

Community Health Needs Assessment

Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital

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Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	Page 3
2. Community Demographics	Page 8
3. Priorities Identified in Interviews	Page 10
a. Specialty Physician Access	Page 11
b. Major Health Issues Identified	Page 12
c. Community Outreach	Page 13
4. Summary and Recommendations	Page 15
5. Appendix	Page 18
a. Focus Group Questions	Page 19
b. Major Data Sources	Page 20

Executive Summary

A Community Health Needs Assessment (Assessment) was conducted for Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital, (Hospital) (RPMH) on January 7th and 8th, 2015, with a number of focus groups that included a broad representation of the Community. The value of an Assessment is that it allows Healthcare Organizations to better understand the needs of the Communities they serve, with the ultimate goal of improving the overall health of the local citizens. Whether or not an Organization is required by regulation or statute to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment, it is an extremely valuable tool for fulfilling its role in the Community.

The Mission Statement of Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital is:

..... to be a community health institution by:

1. Striving for a high level of quality in patient services consistent with the changing needs of the service area;
2. Promoting health in our community; and
3. Functioning in a cost-effective manner, to the benefit of the tax payers of Nolan County.

The Mission appropriately focuses on quality of care, providing the right services, promoting health, and managing cost-effectively. By listening to members of the Community, and by understanding the community demographics, the Hospital can gain information on health status, and on where the gaps in healthcare delivery currently exist. Further, the Assessment solidifies the Hospital's role in the Community as a partner in improving the overall health status, and in areas beyond health, such as in education and economic development. The Hospital identifies the Community it serves as its' primary market area, which includes all of Nolan County, along with its secondary market to include portions of the counties of Fisher, Mitchell, Scurry, and the West side of Taylor County. The area South of Nolan County tends to move toward Shannon Medical Center in San Angelo, Tom Green County.

In addition to Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital, which operates 45 of 85 licensed beds, other hospitals in the area include:

Cogdell Memorial Hospital

- Hospital District
- 49 licensed beds, ADC 12
- limited competition with RPMH

Mitchell County Hospital District

- District Hospital
- 25 licensed beds, ADC 12
- Friendly relationship, share Orthopedic services

Hendrick Medical Center

- Not-for-profit, Church-related
- 522 beds
- Friendly relationship, placed Physician at RPMH

Shannon Medical Center

- Not-for Profit
- 409 beds
- Operate RHC in Sweetwater
- Admit to RPMH, send patients to SMC for specialty care
- Operate their own clinical laboratory and radiology service

Regarding Hendrick Medical Center, it is no longer a provider for Blue Cross, so RPMH patients who have that insurance are referred to Abilene Regional Medical Center, an investor-owned Hospital that is licensed for 231 beds. Regarding the Shannon Medical Center Rural Health Clinic (RHC), admissions to Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital are declining, but the Physicians cover Emergency Room call for RPMH, and refer patients there for mammography. Shannon Specialists see patients in their own RHC.

The Association for Community Health Improvement (ACHI) points out that this Assessment process provides help in understanding where the needs are, and where and how to spend the available health care dollars in a community. ACHI also describes the importance of the Hospital working together as a partner with other local organizations (Schools, Churches, Businesses, other Healthcare entities, etc.) to improve the health of all citizens, from the child to the senior adult. The Mission Statement indicates that the Hospital recognizes its' role in the Community.

In the annual Board Self-Assessment completed in 2014, Board members indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that the mission and goals of the Hospital are clear, and appropriate for the role in the Community. Additionally, the Board members agreed or strongly agreed on questions regarding their role in understanding and meeting the needs of the Community, and one member suggested meeting with Community members to update them on changes at the Hospital.

The Assessment just completed for the Hospital included interviews/focus groups with representatives of the following constituencies:

1. Business Leaders
2. Educators/retired educators
3. Elected Officials from County and Cities in Nolan County
4. Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development
5. Medicare population, including Medicare/Medicaid enrollee
6. Hispanic Community
7. Parents of young children
8. Representative of Veterans Service Office of Nolan County
9. Staff of Sweetwater-Nolan County Health Department

Additionally, focus groups were held with Medical Staff and Department Directors, and with Board members, and the CEO was interviewed at the beginning of the process. (See Appendix p.18 for list of questions asked). The findings were very broad, but common themes were discovered

throughout the meetings, and from those meetings, a prioritized listing of the most important issues has been developed. The prioritized list will be used to develop action plans within the Strategic Planning process.

While opportunities for improvement were presented and captured, it is fair to point out that many positive comments were made. The Community appreciates the availability of good local emergency and primary care services, and the Hospital's efforts to continue expanding facilities and services. Additionally, the following specific services were highlighted:

1. Quality of Physicians and other Providers in the Clinics
2. Friendliness and quality of Hospital and Clinic staff
3. Physical Therapy, Obstetrics, Wellness Center
4. Specialists currently available in the Community
5. Quality of Hospital Care

One participant stated a preference to seek services in Abilene and would not necessarily use Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital or its' Doctors. (Although that person had used it some in the past, with both positive and negative results). All other participants indicated that they do utilize the local Hospital/Physicians and/or will do so when the need arises in the future.

The meeting with Sweetwater-Nolan County Health Department was to assess the role of the Hospital and the health of the Community and its' relationship with the public health functions. There is a strong connection between the two organizations in many ways, including the presence of one of the Health Department staff members as a member of the Hospital Board of Directors. Additionally, the staff of the Health Department spoke highly of the Hospital's willingness to work with them on community needs.

The Hospital assumed responsibility for the Diabetic program when the Health Department's contract ended, and provides services for its' clients when needed. The Hospital is also an active participant in the Community Emergency Response program, operated by the Health Department.

In summary, the staff of the Health Department stated that the Hospital is very responsive to their requests, and always follows through on any needs.

Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital conducted a previous Community Health Needs Assessment in 2011. A copy of this report is available in the Administration offices. The findings included two particular areas of opportunity:

1. Promote the availability of Specialists in the Community
2. Offer a variety of healthcare education and programs that will help contribute to a healthier community.

Additionally, in responding to specific questions, members of the Community indicated the following:

1. Orthopedics was one of the Specialties needed.
2. Weight control/exercise classes were of high interest.
3. Low-cost education and screenings were, particularly dealing with heart disease and stress, were desirable.

Since 2011, the Hospital has engaged in a new marketing program that includes promotion of primary and specialty medical services. In the area of education and programs, the Hospital has built a new Wellness Center that offers many exercise opportunities for the Community, and has introduced the Lunch and Learn Seminar series that offers classes on these and other important health topics.

Based on feedback during this current Community Health Needs Assessment, the addition of Orthopedics has been well received, but there is a need to continue to promote the availability of Specialists, Primary Care Providers, and the numerous programs offered at the Hospital. The availability of the Wellness Center and the Lunch and Learn seminars are considered to be very positive signs that the Hospital is addressing the needs of the Community, and the continued expansion of services, such as Obstetrics, ICU, and Radiology/Laboratory show a forward-looking organization.

Community Demographics

The Census of 2012 showed the population of Sweetwater, Texas, to be 10,681, a 6.4% decline since 2000. Nolan County showed a population of 14,924, in 2012, a 6% decline since 2000. The City of Sweetwater land area is 10.04 square miles, with a population density of 1,066 people per square mile.

5.5% of the residents of Sweetwater were foreign born, as of 2012. The median income for a household in Sweetwater was \$34,322, compared to \$50,740 for the Texas average, and the estimated per capita income was \$17,578. The median age was 37.4 years, compared to 30.8 years for Texas. Approximately 23.5% of the population was living in poverty.

The unemployment rate reported in November, 2014 was 3.6%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. According to the County Health Rankings, the data for 2014 shows that 25% of the adults in Nolan County are uninsured, and 13% of children are uninsured. Additionally, 31% of children live in poverty, and 54% of children enrolled in the public schools are eligible for the free lunch program. (www.countyhealthrankings.org)

Education levels in Sweetwater, according to www.city-data.com, are as follows:

- High School or greater: 74.8%
- Bachelor's degree or greater: 11.0%
- Graduate/professional degree 2.5%

Further, County Health Rankings reports that 89% of ninth graders graduate in four years, and 53% have some amount of college.

Nolan County is a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for Primary Care, Dental Care, and Mental Health Providers, and a Medically Underserved Area (MSA), as designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Current data shows the following key health measures for Nolan County:

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Adult Diabetes rate: | 10.6% (9% in Texas) |
| 2. Adult Obesity rate: | 29.0% (26.6% in Texas) |
| 3. Low-income pre-school obesity rate: | 11.9% (15.7% in Texas) |

County Health Rankings also reports on other health matters, to include:

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Physical inactivity (age 20 and up) | 31.0% (24% in Texas) |
| 2. Access to Exercise opportunities | 65.0% (74% in Texas) |
| 3. Sexually transmitted infections* | 439 (486 in Texas) |
| 4. Teen births* | 96 (57 in Texas) |

These rates are comparable to other rural counties in Texas, including those adjacent to Nolan County. While the numbers are not particularly higher for Sweetwater and Nolan County, these three issues contribute significantly to the cost of health care, and the overall health of the community. All three were brought up in the Focus Groups as participants discussed major health issues in the Community.

Obesity is an area of concern, both in Adults and in Children, as it can lead to Diabetes, Coronary Artery Disease, Circulatory Disease, and many other chronic conditions, as well as premature death. According to the Texas Diabetes Council, 9.7% of Adults in Texas who are age 18 and above have been diagnosed with Diabetes (approximately 1.8 million people). The Council reports that while there is no significant difference between males and females in the prevalence of Diabetes, the rate increases with age, impacting the elderly. Further, the Council reports that 26,000 Texas youth (less than 18 years of age) have been diagnosed with Diabetes. This is a major area of concern for Healthcare Providers and School Districts throughout the State and Nation.

Of significance to Sweetwater and Nolan County, the Diabetes rate among Hispanics is higher than among other races. Additionally, the incidence of hypertension tends to run high in the Hispanic populations.

*Infection rate per 100,000 population, and births per 1,000 females aged 15-19 years

The U.S. Census (www.quickfacts.census.gov) reported in 2013 that the population by race in Sweetwater was 54.0% White, (not reporting as Hispanic), but that by ethnicity, 38.3% of the population is of Hispanic or Latino origin. Consideration should be given to this sector of the market as education and screening opportunities are developed.

Additional chronic diseases being treated in Sweetwater and Nolan County include Cardiovascular and Respiratory illnesses, along with Congestive Heart Failure, Hypertension, and other related diseases.

Priorities Identified in Interviews

Much of the information presented is based on the perceptions of the members of the Community, most of whom have had some experience with Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital and its services and staff. Even if a comment made was only perception and not based on actual experience, perception is reality to those individuals, and needs to be considered. Additionally, information shared in focus groups and/or interviews is often what gets repeated within the Community, and therefore becomes the basis for what people believe about the Hospital.

The following topics were most often indicated as major health issues and/or areas the Hospital should focus on to improve the health of the Community. The frequency with which a topic was brought up in the focus groups, and data gathered on Nolan County, were used to determine the priorities. These priorities are listed for the Board and Administration to consider as future planning is being developed.

1. Specialty Physician Access
 - a. ENT, Podiatry, Dermatology
 - b. Neurology, Cardiology
 - c. Pediatrics, Mental Health

2. Major Health Issues Identified

- a. Diabetes
- b. Obesity (Adult and Child)
- c. Cardiovascular and Hypertension
- d. Respiratory
- e. Cancer
- f. Nutrition issues
- g. Age-related illnesses, including dementia
- h. Mental Health
- i. Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- j. Renal disease (being addressed with Dialysis Center)

3. Community Outreach

- a. Education on major health topics
 - i. Nutrition
 - ii. Disease Management
 - iii. Healthy Lifestyle...exercise, preventive care, nutrition
 - iv. Health Fair/Open House activities
 - v. Outreach to Senior citizens
 - vi. Summer camps for children, utilizing Wellness Center
- b. Marketing of services
 - i. Current capabilities/services offered
 - ii. Include outlying cities
 - iii. Connection with Schools and Churches

Specialty Physician Access

Participants in the interviews spoke about the value of having the current Specialty Physicians in the Community, as well as the presence of skilled Primary Care Physicians. Beyond that, several participants would like to see the Hospital expand the number of Specialists beyond what is currently available. Specifically, the following Specialties were suggested:

Ear, Nose and Throat
Podiatry

Neurology
Dermatology
Cardiology (increase current availability)
Pediatrics
Dental
Mental Health

Several participants commended the Hospital for bringing Dialysis services to Sweetwater/Nolan County. This is an important service that will touch many lives. There was also appreciation offered for the addition of Orthopedics, and for the planned expansion of existing services. The availability of Specialty Clinics is especially important to the Senior population and to the poor, for whom travel is a challenge, so any additional Clinics will meet an important community need, and will be well received. The most important reason to address Physician Access is, of course, to meet the needs of the Community. Beyond that, supplementing the existing level of Primary Care with a good mix of Specialty Clinics is also important for the Hospital to be able to keep Community members in Sweetwater.

Many spoke highly of the local Physicians and other providers who are currently in the Community, and especially appreciated the recent addition of Drs. Liedtke and Enard. There is some concern about the potential retirement of members of the Shannon Rural Health Clinic, and how they will be replaced. As the Hospital develops strategies for the future, a current Medical Staff Management Plan will be important to insure the right mix of Providers to support the needs of the Community today and into the future.

Major Health Issues Identified

While there was an overall appreciation for the Hospital from most participants, there was also an expression of the need for an increase in addressing chronic diseases in Sweetwater, including Diabetes,

Cardiovascular, Cancer, Hypertension, and issues of particular importance to the Senior population, such as Dementia. As noted earlier, the rate of Diabetes in Nolan County is 10.6%, and Obesity in Adults is 29.0%. These two conditions can lead to many other issues related to the Heart and Vascular systems, as well as other health issues.

While Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital cannot solve all community health issues by itself, there may be opportunities to partner with other organizations to help address the issues of Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol abuse. The Hospital could work with others to help address this issue, perhaps through grants or other sources, such as telemedicine. The Medical Staff stated that this is a major issue in the Community, as did other participants. A Medical Staff member suggested bringing a Mental Health professional from Abilene to speak with them about resources.

In general, participants often spoke of the needs of an aging population, stressing the importance of addressing chronic health issues as well as the importance of a proactive healthy lifestyle. The Wellness Center is an important resource for that population, as are the Lunch and Learn seminars. CEO Donna Boatright suggested that educational programs could be presented at the Senior Nutrition Activities Program center during meal times.

Community Outreach

In questions asked about the overall health of the Community, and ways in which the Hospital can improve the health and quality of life of Sweetwater, education and/or screenings came up in most interviews. This included the acknowledgement that education and screenings do take place currently, through the efforts of the Hospital. The education included the need for Community members to better understand the various disease categories affecting them and their loved ones. Beyond that, there is a need for education and support in how to live a healthy life style, in order to mitigate the growth of the most serious diseases. A partnership with the Sweetwater Independent School District and other Districts in Nolan

County would be one way in which to get education out into the Community, by jointly offering nutrition and exercise opportunities for all ages. Opportunities to develop a partnership with the School District should be explored. Further, partnering with the Ministerial Alliance and/or individual Churches, as well as other organizations in the Community, should be pursued as a means of expanding the educational outreach.

As noted earlier, the major health issues in the Community that were most frequently mentioned, and which provide opportunities for education, are:

- a. Diabetes (particularly among adults)
- b. Obesity (child and adult)
- c. Hypertension
- d. Cancer
- e. Cardiac
- f. Nutrition (child and adult)
- g. Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- h. COPD and other Respiratory ailments

The Hospital is in a unique position to provide such education, both among the adult population as well as with those under 18 years of age. The rate of Diabetes in children in Sweetwater appears to be stable, according to several participants, but the rate of Pre-school Obesity for low-income children is at 11.8%, and addressing nutrition and healthy living at an early age is important. Educating the children can be an important first step in educating their parents.

As with every community in the State, Sweetwater and Nolan County have individuals who are dealing with one or more of these issues. The Health Fairs and similar activities that have been held in the past were described as very important to the Community, and several participants want to see these continue. Again, as with every community, the growing number of Senior Citizens presents a special need for education on disease prevention, education, and counseling on specific diseases. The Hospital is encouraged to seek opportunities to partner with other organizations to continue and expand educational offerings.

Several participants suggested that many residents are not always aware of the services offered by the Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital. This is not unusual, in that individuals tend to not be aware, unless they are currently receiving services. It simply means that the effort to market services is an ongoing process, which helps individuals and families realize the great resource that the Hospital is, and helps to keep people in the Community for their healthcare needs. Efforts to market the services, the local Medical Staff, and visiting Specialists can be done in a variety of ways, including inviting the Community to tour the facility and combining the Open House approach with health screenings and/or education programs.

In the Annual Board Self-Assessment, members stated that two of the highest priorities for the next year are “to make people aware of the advancements taking place at RPMH”, and “Holding ourselves accountable for public opinion regarding the growth of the hospital and the need for additional services we will be able to provide through the enhancements/additions”. Another member listed as a weakness “Educating Community”. These comments indicate the Board recognizes the importance of a close and open relationship with the Community.

Summary and Recommendations

In summary, the feedback from the various participants can be very beneficial to Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital, as the future needs of the Hospital and related facilities are considered. The level of services currently being provided by the Hospital is a prime example of what can be done when the Board, Administration, Providers, and Staff work with the Community to provide the right services in the right location, at the right time. Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital is indeed a Community-based entity, by virtue of the services it offers, and as shown in the Mission Statement. Building on what exists today, listening to the Community and to the Staff, and seeking innovative ways to deliver care will benefit the

Community for years to come. The sharing of the findings from this report with members of the Community is a very important step, as it shows not only that the Hospital sought out their input, but that it is listening and willing to address that input. Further, the Hospital is encouraged to ultimately share the action plans that will become part of the strategic planning process that will follow.

Recommendations are as follows:

1. Continue to update the plan for recruiting and retaining Physicians and Midlevel Providers to insure access for patients, the availability of Primary Care and Specialty Providers at the necessary level and for the appropriate services, and to accommodate future planning for potential retirements.
2. Continue to strengthen the necessary service lines that address chronic diseases such as Diabetes, Heart Disease, Hypertension, Renal Disease, and others for which the Hospital is the primary leader in the Community. For other health priorities such as Mental Health, to include Drug and Alcohol addictions, pursue opportunities to partner with others in the Community, to include the Sweetwater Independent School District and other organizations, such as Churches and Businesses, the City and County, and other Healthcare entities. While the Hospital cannot provide full services for all issues, it can be an important partner in the efforts to improve the overall health status and quality of life in Sweetwater.
3. Expand, where possible, current efforts to provide education on chronic diseases, nutrition, and healthy lifestyle, with focus on all age levels, from school children to Senior citizens. Again, utilize partnerships within the Community where appropriate to accomplish this.
4. Continue to utilize the Marketing Plan to help promote the services that are currently available, as well as future plans for services. A broad approach as is now used, to include newspaper, radio, and social media, as well as local presentations, is encouraged.

TMSI, Inc. is appreciative of Donna Boatright and her team, especially Carla Howard, for assistance in scheduling the participants for the interviews. We also appreciate all the individuals who took time to share their insights into the health needs of Sweetwater and Nolan County. It has been a pleasure for us to assist you in conducting this Community Health Needs Assessment.

Appendix

Focus Group Questions

1. What makes a community a healthy place to live?
2. What is healthy/unhealthy about Sweetwater/Nolan County?
3. What are the major health issues in your community?
4. What are your perceptions of Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital? Others perceptions?
5. Do you use the Hospital? If not, why not?
6. What can the Hospital do to address the health issues in the community?

Major Data Sources

1. www.city-data.com
2. www.countyhealthrankings.org
3. www.quickfacts.census.gov
4. www.hrsa.gov
5. www.dshs.state.tx.us/diabetes/