

Little Falls Hospital

**Implementation Strategy
for
Community Health Needs
Assessment**

**Prepared to meet Requirements of the
Internal Revenue Service
And
Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
February 2013**

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I. Introduction

This Implementation Strategy has been prepared to meet requirements promulgated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) based on the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act enacted March 23, 2010 that all 501(c) (3) hospital organizations conduct a "community health needs assessment and prepare a corresponding implementation strategy once every three taxable years." The Implementation Strategy is based upon the Little Falls Hospital Community Health Assessment also prepared to comply with new federal requirements. Its purpose is to describe how Little Falls Hospital plans to meet priority community health needs identified in its Community Health Needs Assessment.

Completion of the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and development of the Implementation Strategy has served to focus the future efforts of Little Falls Hospital and the area's cadre of supporting health care providers, services and resources. Specifically, it has re-emphasized the importance of targeting efforts to improve access to quality health care, improve the health of mothers, infants and children; and prevent chronic diseases (cancer, diabetes).

The development of the Implementation Strategy has also considered recent guidance from the NYS Department of Health for the hospital's "community service plan". This guidance describes the essential elements of a local health department Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan, as well as the requirements for hospital Community Service Plans. The NYS Department of Health guidance was also intended to facilitate responses to the requirements of the federal Affordable Care Act and promote collaboration in doing so.

Implementation strategies identified in this report offer new approaches and programs, as well as existing and/or expanded programs and partnerships being undertaken by Little Falls Hospital to meet selected community health priorities. The remainder of this report includes five sections. Section II describes the process and information sources used for preparing this Implementation Strategy. Section III summarizes the community health priorities and targeted objectives selected by Little Falls Hospital in its Community Health Assessment. Section IV identifies strategies for selected community health priorities and targeted objectives. Section V provides a rationale for why some community health priorities identified in the hospital's Community Health Needs Assessment will not be pursued. Section VI describes next steps with respect to how the Implementation Strategy will be made available to the public and how local partners will be engaged in implementation activities. It will also outline the process that will be used to track progress and make mid-course corrections.

II. Process and Information Sources

A. Process

The process for preparing this **Implementation Strategy (IS)** involved a multi-hospital planning effort conducted by the Bassett Healthcare Network and its affiliate hospitals. In addition to Little Falls Hospital, this includes Bassett Medical Center in Cooperstown, A.O. Fox Memorial Hospital in Oneonta, Cobleskill Regional Hospital in Cobleskill, O'Connor Hospital in Delhi and Tri-Town Regional in Sydney. It followed an extensive process to develop Community Health Needs Assessments for Little Falls Hospital and the other Bassett affiliates over a period from April of 2012 to February 2013. As with the CHNA, the process began with gaining the necessary buy-in for its completion and included charging a Bassett network-wide advisory group with providing overall guidance for developing the IS. This group included representation from each of the six hospitals. In addition to providing overall guidance during the process, the advisory group was charged with:

- 1) Agreeing on a common template for an Implementation Strategy as a method for coordinating and integrating efforts;
- 2) Considering current implementation strategies of the hospital's Community Service Plan and related County Community Health Assessments;
- 3) Considering the current implementation strategies identified in the hospital's CHNA;
- 4) Considering suggested implementation strategies identified through key stakeholder sessions conducted during development of the CHNA;
- 5) Considering current implementation strategies identified in the hospital's Annual Operation Plan for 2012;
- 6) Considering related "intervention considerations" identified in the NYS Prevention Agenda Action Plan for 2013-2017;
- 7) Selection of community health priorities and targeted objectives to be addressed by the Implementation Strategy on either a Network-wide or individual hospital basis;
- 8) Identification of community health priorities and targeted objectives that will not be addressed by the Implementation Strategy and why;
- 9) Identification of Network-wide and hospital specific implementation strategies for selected community health priorities and targeted objectives, including tasks/activities to be completed, desired outcomes, potential partners and timelines; and
- 10) Approving a final Implementation Strategy for submission to the respective Boards of the six Bassett Healthcare Network hospitals.

B. Information Sources

There were four primary information sources used to assist in the identification of implementation strategies. They included: 1) the hospital's current Community Service Plan; 2) the hospital's Operational Plan for 2012; 3) suggestions made by key stakeholders during public sessions on the hospital's CHNA; and 4) related "intervention considerations" contained in the NYS Prevention Agenda Action Plan for 2013-2017.

III. Selected Health Priorities and Targeted Objectives

The Little Falls Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment identified three health priorities and nine targeted health objectives. The health priorities selected included improving access to quality health care, preventing chronic disease and promoting healthy women, infants and children.

A. Community Health Priorities

➤ Improving Access to Quality Health Care

Improving access to quality health care is the first priority identified through by the CHNA. This priority was selected by Little Falls Hospital in its Community Services Plan, as well as by the Herkimer, Fulton and Montgomery County Health Departments in their respective Community Health Assessments. In addition, the Upstate Health and Wellness Survey data supports the selection of this priority for the Little Falls service area, where only 81 percent of adults reported they had a primary care provider. The focus in selecting this priority is to improve access to primary care within the service area.

➤ Preventing Chronic Disease

Preventing chronic disease is the second priority identified in our CHNA. This priority was selected by Little Falls Hospital in its Community Services Plan and also by Herkimer and Fulton Counties in their respective Community Health Assessments. In addition, the Upstate Health and Wellness Survey reported that rates of selected types of cancer screening in the Little Falls service area are significantly below Healthy People 2020 goals. The Survey reported that under 67 percent of women 18 years and older had a Pap smear in the previous 3 years, less than 61 percent of women 40 years and older had a mammogram in the past 2 years and less than 54 percent of adults 50 years and older had a colonoscopy in the past 5 years. The Survey showed levels of cancer screening in the Little Falls Hospital service area were generally lower (for all forms of screening) than levels for the Bassett Network service area. The Survey also estimated that nearly 30 percent of adults in the Little Falls service area were obese.

➤ Promoting Healthy Women, Infants and Children

Promoting healthy women, infants and children is the third priority identified through the CHNA. This priority was selected by Little Falls Hospital in its Community Service Plan. It was also a priority selected by the Herkimer County Community Health Assessment and as an area of importance by the Fulton County Community Health Assessment. In addition, the Upstate Health and Wellness Survey supported the selection of this priority. The survey reported that greater than 36 percent of children in the Little Falls service area are obese or at risk for obesity. The focus of this priority will be on providing early prenatal care, reducing teen pregnancy, increasing immunization rates for children and reducing obesity of children.

B. Targeted Health Objectives

As a means to measure progress in addressing the health priorities for Little Falls Hospital and the communities' it serves, eight targeted objectives were identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment. This included objectives to improve access to primary care; increase screenings for breast, cervical and colon cancers; reducing obesity among children; increasing access to early prenatal care; reducing teen pregnancy; and increasing immunization levels of children. Achievement of these objectives is not possible through the efforts and resources of Little Falls Hospital alone. It will require a coordinated and shared commitment of resources by all communities, businesses and health care providers in the service area, as well as by governments at the local, county, State and Federal levels.

Health Priority - Improving Access to Quality Health Care

Objective 1: To increase the percentage of adults in the Little Falls Hospital service area with access to a primary care provider from 81 percent to at least 89 percent by 2016 (working toward the NYS Prevention Agenda of 96 percent).

Health Priority - Preventing Chronic Disease

Objective 2: To increase the percentage of women 40 and older in the Little Falls Hospital service area with a mammogram in the past two years from less than 61 percent to 71 percent by 2016 (with a focus on low income women) (working toward the NYS Prevention Agenda objective of 81 percent).

Objective 3: To increase the percentage of women 18 and over with a pap smear in the three prior years in the Little Falls Hospital service area from just below 67 percent to over 80 percent by 2016 (with a focus on low income women) (working toward the NYS Prevention Agenda objective of 93 percent).

Objective 4: To increase the percentage of adults 50-75 in the Little Falls Hospital service area who receive a colorectal cancer screening based on the most recent guidelines (blood stool test in the past year or a sigmoidoscopy in the past 5 years and a blood stool test in the past 3 years or a colonoscopy in the past 10 years by 5 percent by 2016 (with a focus on low income residents) (NYS Prevention Agenda Objective).*

Health Priority – Promoting Healthy Women, Infants and Children

Objective 5: To increase the percentage of mothers in the Little Falls Hospital service area receiving early prenatal care from 75.7 percent to 83.0 percent by 2016 (working toward the NYS Prevention Agenda objective of 90 percent).

Objective 6: To decrease the teen pregnancy rate in the Little Falls Hospital service area from 26.2 per 1,000 to 23.1 by 2016 (working toward the NYS Prevention Agenda objective of 20 per 1,000).

Objective 7: To increase immunization rates for 2 year old children who have received recommended vaccines in the Little Falls Hospital service area by 10 percent by 2016 (working toward the NYS Prevention Agenda objective of 90 percent).

Objective 8: To reduce the percent of children in the Little Falls service area who are obese or at risk for obesity from over 36 percent to under 30 percent by 2016.

*Clinical standards for colorectal screening have been modified to include blood stool and sigmoidoscopy tests and increased from 5 to 10 years for colonoscopies. As a result measurement of this objective will require collection of additional and different data in the future.

IV. Strategies for Health Priorities and Targeted Objectives

Numerous strategies to address each of the selected community health priorities and to achieve targeted objectives related to those priorities were considered. Among others, Strategies considered included those identified in the Little Falls Hospital's Community Service Plan, in its 2012 Annual Operating Plan, made by the public and key stakeholders in commenting on the CHNA and suggested as "intervention considerations" in the NYS Prevention Agenda Action Plan for 2013-2017. Strategies were identified on a Little Falls Hospital service area basis, as well as on a Bassett Healthcare Network wide basis.

A. Strategies for Improving Access to Quality Health Care

Access to Primary Care

Community Based Strategy: On a longer term basis, plans will be developed in partnership with the Central New York Area Health Education Center to create a "Grow Your Own" health professionals program. This program will be focused on identifying, nurturing, supporting area students from junior high school and beyond to enter the health professions and to creating employment opportunities for them to return to within the communities served by Little Falls Hospital.

In pursuit of this strategy Little Falls Hospital will continue to dedicate Executive staff resources to working in partnership with the Central New York Area Health Education Center. Specifically, resources will be dedicated to developing and expanding the healthcare workforce in the Hospital's service area through a range pipeline programs (initiatives that guide students in a given direction over an extended period of time.) Programs are designed for both middle and high school students. Little Falls currently conducts an annual Medical Academy of Science and Health (M.A.S.H.) camps for area students in seven and eighth grade which introduces

them to a range of potential health careers. Additional programming will be developed including such programs as MedQuest, HealthQuest, Sr. M.A.S.H. camps which are designed for students in high school. In addition, My Health Careers will be promoted throughout the service area. It is an online resource to assist area students in exploring and researching the wide array of careers available in health care, and to discover the resources, opportunities, and possibilities the health care industry has to offer.

Bassett Healthcare Network Strategy: Improving access to primary care services in the Little Falls Hospital's service area will require a continued effort to expand primary capacities, particularly in Dolgeville, Herkimer, Little Falls, Newport and St. Johnsville. Recruitment of additional primary care providers to both expand services and to replace current providers who are reaching retirement age must be pursued through the Bassett Healthcare Network in an ongoing and methodical manner. These efforts will seek to take advantage of existing Federal and State programs, including the Federal National Health Service Corp, NYS Doctors across New York initiative, NYS Vital Access Provider grant program and the NYS Primary Care Services Corp. A key step of this strategy will be a network wide effort working with Bassett Medical Center and its affiliate hospitals to develop a regional primary care development plan to promote a coordinated and integrated effort toward sustaining and enhancing the delivery of primary care throughout the service area.

A second network wide strategy, with participation by Little Falls Hospital based primary care and other area providers in the Bassett Healthcare Network and in partnership with Excellus, will continue to develop and certify medical home or team based care models that place greater emphasis on wellness, prevention and screening and coordination of care across a regional delivery system. Two primary care practices in Herkimer and Canajoharie are currently certified as "medical home" providers. In the future, certification of primary care practices in Little Falls, Dolgeville and Newport will be targeted.

Part and parcel of both the community and network wide strategies will be continuation of efforts to improve linkage and coordination of services. Specifically, steps to implement and integrate electronic medical record systems will be completed. In addition, telemedicine capacities will be planned and developed to support and enhance clinical capacities of area emergency and primary care providers.

Impacts and Commitment of Resources: It is anticipated pursuit of these strategies will markedly improve access to primary care service in general, but also to a more comprehensive and coordinated range of primary care service throughout Little Falls Hospital's and the Bassett Medical Center's service areas. Measures of the impact will be increases in the percentage of adults who have regular access to primary care service, specifically an increase to 89 percent in the Little Falls Hospital service area by 2016.

Little Falls Hospital will seek support under the NYS Vital Access Provider program to assist in future physician recruitment efforts. One point two million dollars will be sought to recruit five

physicians to the Little Falls service area over the next three years. This money will be used to cover recruitment costs, sign-on bonuses and ramp-up support.

Bassett Medical Center will also continue to commit significant resources toward these strategies. It will provide lead staff support for the development of the regional primary care plan. Bassett will also continue to maintain dedicated staff (two full-time physician recruiters) for a regional recruitment function under its Department of Medical Staff Affairs. In terms of developing medical home models, Bassett Medical Center will continue to assist area physician practices in gaining and maintaining certification from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as “medical home” providers.

Bassett Medical Center will also continue to assist Little Falls Hospital in technology development, specifically in supporting development and integration of electronic medical records and telemedicine as part of a regional delivery system. This includes a Bassett investment of nearly \$24 million between 2010 and 2013 to develop a regional EMR system linking it with its affiliates. Significant staff and technical assistance resources have been and will continue to be dedicated to meeting federal “meaningful use” standards for achieving a state-of-the-art EMR system. This will include an estimated annual operating budget of nearly \$4 million and a supporting staff of over 37 FTEs.

Little Falls Hospital committed over \$350,000 to implementing its electronic medical records system (as part of the Bassett EMR system), which became fully operational in February of 2013. Resources were provided for EMR hardware and software and costs associated with training staff. Over the next several years Little Falls Hospital will continue to dedicate staff and operational resources to optimize and expand the functionality of the EMR systems reporting, monitoring and strategic planning capacities and to meet meaningful use standards.

Little Falls Hospital will also continue to commit resources and work with Bassett’s Telemedicine program to increase use of telemedicine capacities. Little Falls Hospital has invested over \$40,000 in telemedicine equipment including mobile medical practitioner carts with wireless connections, teleconference units, hi-definition cameras and electronic stethoscopes. Future support will include continuing to conduct training forums for physicians in the uses and benefits of telemedicine capacities and in procuring practice privileges for interested physicians.

B. Strategies for Preventing Chronic Disease

Cancer Screening

Community Based Strategy: A collaborative strategy between Little Falls Hospital, the Bassett Cancer Institute and Cancer Services of Oneida, Herkimer and Madison Counties will be pursued to improve access to cancer screening services for breast, cervical and colon cancer. In line with the NYS Department of Health guidance, the target for this collaboration will be on the disparity population of individuals and families with limited or no health insurance. A key

aspect of the strategy will focus on improving the system of referrals for cancer screening in the area. Development and integration of electronic medical records systems will assist in improving referral and tracking of patients receiving cancer screenings.

Bassett Healthcare Network Strategy: The network wide strategy to develop medical home or team based models will be pursued to ensure that the cancer screening rates of the targeted objectives are achieved. The development of these models will result in a greater focus on wellness and prevention.

A second network strategy will support the continuation of the Bassett Cancer Institute custom-built medical coach equipped with digital technology for mammography and other cancer screenings for men and women. The cancer screening services of the coach will be targeted to rural areas.

Impacts and Commitment of Resources: It is anticipated pursuit of these strategies will lead to increases in the percentage of population being screened for specific types of cancers by 2016, including achieving a level of 71 percent of women (aged 40+) receiving mammograms every three years, a 5 percent increase in the number of adults receiving colon screenings, achieving a level of 80 percent of all women (18+) receiving cervical cancer screenings every three years.

In pursuit of these results, Little Falls Hospital has completed a comprehensive renovation and upgrade of its radiology capacities at an expense of over \$1.9 million. This service now provides state-of-the-art cancer screening services for all referrals from throughout its service area, and a high percentage of the underserved populations of the area. In addition, Little Falls Hospital will continue to dedicate the staff resources of its Health Educators to the promotion of the full range of cancer screening programs. It will do this through its Lunch and Learn programs and by staffing health screening booths at events throughout the service area. It will also continue to work closely with local health departments to support their efforts to promote cancer screenings.

Little Falls Hospital will dedicate staff resources to increased monitoring and reporting of cancer screening through its EMR system. It will also continue to work with the Bassett Cancer Institute mobile medical coach for cancer screening to reach residents located in remote rural areas. The mobile coach has an annual operating budget of over \$260,000 and staffing support of 5 from the Bassett Cancer Institute. In addition, Little Falls Hospital will continue to work with the Bassett Healthcare network to support the certification of area primary care practices as medical homes (see above description of resource commitments under access to primary care).

C. Strategies for Promoting Healthy Women, Infants and Children

Women's Health

Community Based Strategy: Little Falls Hospital will collaborate with the Herkimer County Department of Public Health, Herkimer County HealthNet, Inc. and others to enhance and expand prenatal care services for women in the service area. This will include working with the local schools, primary care clinics and community organizations to encourage early prenatal care and to prevent teen pregnancy by making educational materials available at community events, health fairs and school-based programs. Little Falls Hospital will also work closely with the Herkimer County Health Department as it develops new programming guaranteeing access to prenatal care service for all women residing in Herkimer County.

In addition, Little Falls Hospital will continue its Healthy Women's Program, which provides preventive health screening services to women with little or no insurance coverage. Screening services are held every other month and include breast exams, mammography, instructions on breast self-exams and Pap smears.

Children's Health

Community Based Strategy: A third community based strategy will entail a partnership between Little Falls Hospital, Herkimer HealthNet and Herkimer County Health Department to develop and pursue strategies to improve the health of area children. This effort will focus on increasing immunization rates and reducing obesity among children.

Impacts and Commitment of Resources: It is anticipated pursuit of these strategies will result in increases in the percentage mothers receiving early prenatal care (up to 83 percent), a decrease in teen pregnancy rates (down to 23 per 1,000), a 10 percent increase in immunization levels of children and a decrease in obesity among children to below 30 percent.

Little Falls Hospital will continue to dedicate staff resources to achieve these results. The Hospital's health educators will work with community partners to provide educational programming targeted to mothers and children. The hospital will also work closely with local health departments to establish additional prenatal care services in the service area.

V. Health Priorities Not To Be Pursued

The Little Falls Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment selected three health priorities and eight targeted health objectives. Strategies have been identified that will address all three priorities and all eight health objectives.

VI. Implementation Partnerships and Tracking

This Implementation Strategy, following its completion and as a means of meeting requirements of the NYS Department of Health guidelines issued December 12, 2012 for Hospital Community Service Plans, will be made available for public review and comment. Similar to the CHNA development process, the Implementation Strategy, as part of the NYS Hospital Community Service Plan development process will be placed on Little Falls Hospital and the Bassett Healthcare Network websites. Public comments will be solicited with respect to the contents of the Implementation Strategy in general and on the individual strategies identified for addressing each community health priority and for achieving related health objectives. This process will also seek suggestions for additional strategies as well for modification and/or improvement of identified strategies.

In addition, as part of the NYS Hospital Community Service Plan development process, partnerships will be sought with other area provider and community services organizations. The purpose of seeking partnerships will be to gain support for selected strategies and identify the level interest among area providers and community organizations in collaborating to address selected health priorities and pursue strategies. This process will provide the foundation for future planning on how partners will be engaged in implementation activities. It will also lead to agreement on tasks and activities, shared resources and responsibilities, timelines and expected outcomes to be achieved through pursuit of each strategy.

In addition, a tracking and reporting system for monitoring progress in pursuing selected implementation strategies will be maintained. A Bassett Healthcare Network Advisory Group will be charged with tracking and reporting of progress. This will include periodic reporting to apprise the Network Advisory Group of activities and progress related to the implementation strategies. It will also include periodic updates on partnerships formed to implement specific strategies and/or achieve targeted objectives. The tracking and reporting system will include gathering information and data and making determinations of whether tasks and activities are being completed within the expected timeframes, identification of any issues or barriers that may be causing unexpected delays or problems in completing specified tasks and activities, whether the specified parties are carrying out assigned responsibilities or if the assistance of other parties may be necessary. The Network Advisory Group based on progress reports will be responsible for recommending mid-course corrections related to implementation strategies.