year the Emergency Department sees too many children under the age of five brought in due to accidental overdoses. Getting these medications out of the home keeps them out of very young hands too.

Just as important as keeping these prescription drugs out of the reach of children, is making sure they do not make their way into our drinking water.

Skip Wieder, Sr. Vice President Emeritus Geisinger Health System, and Executive Director of the Susquehanna River Heartland Coalition for Environmental Studies, is a strong supporter of the Medication Disposal Project. According to numerous studies and reports, a wide array of pharmaceuticals are being found in our waterways, including estrogen, antidepressants, and antibiotics. This is resulting in populations of fish that not only exhibit both male and female sex characteristics but are also more susceptible to disease and premature death than fish found in untainted water. This pollution is affecting other animal and plant species too.

According to Jones, water treatment facilities are currently unable to filter out these substances. This means proper disposal of medication will help protect the environment and our drinking water, too.

He points out that at this time, the Medication Disposal Project is unable to accept narcotics. These still have to be collected by law enforcement during *Take Back Days*. "Regulations can change though," he says. "We're certainly working on it. These are the substances we're most concerned about obviously."

Protecting kids & wildlife from dangerous medicine

To support the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010 and protect the safety of our children and wildlife, we're working with local, state and federal agencies to combat improper drug disposal.

Our efforts include:

- **Talking to our patients:** Educating the community at large about the health and environmental dangers of old, unused prescriptions.
- **Participating in "National Take-Back Days":** Encouraging the drop-off of unused medications at secure locations, while developing educational programs to engage the community. At Geisinger Medical Center, our program has recovered hundreds of pounds of unused medication.
- **Partnering with other medical organizations:** Working with private contractors and medicine haulers to develop cost-effective ways to properly organize, collect and destroy unused medications.
- **Protecting the environment:** Recent studies have shown an increased contamination of U.S. drinking water and wildlife by improperly disposed medications.

Where to discard unused/expired prescriptions:

- Return expired, unused prescriptions to a Geisinger Pharmacy for eco-friendly, responsible disposal of medications. For a listing of drop-off locations, visit: geisinger.org/chna/gmc/behavior/med_disp.html

Note: Geisinger Pharmacies cannot accept controlled substances or narcotics.

Dial 211 and Get Connected to the Services You Need

Did you know it used to take an average of seven phone calls to reach the human services office you were looking for?

Not anymore, thanks to 211.

211 is a *free* three-digit telephone number that gives you access to customized health, housing, and human service information all in one place. Need help with job training, transportation, health insurance, rent assistance, or crisis intervention? Call 211— it covers all that and more. They can also be reached at pa211.org.

geisinger.org

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