St. Elizabeth Hospital

Community Health Needs Assessment

Prepared by
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
Office of Assessment, Planning, and Improvement
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Key Findings

- The St. Elizabeth hospital service area is quite small compared to the other service areas in the Franciscan Health System. In addition, the number of residents with incomes below the poverty level is much lower than the Western Washington state average. As such, care must be taken in interpreting these data especially with respect to differences between other service areas or Western Washington state.

- Like many places, the service area is growing older and more racially and ethnically diverse. With aging comes greater need for health services and particularly services related to chronic conditions. Because managing and preventing chronic conditions is a cooperative effort between providers and patients, health communication will need to be tailored to the cultural needs of patients.

- The number of births in the service area has been decreasing 2% per year since 2008. This drop has been reported across the nation and is thought to reflect changes in reproductive decisions brought by the economic recession. The percent of births that are preterm births are increasing almost 0.8% per year.

- Both for adults age 18-64 and for adults 65 and older the death rate in the service area, but not in Western Washington state, is increasing over time. For adults age 18-64, accidents death is higher in the service area than in Western Washington state. For adults 65 and older, the death rate for major cardiovascular diseases and cancer is substantially higher in the service area than in Western Washington state. This suggests the service area will continue to need high levels of preventive and therapeutic care related to cardiovascular disease and cancer.

- Although mental health is no worse in the service area than in Western Washington state, a large proportion of adults and youth suffer from poor mental health. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for adults 18-64.

- Life expectancy, a broad indicator of population health, is decreasing in the service area, but is increasing in Western Washington state.

- Indicators of health care access were similar between the service area and Western Washington state. Utilization of preventive services was also similar. This suggests that the gap in mortality and life expectancy may be due to behavioral factors such as smoking, obesity and chronic disease management rather than therapeutic care.

Community members identified three broad directions that would most impact community health:

- Providing access to quality health care for all. This includes comprehensive mental health services, service equity for minority populations, and better coordination of care within and between the major health care systems in the area.
- Reducing preventable chronic conditions including substance abuse and obesity-related diseases such as diabetes.
- Meeting the needs of special populations, particularly military families and the homeless.
Introduction

A community health needs assessment is only one element in what necessarily must be a comprehensive planning process to strengthen Pierce County’s and South King County’s health care infrastructure and address community health priorities. The information contained in this assessment, both the quantitative and qualitative data, can provide a blueprint for the planning the hospital will need to do to best address the needs of the Pierce and South King Counties’ communities. Moving forward with a resource inventory and a current service gap analysis will assist in learning more specifically and strategically what the best means of health care planning are.

St. Elizabeth Hospital is a 25-bed critical access hospital located in Enumclaw, Washington with its primary service area (representing 75% of individuals served) as shown in the figure below. This report presents quantitative data specific to the St. Elizabeth primary service area and qualitative community group data gathered from focus group-type meetings throughout Pierce County and South King County. The quantitative data are presented first, followed by the community group data and concluding with a description of the methods used to collect and analyze data.

Figure 1 Map of St. Elizabeth Hospital primary service area
Quantitative Data

Demographic profile
Approximately 120,260 people live in the St. Elizabeth service area. The demographic characteristics of a community are strong predictors of health and of the magnitude and type of health service needs. The age distribution of residents in the service area has changed over the past decade (Figure 2) with the numbers of older adults increasing. For example, the modal age increased from 40-45 to 45-49. As the population ages, chronic health conditions will become more prevalent and demand for health services associated with those conditions will grow. In addition to therapeutic services, there will be growing need for helping patients manage their chronic conditions, including care management and patient education.

![Population pyramid for St. Elizabeth service area, 2000 and 2010](image)

**Figure 2 Population pyramid for St. Elizabeth service area, 2000 and 2010**

With respect to race and ethnicity, the service area is predominately white non-Hispanic (Figure 3). All subgroups of race and ethnicity grew in size over the last two decades. The rate of growth from 1990 to 2009 was highest for Hispanic (154%), Asian/Pacific Islander non-Hispanic (95%) and Black non-Hispanic (58%) groups. Health communication, which is vital to preventing and managing chronic conditions, will need to be tailored to the needs of these growing population subgroups.
In the service area, 7.6% of residents had incomes below the Federal Poverty Level, averaged over 2006-2010. This is lower than the Western Washington state prevalence of 10.8% over the same time period.

**Pregnancy and childbirth**

Birth patterns in the service area have shifted over the past two decades (Figure 4). Note that data for Western Washington state is plotted using the axis on the right. Therefore, the relative position of the two plots is arbitrary. The number of births in the service area has been decreasing by about 2% per year since 2008. This is similar to the drop in births seen in Western Washington state over the past few years. This drop is probably the result of declining birth rates seen nationally in response to the economic recession.
Infants born preterm can face multiple acute health concerns and lifelong disabilities. Preterm births in the service area are increasing 0.8% per year (Figure 5). The trend is similar to that in Western Washington state.

Figure 5 Percent of births <37 weeks gestation for St. Elizabeth service area
Source: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics Birth Certificate Data

Prevalence of selected health behaviors
Current health behaviors can help to predict future health for a community. Obesity, a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, is more prevalent among 8th graders in Western Washington state than in the service area (Table 1). In contrast, obesity rates for adults in the service area were higher than that present in Western Washington state. There were no other meaningful differences between 8th graders or adults in the service area and those statewide.

Table 1 Prevalence of selected health behaviors (self-reported)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>St. Elizabeth service area</th>
<th>Comparison area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of adults who currently smoke†</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of 8th graders who smoked in last 30 days*</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of 8th graders who drank alcohol in last 30 days*</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of 8th graders who used an illegal drug in last 30 days*</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of adults who are obese†</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of 8th graders who are obese*</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2009-2010; comparison area: Western WA
Prevalence of selected chronic conditions

Diabetes is expected to grow in prevalence as a result of climbing levels of obesity. Currently, 12% of adults and 4% of 8th graders report being diagnosed with diabetes (Table 2). The rate for adults is higher than that found in Western Washington state and is consistent with the higher levels of obesity for adults in the service area.

Mental illness is a common and frequently untreated condition that accounts for significant disability, productivity loss, and human suffering. In the service area, about one fifth of 8th graders reported symptoms consistent with clinical depression, while about 13% of adults reported experiencing periods of poor mental health recently (Table 2). There were no differences between service and comparison areas for these indicators of mental illness.

Table 2 Prevalence of selected chronic conditions (self-reported)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>St. Elizabeth service area</th>
<th>Comparison area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of adults with diabetes†</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of adults with pre-diabetes†</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of 8th graders with diabetes*</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of adults with poor mental health &gt;10 out of last 30 days†</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of 8th graders with symptoms of depression (sad or hopeless for 2 weeks last 12 months)*</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2009-2010; comparison area: Western WA

Mortality

While death is unavoidable, premature death is sometimes preventable. Deaths among children 1-17 residing in the service area vary widely due in part to the small size of the service area (Figure 6). The most common cause of death for this age group is unintentional injuries (Figure 7). There were no meaningful differences in child death rates between the service area and Western Washington state.
Death rate among persons age 1-17 for St. Elizabeth service area
Source: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificate Data
Trend line not presented as some years reported zero deaths.

Figure 7 Cause-specific death rates for most common causes, age 1-17 for the St. Elizabeth service area, 2007-2009.
Source: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificate Data

Among adults age 18-64, the rate of death is climbing 2.7% per year (Figure 8) while the death rate for Western Washington state has remained stable. Both chronic conditions and injuries are leading causes of death for this age group (Figure 9). Death from unintentional injuries is markedly higher for the service area in comparison to Western Washington state.
For the oldest residents in the service area, the death rate is increasing 2.9% per year (Figure 10). In contrast, the rate is declining in Western Washington state. Major chronic diseases claim the most lives for this age group (Figure 11). Deaths from the top two leading causes, cardiovascular disease and cancer, are more common in the service area than in Western Washington state. The high rate of cardiovascular disease related death may be due in part to the higher levels of obesity associated with this service area.
Life expectancy is a broad summary measure of population health, calculated from mortality statistics. Life expectancy at birth in the service area is decreasing at a rate of 1.6% per year in the service area, and is increasing in Western Washington state (Figure 12). This is resulting in an increasing gap between the service area and the region.
Access to care

Individuals without health insurance and without a regular provider frequently do not receive needed health care, particularly preventive care. Health care access was similar in the service area to that in Western Washington state (Table 3). Cancer screening rates were also about the same in both regions.

Table 3 Percent of adults reporting access to health care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>St. Elizabeth service area</th>
<th>Western WA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of adults 18-64 with health insurance</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of adults with a personal health care provider</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of women 40-74 with a screening mammogram in last 2 years†</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>75.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of adults age 50+ who ever had a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy†</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2009-2010

Community Input

Background

The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department worked collaboratively with Franciscan Health System and MultiCare Health System to conduct a community health needs assessment that included input from key leaders and community residents representing multiple sectors and population groups in the community. The purpose of this qualitative portion of the community health needs assessment was to hear from the Pierce County and South King County communities about the following five questions:
1. What makes a healthy community?
2. What would a healthy Pierce County look like?
3. What are the strengths, assets and resources of Pierce County?
4. What are the challenges to health in Pierce County?
5. What are the most important health issues that need to be addressed in a community health improvement plan?

**Pierce County Findings**
The information from all three data collection methods (see “Community engagement methods”) were analyzed, themed and summarized to draw out the most important conclusions. These major finding include:

1. Significant and unique strengths of Pierce County are:
   - Coalitions and collaborations
   - Higher education network
   - Open minds to complementary care
   - Access to local food and farmers markets
   - Volunteer base
   - Faith communities
   - Health care systems
   - Natural assets
   - Arts and humanities

2. The community problems that have the greatest impact on overall community health are:
   - Substance abuse
   - Mental health issues/behavioral health issues
   - Access and availability to top quality health care
   - Availability of and accessibility to quality medical care and treatment services
   - Chronic diseases (ex., diabetes, cancer, heart disease, hypertension,)
We see some of the poorest health indicators in the county here in [a south King County community]: diabetes, hypertension, asthma, obesity. People see the indicators and assume people don’t care about their health, but this is a food desert…It can take two buses to get to a grocery store.

3. Health improvement planning should focus on strengths not just deficits.

4. Health improvement planning should consider the mind, body, and spirit.

5. Strengthen the community-based systems in Pierce County that are working to improve health, e.g., community health workers and patient navigators.

South King County findings

The Group Health Research Institute interviewed key informants representing health care, social services and the public in South King County. The top themes that emerged from this assessment, as well as representative responses from informants, are included below.

The most frequent themes related to access to care included:

- Primary care (13)
- Mental health (14)
- Dental care (5)
- Health insurance coverage (7)
- Case management (6)
- Health care for youth (5)
- Substance abuse services (4)
- Reproductive health services (3)

The most frequent themes related to social environment included:

- Culturally competent services (17)
- Struggles to take care of basic needs (16)
- The economic downturn (6)
- Trauma and violence (6)

The most frequent themes related to health behaviors and associated risks included:

- Diabetes (14)
- Obesity (13)

The most frequent themes related to the physical environment included:

- Access to healthy foods (17)
- Resources that support physical activity (13)
- Transportation (5)
**Methods**

**Quantitative data methods**
This study uses data from 4 zip codes that represent 75% of inpatients seen at St. Elizabeth Hospital. When possible, we used Western Washington state as a comparison population. This area includes 19 counties west of the Cascade mountain range: Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King, Pierce, Thurston, Lewis, Skamania, Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, Pacific, Mason, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Clallam, Kitsap, San Juan and Island counties.

We included six broad indicators of current population health and of future health and health care utilization: demographics, pregnancy and childbirth, health behaviors, mortality and access to health care. Error bars in the figures show 95% confidence intervals. These indicate the margin of error for the value estimated. We used Joinpoint regression models to evaluate time trends. Black lines in the figures show trends over time for the service area. Additional detail about data sources and how they were used follow. Much of the data in this report come from a few key sources. These sources and their limitations are briefly described below.

**Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System**
The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an ongoing national telephone survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The survey includes adults age 18 years and older and provides state- and county-level data for each calendar year. Topics are wide ranging and include disease prevalence, health care access and use, health behaviors and demographics. There are several biases inherent to BRFSS. First, cell phone-only households are excluded. These households tend to be younger and poorer than households with landlines. Second, BRFSS excludes people in institutions such as hospitals and nursing homes and so may underreport responses from people who are ill or in poor health. Third, data are self-reported and so are subject to social desirability bias and recall error. Finally, BRFSS is conducted in English and Spanish, and so underreports responses from speakers of other languages.

**Healthy Youth Survey**
This school-based survey is administered in even numbered years throughout Washington State. The survey includes grades 6, 8, 10 and 12. For this report, we included data from schools that were physically located in the service area, recognizing that this may include responses of students residing outside the service area and exclude information about students living in the service area but attending school elsewhere. Topics include health risk behaviors, family, community risk and protective factors, and current health conditions. Like other survey data, it is subject to social desirability bias and recall error.

**Death certificate data**
For death certificates, funeral directors collect information about the deceased person, including race and ethnicity, from an informant who is usually a family member or close personal friend of the deceased person. A certifying physician, medical examiner, or coroner generally provides cause-of-death information. Cause-of-death data come from underlying causes of death and not immediate causes. For example, if a person dies of a complication or metastasis of breast cancer, breast cancer would be the underlying cause of death. Data are compiled by the Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics.
Birth certificate data
The birth certificate system contains records on all births occurring in the state and nearly all births to residents of the state. Information is gathered about the mother, the father, the pregnancy, and the child. The information is collected in hospitals and birth centers from worksheets completed by parents or medical staff, from medical charts, or by a combination of these sources. Midwives and family members who deliver a baby complete the birth certificate and collect the information from a parent or from their records. Data are compiled by the Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics.

American Community Survey
The American Community Survey (ACS) is a mailed survey conducted every year by the U.S. government to estimate a wide variety of social and economic data for the U.S. population. The ACS replaces the long form of the census for collecting detailed population data and has the advantage of being released annually rather than at 10-year intervals. ACS location of residence is based on census tracts, which don’t align with zip code boundaries. A census tract was considered to be in the hospital service area if the centroid of the census tract was within the service area.

Decennial United States Census
The census, unlike other surveys, includes responses from the entire population, not just a representative sample. And unlike the ACS, census data are available by zip code. The census collects limited demographic information (age, sex, race, ethnicity, family and housing).

Community engagement (qualitative) methods
The Health Department worked collaboratively with Franciscan Health System and MultiCare Health System to conduct a community health needs assessment that included collecting input from key leaders and community residents representing multiple sectors and population groups in the community. The needs assessment included conducting a Pierce County community survey and a comprehensive community engagement process, as well as incorporating findings from previous South King County key informant interviews conducted by Group Health Cooperative.

Pierce County community survey
In December 2011, the Health Department commissioned the Pierce County Community Study, conducted by the Gilmore Research Group in Seattle. More than five hundred Pierce County residents were surveyed; 384 (73%) via the internet, 100 from phone calls (19%) and 41 (8%) via intercept surveys conducted at several Pierce County food banks. The Community Study sought Pierce County resident’s views on issues related to health care, economic opportunity, important health issues, and issues that impact community health.

Community engagement process
To complement the community survey, a community engagement process was implemented to further solicit input from the Pierce County public. This process included three stages:

1. Hold key leader focus groups to gain input on main questions, listening for top themes;
2. Hold community workshops, listening for important health issues in Pierce County; and
3. Invite key leaders to reflect on qualitative and selected quantitative data.

Focus groups utilized the “world cafe” meeting format to allow participants the opportunity to share their observations and reflections. Groups were facilitated by Karen Meyer, Community Liaison Specialist with the Health Department. A key element in all three parts of the community engagement process was the use of a visual (or graphic) facilitator. This allowed for comments to be captured
immediately. Furthermore, by utilizing a graphic recorder, all participants were able to be engaged in the process. If participants provided an email address, they received a copy of the meeting map, thus building momentum and keeping them engaged in the process. In addition, participants were encouraged to suggest any corrections they felt were necessary.

**Key leader focus groups**
A series of four key leader focus groups (32 participants) were held in October and November 2012 to solicit input on the strengths, assets and resources, as well as health priorities for Pierce County. Key leaders represented multiple sectors, including local government, education, business, social and health services, and the military. Meetings were held in Puyallup, at the University of Washington-Tacoma, at the Sea Mar Health Clinic (Tacoma) and with the leadership group from the Pierce County Cross Cultural Collaborative (Musk Ox Goat Herd).

**Community workshops**
Seven community workshops were held between December 2012 and January 2013 in Puyallup, Gig Harbor, Tacoma, Bonney Lake, and Lakewood, as well as with the Pierce County Cross Cultural Collaborative. Approximately 80 Pierce County residents attended the community workshops, which were broadly advertised through local print, radio and television media (including on-line) and with multiple community partners. Participants were asked to consider the challenges to health in Pierce County. After thinking about challenges, participants were asked to address the following, working in small groups:

- Which priorities have the greatest impact (i.e., impact the greatest number of Pierce County residents)?
- Which priorities allow for greatest equity?
- Which priorities are we most ready to address?

**Key leader review meeting**
Finally, the assessment process involved inviting key leaders (see above definition) to meet again in January 2013 at the Health Department to review the results of the previous community input, as well as some relevant quantitative data. During this meeting, attendees were asked to work in small groups and share their reflections on the data presented, their impressions of the common threads, and to consider what might be missing in terms of health issues that should be included in a community health improvement plan going forward.

**South King County key informant interviews**
The Center for Community Health and Evaluation (CCHE), part of Group Health Research Institute, was asked to conduct the 2012 needs assessment for Group Health Cooperative. In early 2012 CCHE interviewed 23 key informants representing health care, social services and the public in South King County. Questions addressed the health-related needs of the South King County population, programs and services intended to address those needs, methods for assessing needs, and methods for monitoring outcomes. Group Health Cooperative gave the Health Department permission to include their findings in this community health needs assessment report.

**Conclusion**
Nonprofit health care organizations are expected to contribute to overall health in the communities they serve. A systematic approach to assessing community needs can help shape the community benefit strategies developed to meet those needs. The 2010 Affordable Care Act
defines explicit expectations for community health needs assessments, such as gathering input from persons who represent the broad interests of the community – including public health – and considering the needs of the most vulnerable populations. The hope is that this report will be a helpful tool in providing specific and local information to decision makers working on behalf of the best interest of the hospital and the community.