

# Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital's Community Health Implementation Strategy



2013-2016

# Executive Summary

Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital is a 114-bed, not-for-profit hospital located in Ahoskie, North Carolina. This hospital provides a widerange of general and specialized healthcare services for about 44,000 residents in a four-county Roanoke-Chowan area of Hertford, Bertie, Gates, and Northampton Counties. The hospital affiliated with a larger health system in 1997 to become part of Vidant Health that serves more than 1.4 million people in 29 counties in eastern North Carolina. The health system's mission is "To enhance the quality of life for the communities and people we serve, touch, and support" and Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital has a strong history of improving health in the community through partnerships and programs.

## **Description of Community**

Hertford County, where Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital is located, has a population of 24,669. The majority of the population in the county is African American (60.7%). In the 2010 census, of the 100 counties in North Carolina, Hertford County was ranked 2nd in the state for percent of population African American; second only to Bertie County. The Hispanic and Asian populations in Hertford County are small compared to other NC counties. 1.2% of the population is American Indian (Meherrin Tribe). 25% of county residents do not have health insurance. 27% of residents are Medicaid eligible (NC=16%). From 2006 to 2010 the Median Household Income was \$30,878 (NC \$45,570).

## **2012 Community Health Assessment**

Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital participated in a pilot project led by the Hertford County Public Health Authority initiated by the Centers for Disease Control. Hertford County was one of three local health departments in North Carolina chosen to use the CDC's community health assessment model as a part of a pilot demonstration. The Community Health Assessment model piloted is a community wide strategic planning framework for improving public health known as MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships).

The model provides the framework for convening a variety of organizations, groups and individuals that comprise the local public health system. Many of the organizations that came together in Hertford County previously served on a local Healthy Carolinians Task Force. Many of these same organizations also formed a local "Care Share Alliance" called the Hertford Health Maintenance Alliance (HHMA) to provide a safety network and patient navigation for indigent and uninsured individuals.

The following organizations participated in at least one of six sessions of community health assessment and planning:

1. Ahoskie Town Police
2. Chowan University
3. Hertford County Public Schools
4. Roanoke Chowan Community College
5. Vidant Roanoke Chowan Hospital
6. Roanoke Chowan Community Health Center
7. Pregnancy Care Center
8. County Department of Social Services
9. Hertford County Cooperative Extension
10. Eastern Regional Behavioral Health
11. Hertford County Public Health Authority
12. Hertford County Board of Health

The MAPP model (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership) involved greater assessments and strategic planning strategies than the traditional CHA model used in North Carolina. The first step was to develop a Long Term Vision for Ideal Hertford County and determine common values. The long-term vision statement developed by the group was:

*Hertford County is a place where optimal health is achieved through personal responsibility for positive lifestyle choices; where all children and adults regardless of socioeconomic status, race or gender have access to resources for attaining overall physical, mental and social well-being as well as academic success in a safe environment guided by innovative and visionary leaders.*

The MAPP team then conducted four assessments:

- o Community Health Status Assessment – based on health statistics
- o Community Themes and Strengths Assessment – based on community surveys (528 community members completed the survey)
- o Local Public Health Assessment – based on 10 Essential Public Health Services
- o Forces of Change Assessment – Environmental Scan

The MAPP process concluded with the team establishing four common theme priorities based on the comprehensive community assessment process. These include:

1. Access to Care (need for specialty care, lack of evening/weekend hours for health services, need to link people/population to needed personal health services)
2. Adolescent Health (teen pregnancies, STDs, drug abuse, childhood obesity, youth tobacco use prevention)
3. Chronic Disease Prevention (diabetes, prostate cancer)
4. Social Determinants of Health (high percent of single head of household, shortage of employment opportunities, children in single parent households, children in poverty, teen pregnancies)

## **Partnerships for Health Improvement**

The hospital currently partners with organizations such as the Hertford County Public Health Authority, Roanoke-Chowan Community Health Center, American Cancer Society, Office of Aging, Cooperative Extension Agency, Smart Start, public schools, The Roanoke Center, Choanoke Area Development Association, Chowan University, and Roanoke-Chowan Community College to provide health-related initiatives and public health events throughout the year.

Since 2011, Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital has partnered with the North Carolina Care Share Alliance to develop a 'safety' network of healthcare (including patient navigation) for patients who are indigent, uninsured, or under-insured. The Hertford Health Maintenance Alliance was established as a partnership between hospital, health department, federally qualified community health center, and many other health and community organizations. The Duke Endowment provided grant funds in the amount of \$175,000 for a network coordinator and two patient navigators to assist patients who enroll in this 'safety network.' Focus will be on access to specialty care.

Hospital leaders serve on numerous health-related boards and advisory councils in the area including Communities in Schools, Pre-K Head Start Advisory Council, Choanoke Area Development Association board of directors, Hertford County Public Health Authority board, and the regional North Carolina Community Transformation Project Healthy Eating Team. The president serves on the board of the North Carolina Hospital Association.

In addition, the hospital provides space for health-related meetings and support groups including Roanoke-Chowan SAFE (for abused families), cancer support groups, diabetes support classes, Alzheimer's disease family support sessions, Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, and Hertford Partners for Health.

The hospital opened a medical model wellness center in 2002 called the Vidant Wellness Center—Ahoskie (a 20,704 square foot facility with lap pool and sauna) to make memberships affordable for the low-income communities in northeastern North Carolina.

Roanoke-Chowan Foundation provides operational support for the center. Operation of this center would not be possible if the foundation did not underwrite a percentage of the operational costs.

Over 2200 members participate in exercise and fitness programs including land and water aerobics, weight loss programs, children's programs, clinical based programs for cardiopulmonary patients and more.

The Vidant Wellness Center's Advantage program offers the same access and level of service to community members at a reduced cost based on their income and health risk factors. Over 100 members currently participate in the Vidant Advantage program.

In addition to the services offered at the center, the Vidant Wellness Center staff provides many outreach opportunities to our community including health screenings and education as well as fun events such as the annual Heritage Day 5K benefit race and Zumbathons.

## **Health Improvement – Early Detection Through Screening**

Hospital staff members provide free breast and colon cancer, diabetes, and heart disease/stroke screening throughout the year. Staff members offer screening and health information at community health fairs, and at a major community health screening fair annually during National Hospital Week in front of Wal-Mart in Ahoskie.

A Cancer Care Team of clinical and non-clinical staff completed a major project of four free breast cancer screening events in African American churches funded by the Roanoke-Chowan Foundation. Over 100 women received free clinical breast exams and access to free mammogram or ultrasound. 75 women have received free mammograms through this program.

This team partners with four local health departments' Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention Programs to refer indigent/uninsured women for diagnostic testing. The hospital has a 'cancer care fund' to assist women in paying for these services; there is also a cancer care fund designated to help indigent/uninsured patients with needed colonoscopy procedures.

## **Ambassadors for Health**

Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital provides "Ambassadors for Health" who represent the hospital at over 75 events during an average year. A team of over 60 Ambassadors for Health—clinical and non-clinical staff members—represent the hospital at community events including health fairs at churches and awareness days at businesses, the annual Elder Fair, Children's Festival, Cancer Awareness Fair, Ahoskie Heritage Day, Watermelon Festival. The hospital is also a major sponsor of the Hertford-Gates Relay for Life for the American Cancer Society and sends a team to walk each year.

The hospital also sponsors annual free Breast Cancer Pink Power events and Heart Truth Luncheons with nationally known speakers on these health topics. Attendance at each event is close to 200 participants. The first annual 'Save our Sisters' breast cancer luncheon was held in 2011 with plans to continue this event for African-American women to encourage early detection of breast cancer. The Vidant Health Foundation with the Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Grants Program awards grant dollars totaling at least \$100,000 each year to community organizations focused on healthy eating/nutrition, physical fitness, access to care, and diabetes education/prevention. Through an on-line grant process, non-profit and government agencies apply for funds that meet the criteria. Organizations such as the federally qualified community health center, cooperative extension agencies, health departments, town recreation departments, and food banks receive one-year grant awards to complete goals toward health improvement in the counties of Hertford, Gates, and Northampton.

## **Community Health Focus Areas**

Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital established a committee of clinical and non-clinical staff—leaders and front-line staff—to review the findings of the 2012 Hertford County Community Health Assessment. After several meetings and discussion, the team identified the following as focus areas for the hospital for 2013–2014:

- o Chronic disease prevention and management
- o Access to Care
- o Physical Activity and Nutrition (adult and adolescent health)



# Implementation Plan

## **Initiative: Chronic Disease Prevention and Management**

**Goal:** Early detection, prevention, and improvement of outcomes and quality of life for children and adults with chronic disease (cancer, heart disease, diabetes, pediatric asthma, or COPD).

### **Strategies:**

#### **Health Screening**

- o Provide screening for early detection of cancer, heart disease or diabetes for at least 500 adults at health events in the hospital or community.
  - » Annual free community health fair open to the public offering cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, height/weight, and body mass index screening for participants.
- o Implement Breast Cancer Care Project to screen women for breast cancer annually during the month of October at the hospital; provide clinical breast exam and on-site mammography/ultrasound. (Funds available to assist indigent/uninsured women through Cancer Care Funds)
- o Provide free colonoscopy screening for at least five (5) indigent/uninsured patients referred to Cancer Care Project utilizing Cancer Care Funds (funding raised by Roanoke-Chowan Foundation to assist cancer patients in need).
- o Provide prostate cancer health education and referral for screening for at least 100 men during the year.

#### **Health Education for Prevention**

- o Provide health education to prevent chronic disease at health fairs, educational events such as Dinner with a Doc, community seminars, Speaker's Bureau, or at major health events including:
  - » Pink Power Breast Cancer Education Event - October
  - » Heart Truth – heart disease prevention - February
  - » Stroke Education and Screening Event – Spring
  - » Save our Sisters Breast Cancer Education – Spring
  - » Diabetes Community Education Seminar – Spring
- o Provide Ambassadors for Health (60 trained staff members) to represent hospital at over 25 community health fairs and other events in 4 counties promoting health education, information about risk factors, and resources/services to treat chronic disease.

## **Support and Community Resources**

- o Providesupportgroupsforpatientsandfamiliesdealingwithchronicdisease:
  - » Diabetes Support Group – Monthly – Vidant Wellness Center
  - » Cancer Support Groups – Monthly in Hertford and Gates Counties
  - » Better Breathers Support Group for COPD – Vidant Wellness Center
- o OffercommunityoutreachprogramsforcancerpatientsincludingREACHtoRecovery(16 womentrainedtofacilitate)andROADtoRecovery(volunteersassistwithtransportation).
- o Providepatientnavigatorforcancerpatientstoinclude resource/referral, follow-up in home, and networking with other agencies to improve health outcomes.

## **Care Management for Chronic Disease**

- o Provide a comprehensive Pediatric Asthma Program for Hertford and Northampton Counties to serve children with asthma; provides case management, referral/resources, and in home family support for at least 80 children per year.
- o Provide a comprehensive diabetes education and care management program for patients admitted to the hospital with diabetes. RN care coordinator provides education and in-hospital management; and at-home follow-up and resources including tele-health to monitor patients when they return home.
- o Provide case management for heart failure patients admitted to the hospital or emergency department to offer referrals and resources in the community to prevent re-admission to the hospital for heart failure.
- o Provide emergency department care management plan to connect emergency patients with resources, including primary care, in the community.
- o Provide a stroke management program that includes identifying stroke patients admitted to emergency department to include resources, referrals, and monitoring treatment and outcomes.

## **Rehabilitation and Exercise Programs**

- o Provide cardiopulmonary rehab programs for heart disease patients and “Breathsavers’ rehab exercise programs for COPD patients at the Vidant Wellness Center.

## **Initiative: Access to Care**

**Goal: To improve access to healthcare especially for indigent/uninsured patient population**

### **Strategies:**

- o Serve as the lead organization for Hertford Health Maintenance Alliance (an alliance of community health agencies, schools, social service organizations, and non-profits) to develop a network of specialty care for indigent/uninsured patients.
- o Assist Roanoke-Chowan Foundation to administer over \$100,000 in grant funds to qualifying applicant organizations to improve access to care, and promote health and fitness.
- o Provide financial counselor to assist indigent/uninsured patients and families in need of charitable funds.
- o Provide a patient transportation fund to assist indigent patients in need of transportation from the hospital upon discharge. Collaborate with Vidant Medical Group to recruit additional specialty physicians to the area to meet patient needs to ‘keep care local’.

- o Assist Vidant Medical Group and local primary care practices to achieve patient-centered medical home model of care to provide increased access to primary care services, better quality of care, focus on prevention and management of health issues.
- o Provide community benefits including cash donations to agencies and organizations that promote access to healthcare in the community.
- o Collaborate with Roanoke-Chowan Community Health Center's school-based health center at Hertford County Middle School (Bear Care Center) assisting with health education programs and referrals/resources for students.
- o Serve on advisory councils, committees, and boards including the county board of health in the community to promote access to healthcare (hospital leaders to serve as needed).

## **Initiative: Physical Activity and Nutrition**

**Goal: To educate adults and children on the benefits of physical activity and nutrition and provide a wellness center with resources to improve general health and fitness.**

### **Strategies:**

- o Provide height, weight, and body mass index screening at community health screening events for obesity prevention.
- o Serve on advisory councils and partnerships for health in 4 counties to promote wellness, health and fitness.
- o Provide medical model wellness center (that includes health risk assessment) for community (membership required) that offer exercise equipment, weights, and other exercise options with monitoring (FittLinx) to track results; as well as personal trainers, and consultation with exercise specialists to improve outcomes.
- o Offer Vidant Advantage program for low-income community members on a sliding fee schedule or reduced membership rate based on need and health indicators.
- o Open medical model wellness center to the public free of charge at least two times a year for health and wellness promotion events (National Senior Health and Fitness Day, other events)
- o Provide structured exercise classes at the medical model wellness center (aerobics, water aerobics, spinning, Zumba, and other instructor-led training) to help prevent obesity and chronic disease.
- o Offer comprehensive child/adolescent health and fitness programs at the wellness center including:
  - » Youth sports conditioning and personal training- promotes active lifestyles including sports, among youth; tailored to age 12–15, this program allows children to work with an exercise specialist to learn the risks of unhealthy eating, sedentary lifestyles, and the effects of obesity.
  - » Summer camps – focus on healthy lifestyle choices and include activities in the pool, aerobics, indoor/outdoor games, arts and crafts, educational speakers, field trips and fun. Scholarships available.
  - » Kids Karate – physical conditioning and basics of balance, coordination, strength, speed and endurance.
  - » Swim lessons – available year round in lap pool

**\*Youth activities are provided through grant programs for lower income nonmembers of the community.**



- o Provide free educational classes and seminars on health and fitness and nutrition throughout the year at the wellness center.
- o Implement the Exercise is Medicine physician referral program for primary care providers to refer at-risk patients to the wellness center for specialized health and fitness programs.
- o Serve on regional community transformation grant program to address healthy eating in Roanoke-Chowan area through food banks and farmer's markets; assist in funding grant programs that educate community about healthy eating.
- o Promote healthy eating in the hospital Café through educational displays, and health information about foods served in cafeteria daily.
- o Promote health and fitness with quarterly educational articles in local newspapers and magazines; and through public service announcements on the radio.
- o Provide comprehensive employee wellness initiative to improve exercise, fitness, healthy weight, tobacco free, and nutrition among over 600 employees at Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital. Program includes personal counseling, fitness programs, and competitions among employees to track exercise and healthy eating.
- o Support recreation programs at schools and in community through charitable cash donations and through the foundation's community benefit grants program.

#### **Priority Health Needs Not Addressed by Implementation Plan**

Two community health needs identified by the community health assessment are not specifically addressed in the hospital's implementation plan. However, Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital will work collaboratively with Hertford Health Maintenance Alliance, Hertford County Public Health Authority, and other community agencies to address the following two priority areas:

- o Adolescent Health – Teen pregnancies, STDs, drug abuse, youth tobacco use prevention  
\*Childhood obesity is addressed in the implementation plan.
- o Social Determinants of Health – High percent of single head of household, shortage of employment opportunities, children in single parent households, children in poverty, teen pregnancies.

# Conclusion

Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital has a strong history of providing comprehensive community outreach and benefit programs in the Roanoke-Chowan service area that includes Hertford County. The hospital took a lead role in a community health assessment process for Hertford County. The health assessment and top priorities were reviewed by a hospital team of key community health leaders who identified major strategic initiatives for the hospital for the coming year. An implementation plan will address top priority health needs in the community. The Fiscal Year 2013-2014 community health implementation plan based on the most recent community health assessment in the service area, will continue many health improvement programs, as well as implement new programming in the coming year to address the health needs of the communities we serve.

## Approval

Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital's Implementation Strategy for 2013-2016 was approved by the Vidant Community Hospitals' Board of Directors on June 25, 2013.

Dr. David Herman, Chair  
Vidant Community Hospitals' Board of Directors