

# **REHOBOTH MCKINLEY CHRISTIAN HEALTH CARE SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2020 - 2022**

This Implementation Plan seeks to share how Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services (RMCHCS) has addressed, and plans to address, the health needs and social factors that impede or enhance the ability of women, men, youth, children and families to grow and thrive in McKinley County.

RMCHCS' 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment for McKinley County, and surrounding areas, identified the broad areas of need as priority community health and social concerns for McKinley County and its surrounding communities. These general areas are similar to the areas of need identified in the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment and encompass many specific issues faced in this region.

The areas of need RMCHCS is responding to in the implementation plan are:

- **Social & Environmental Conditions**
- **Education**
- **Collaboration & Communication**
- **Women's Health**

The goal of the 2019 Community Needs Health Assessment was to look at these priority health issues and social needs to see how they have changed, or not changed over the past three years. The assessment began by comparing measurable statistics from 2016 to 2019 in each of these priority areas and highlighting current anecdotal information regarding each issue. Environmental and contextual influences also reveal the larger picture of this very diverse and complex community. Some conditions have seen improvement, while some have remained static or worsened. Additionally, the assessment presented the many community efforts made to address these issues between 2016 and 2019.

RMCHCS' 2020-2022 Implementation Plan presents the interventions the organization has initiated in the last three years, as well as plans for future expansion or creation of programs to address these priority areas.

## **SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS - Poverty/Economic Equity, Employment, Transportation, Access to Services, Safety, Housing**

The economic and social environment of an area has a tremendous impact on the health of its residents. Economic equity, jobs that pay a livable wage, affordable adequate housing, and access to services - particularly healthcare, reliable transportation, and a sense of safety are critical to the quality of life in McKinley County. They influence the mental and physical health

of the 72,488 residents of this county and region. As a major employer in the region, RMCHCS is committed to creating employment opportunities and supporting fair wages. By providing access to medical transport through its hospital social workers and the mobile health unit, RMCHCS seeks to reduce the barriers that the lack of transportation, particularly to access healthcare, creates.

Each of these environmental factors is important, but for the next few years, RMCHCS will focus its resources on the following areas:

**Access to Services** - Access to medical care is an important area of focus for RMCHCS. The organization has increased access to services by opening an Urgent Care Center and developing a mobile health clinic program. In 2019, RMCHCS worked on plans to provide women's health services to women ages 15 and up through its mobile health unit. It began providing services in the Ramah-Navajo Chapter, one of the rural areas in the region. The plan is to grow this service and provide additional needed services such as podiatry and eye exams, which is especially important for those with chronic diabetes. Over the next three years, RMCHCS plans to expand services to other areas in rural McKinley County.

RMCHCS' Family Medicine Residency Program addresses the need for more primary care providers in the region, which will help improve access to care. In 2019, RMCHCS achieved accreditation as a sponsoring institution for the Family Medicine Residency Program and in 2020; it achieved accreditation for the program. RMCHCS is recruiting first-year Family Medicine residents who will begin in July 2021. By 2022, RMCHCS expects to have 12 Family Medicine residents in its 3-year program. Palliative care, a specific need mentioned in the Community Needs Assessment, will also be included as one of the rotations in the program.

RMCHCS continues to focus on recruiting additional providers to increase access to care. In 2019, it added three family medicine physicians to its staff as well as two OB-GYN providers. RMCHCS has contracted with two orthopedic providers and is bringing in new services such as hand surgery and spine care. RMCHCS plans to continue to grow women's health, podiatry, and wound care services. RMCHCS will continue to work on expanding its primary care and some specialty care services so individuals will not have to travel long distances to receive care. Telemedicine has become a significant component of RMCHCS' delivery of services, especially since the pandemic began in March 2020. RMCHCS will continue to develop its telemedicine program.

**Safety** – Providing healthcare to the entire region exposes providers to many of the challenges to safety that exist in the community at-large. Working closely with public officials, personal and community safety is always of utmost significance at RMCHCS. Although the 2019 assessment highlights crime statistics and violence, the greatest safety issue in 2020 is the coronavirus.

RMCHCS has been providing drive-up COVID-19 testing, treating COVID-19 positive patients and working with the City of Gallup, McKinley County, and Gallup Indian Medical Center to

help mitigate the spread of the virus. Since March 2020, the hospital, clinics, and urgent care center have focused the majority of their attention on providing safe and effective care for coronavirus patients. McKinley County was as the epicenter of the pandemic from April – June 2020 and throughout the fourth quarter of the year with the highest number of cases per 100,000 population. RMCHCS has been an active participant in the hotel isolation program for unsheltered individuals and families who have tested positive for COVID-19 and who need a safe place to quarantine. RMCHCS has also served on the community-wide committee in the development of an alternative care facility housed in a high school gymnasium. RMCHCS is participating with the State and County on developing a vaccine distribution program. Once the vaccine is available to the public, the distribution program will go in effect, hopefully sometime in late December 2020 and into the first quarter of 2021.

**Housing** - RMCHCS has been a participant in community efforts to deal with housing issues for homeless individuals, in particular a Housing First program for chronically homeless individuals. This project is currently on hold due to lack of land availability and funding. While RMCHCS continues to support community efforts to develop affordable housing opportunities, the organization will no longer take the lead in such efforts, as it must focus its attention and resources on growing and improving access to healthcare. Other organizations in Gallup are now taking the lead in addressing housing needs in the community.

## **EDUCATION**

One cannot over emphasize the importance of education in the growth and strength of a community. Humans learn from birth until death. The availability of educational opportunities at every stage of life impact an individual's future sphere of options.

As a healthcare system, RMCHCS' is focusing on higher education and graduate education. RMCHCS will continue to strengthen its connection with University of New Mexico (UNM) Gallup Campus' Nursing Program as well as other health-related programs to provide learning opportunities within the hospital environment for its students. RMCHCS offers opportunities for college students who are in the UNM BA/MD program and medical students from various institutions to work with the medical staff. RMCHCS now serves as a primary "Hub" for Burrell College of Medicine in Las Cruces, NM, marked by increasing medical student engagement in the community.

There are also plans for outreach to educate and encourage medical careers among secondary students. With the addition of the Family Medicine Residency Program, RMCHCS plans to have residents connect with middle school and high school students to encourage them to consider careers in medicine. RMCHCS has a robust continuing medical education program that provides programs and trainings for clinical staff and physicians from RMCHCS and health centers throughout the region and will continue to support this program.

## **COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION**

Collaboration is not easily measured. Numbers or statistics do not accurately evaluate collaborative efforts. The 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment revealed that there were many individuals and organizations working in silos, unaware of the work of others, on solutions to the same issues. The 2019 assessment shows evidence of real effort and growth in collaboration within the organizations in the community over the past several years. Yet there are still numerous opportunities to build even stronger relationships and break down long-standing barriers. The open sharing of data among agencies and providers continues to be a challenge.

RMCHCS is involved in many health-related collaborative groups that address various community health needs. In particular, collaborations with surrounding Indian Health Service hospitals continue to grow. Gallup Indian Medical Center (GIMC) and Zuni Comprehensive Health Center will serve as training sites for the Family Medicine Residency Program. RMCHCS is collaborating with Pine Hill Health Clinic and Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment program on the mobile health clinic program. As mentioned earlier, RMCHCS has been collaborating with Gallup Indian Medical Center, the County and the City on issues related to the pandemic and the motel respiratory shelter program. RMCHCS participates in multiple weekly zoom meetings with collaborating organizations. RMCHCS will continue to seek additional collaborations and partnerships to address health needs in the community.

RMCHCS also participates in the Community Alcohol Task Force, which is addressing Medical Detox and Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) for addiction, establishing a standardized protocol for all hospitals, clinics and providers. RMCHCS is planning to offer MAT at WellSpring Recovery Center, RMCHCS' 90-day residential substance abuse treatment program, and has already begun offering this service at its primary and specialty clinics.

WellSpring Recovery Center has reached out to community professionals with various skills and education to collaborate in providing client services to help with post-recovery re-entry. The Center has an agreement with the McKinley County Drug Court to provide Intensive Outpatient Services. In 2021, Santa Fe Recovery Center expects to open a sobering house in Gallup. WellSpring Recovery Center will collaborate with Santa Fe Recovery Center to provide services for individuals who are ready to leave their program and enter a residential treatment program. Recently the facility received accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), which should enable RMCHCS to become Medicaid-certified at WellSpring Recovery Center.

## **WOMEN'S HEALTH**

Reproductive health affects the very heart of families and communities. The strength of a community is partially dependent on the continued growth of its population and the health and development of its children. Across her lifespan, a woman's health status matters to

herself, her family and her community. Women access the health system more frequently than men do, both for themselves and on behalf of their children.

RMCHCS is expanding services in women's health by growing its women's health program and by providing more services for the community. RMCHCS has added two female OB-GYN physicians and two visiting physicians who are part of a fellowship program, which includes six months in an underserved area such as McKinley County. Women's health will be an important component of the Family Medicine Residency Program. RMCHCS is also planning to expand access to women's health services through the mobile clinic and is working to expand those services to other areas in the County.