

## **COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY PLAN 2024**

### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

Memorial Community Health, Inc. (MCHI) is a private, non-profit corporation located in Aurora, Nebraska, that operates Memorial Hospital (Critical Access Hospital), Memorial Health Clinic (including clinics in Aurora, Clay Center, and Harvard), East Park Villa (55+ Senior Living facility), and Memorial Community Care (Nursing Home/Long Term Care).

Prior to creating this Plan, MCHI collaborated with the community and the Central District Health Department to assess the health needs of the community. Over the past years, MCHI has participated with the Health Department through a process called Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Demographics for Hamilton County include a population of 9,400; 93.4 % Caucasian race, with a median household income of \$73,254. For full demographic information, please see the companion document entitled “Community Health Assessment Report 2024.”

As a result of the 2024 assessment, MCHI has identified the following top areas of need within our community to address at this time: Access to Healthcare, Wellness/Preventative Medicine, and Mental/Behavioral Health. This report, interventions identified, and areas of focus also represent and include those who are uninsured, low-income, and minority groups served. These areas of focus are supported by both quantitative and qualitative data collected and synthesized by Central District Health Department. For more information on the assessment, please see the accompanying document entitled “Community Health Assessment Report 2024.” This document outlines the implementation strategies and plan associated with the priority needs of Access to Healthcare, Wellness/Preventative Medicine, and Mental/Behavioral Health.

### **II. ADDRESSING COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS**

Memorial Community Health uses health information and community feedback in the development of its strategic plan. The planning process begins with a review of the Mission and Vision of MCHI. The Community Health Assessment has been a valuable resource in the hospital’s planning process. The report has been shared

with senior leadership, directors and managers, as well as physician leaders.

MCHI's mission statement is "Improving Lives through Community Health Services, because Every Moment Matters." Living that Mission encompasses a broad variety of services. MCHI recognizes that addressing the health and wellness needs of the community is as important as providing direct medical care. We have a rich history of working with the community to address community health needs, and as a partner, the community looks to MCHI to lead the way for healthcare and wellness activities.

In keeping with its mission, MCHI will continue to address community needs by providing quality and safe care to all, including those in need according to our charity care policy.

### **III. ACTION PLANS**

#### **A. Access to Healthcare:**

Concern regarding access to healthcare has grown throughout the district. The community responded that their biggest apprehension was the access to affordable and quality healthcare/support.

MCHI has responded to the need for affordable and quality healthcare/support in a variety of ways. MCHI specific actions include:

- In addition to healthcare services in Aurora, satellite clinics are available in both Harvard and Clay Center
- Implementation of Phreesia, a patient appointment and communication management technology. This technology promotes improved communication through appointment reminders via text and email and the convenience of completing intake forms ahead of time through one's mobile device or computer. A second phase of Phreesia implementation in 2025 is the ability to schedule appointments online, providing flexibility and convenience to seek healthcare.
- An Acute Care Clinic is available at Memorial Health Clinic's Aurora location, providing walk-in care for illnesses and injuries that need immediate care.
- MCHI has recruited new providers to meet the community's needs. This recruitment offers increased availability to primary care and increased capacity for prompt scheduling of appointments.
- MCHI's Connected Care program remains an essential service to provide support to those who need additional resources in managing multiple chronic

medical conditions. The goal of chronic care management is to improve an individual's health status through coordinated care across multiple conditions, medications, and providers.

- Medicare Advantage plans have decreased the quality and access of healthcare to those enrolled. The limitations seen when utilizing these plans prompted MCHI to educate the public via social media regarding the coverage concerns with this plan. In addition, MCHI worked together with the Nebraska Hospital Association to host a local educational session on the basics of Medicare presented by of Nebraska Department of Insurance and State Health Insurance Program (SHIP)
- MCHI offers local access to top area specialists in a wide range of disciplines. From cardiology, pulmonology, and orthopedics to psychiatry, ophthalmology, and many more, advanced medical care and surgical care is available in Hamilton County.

## **B. Wellness/Lifestyle:**

During community meetings in 2024, the larger issues of Lifestyle Illnesses (specifically cancer) was identified in the Community Health Assessment. Cancer (breast cancer foremost), followed by heart disease lead the county's top concerns. In relation to this need, Hamilton County data show that mammography screening is lower than nearby Hall and Merrick County. This further supports the needed focus on preventative medicine.

MCHI specific actions include:

- a) Annual Health Fair: Each year MCHI sponsors a health fair for the community. Screening laboratory blood profiles as well as low cost cardiovascular screenings are available at greatly reduced rates. Along with a complete blood panel, testing for A1C and PSA are offered, and recently, vitamin D testing was added to help identify deficiencies. In addition to these screenings, the health fair is of key importance in providing awareness and education. MCHI and local health related vendors provide demonstrations at booths occupied by various MCHI departments and other vendors in the community.
- b) To focus on an active lifestyle for children, Memorial Community Health offers a program called "The Write Path." Led by the MCHI Rehabilitation department's physical, occupational, and speech therapy team, this program focuses on purposeful and creative activities to enhance and improve gross and fine motor skills in preparation for entering Kindergarten.
- c) MCHI takes part in the annual Early Childhood Event held each March at the

Hamilton County Fairgrounds. Our Rehabilitation department and Health Clinic consistently engage in this event to raise awareness among families with young children about the local healthcare resources accessible to them. Additionally, many other organizations also attend and contribute to the event.

- d) MCHI's Patient and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC), established in 2019, invites community participation in offering feedback on MCHI's initiatives. This committee serves as a platform to gain insights from the patient and family perspective. Additionally, it enhances community relations and offers valuable suggestions on how MCHI can effectively support our community on key priority issues identified.
- e) Preventative Medicine: MCHI provides annual wellness visits which promote wellness screenings that include: colonoscopy, mammography, immunizations, fall risk assessment, depression risk assessment, blood profile, as well as other specific screenings that may be appropriate. MCHI's preventative medicine focus includes reminders to patients who are due for preventative health services.
- f) The Heart Beets Community Garden in Aurora, founded by MCHI and the Aurora Garden Club, allows healthy produce to be shared between gardeners and community. With a prominent place on Highway 34 on MCHI's property, the garden is a symbol of our community's commitment to health.
- g) Annual Fun Run and Wellness Walk: During the A'ROR'N Days celebrations in June, MCHI sponsors a 5K Fun Run & Walk for adults, a 1 Mile Kids Fun Run, and a 1 Mile Walk for Seniors.
- h) National Walk @ Lunch Day: As a way to promote healthy activity throughout the work day, MCHI organizes a National Walk@Lunch Day. This is a national event held each April. MCHI participates by inviting community members and employees from local companies to join them in walking at Cole Park in Aurora to take steps toward a healthier lifestyle.
- i) Community/Employee Wellness: As a leading business in the community and the primary health service provider, being a model for healthy practices is important. MCHI continues to provide its Employee Wellness Program with measurable goals that determine the employee's success. MCHI's Employee Wellness Center has a variety of exercise and work out options available to employees 24/7 free of charge.

MCHI offers several opportunities for the community and/or employees to

receive support including:

- Lunch and Learn presentations on various wellness topics
- Recipe Rehab
- Giving Tree (Gift donation of clothing to elementary age children)
- Back Pack Program
- Collaborate with area businesses to develop wellness programs
- Commit to Get Fit/Move It to Lose It Challenge
- Parkinson’s Class
- Senior Strength & Fitness Class
- Silver Strength Class
- Annual Women’s Wellness event
- Lactation support, including access to lactation counselors
- Opioid and antibiotic stewardship education
- Community vaccine clinics
- Better Breathers Club for individuals with lung disease
- Prenatal and childbirth classes
- Quarterly MCHI newsletter “Health Matters”, which provides health news and happenings for our community and includes an “Ask the Expert” section
- Senior Center presentations on health and wellness topics, and assistance in leading their FROGS fitness class for seniors
- Meeting space for community support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous

### **C. Mental/Behavioral Health:**

Mental Health and the access to appropriate services is a challenge throughout Nebraska, but especially in rural areas. The Central District Health Department survey shows Nebraska ranking 37 out of the 51 states for adults with mental illness. The community reports a continued stigma about seeking mental health counseling combined with the lack of access to local counseling services. MCHI recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need for mental health support. Specific actions include:

- Through our outpatient specialty clinic offerings, patients have access to Psychiatry services. A Behavioral Health Counselor is hosted at MCHI, who specializes in interpersonal communications and analysis to help achieve cognitive, behavioral, and emotional wellbeing.
- Memorial Health Clinic screens patients annually and as needed through the PHQ-9 questionnaire for depression to check on an individual’s mental wellness. The questionnaire is completed by the nursing staff upon intake with the results accessible to the providers during their review of the patient’s medical record.
- Memorial Health Clinic has a full time Care Coordinator who leads our Connected

Care chronic care management program. Since patients with multiple medical issues can be more likely to experience depression, our Care Coordinator is available to assist patients with accessing available resources. Care Coordination is envisioned to see expansion in the upcoming years.

- Utilization of Employer based Employee Assistance Programs that offer behavioral and mental health counseling continues to be encouraged for patients with access to such services.
- MCHI continuously looks for opportunities to provide education within the community and area schools, to share skills for healthy coping, educate on suicide prevention, and help reduce the stigma of seeking support and care when needed.

#### **IV. COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS NOT BEING ADDRESSED**

MCHI recognizes there are additional needs identified in the Community Health Assessment that are not being addressed in this plan. Some of these additional needs include housing, transportation, and child care. MCHI believes that focusing on the top health concerns that MCHI can most support will provide the biggest impact. Available resources and scope limit the ability to implement programs for all identified areas.

#### **V. ADOPTION AND APPROVAL:**

The Memorial Community Health Board of Directors approved the Community Health Assessment Implementation Strategy Plan on December 17, 2024.