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Middlesex Hospital Outlines Community Health Needs Assessment Priorities

MIDDLETOWN—Based on data collected as part of its 2016 community health needs assessment, Middlesex Hospital has identified four priority areas that it will focus on in the coming years: mental health, substance abuse, the aging population, and asthma, with added attention to social determinants of health and health equity.

The Affordable Care Act requires not-for-profit hospitals conduct community health needs assessments every three years. These assessments identify the health needs of a defined geographic area through a comprehensive data collection process. The goal is to create a health improvement plan based on the community's unique characteristics and needs.

Middlesex Hospital's assessment includes data specific to Middlesex County, and it compares that local data to state and national findings. An advisory committee comprised of community partners and local health departments helped guide the process.

Middlesex Hospital held a community forum to discuss its assessment, priorities were determined and plans of action developed. The overall goal for each priority area is to improve health outcomes and quality of life, while focusing on social determinants of health and promoting health equity. The Hospital's Board of Directors adopted the community health needs assessment implementation strategy earlier this year.

In the area of mental health, the Hospital will improve access to mental health services by implementing an evidence-based, integrated model for mental health treatment within the primary care setting. It also plans to provide specialized mental health treatment for high-risk populations by developing and implementing an early intervention program for young adults with emerging mental illness or substance use disorders.

The Hospital will tackle the issue of substance abuse by developing a targeted continuum of care treatment program for high-risk patients who experience severe alcohol use disorders, using evidence-based interventions to support and sustain sobriety by connecting patients to appropriate community based treatment and support services. Recognizing that opioid use is a problem throughout the country, the Hospital will launch an opioid awareness campaign and increase access to naloxone for patients at high risk for opioid overdose.

To help the elderly, the Hospital will implement interventions that promote healthy aging in place and improved health and wellbeing. By developing an in-home comprehensive geriatric assessment and management service line, it will coordinate care through an integrated and collaborative approach.

The Hospital will improve its asthma outcomes by participating in the Connecticut Asthma Initiative and meeting its goals. It will improve access and appropriate asthma care by collaborating with community partners; enhancing patient education for asthma management; improving care transitions and increasing the utilization of asthma action plans.

“The community health needs assessment is designed to assist the Hospital in planning for targeted community based programs in high need areas and to be a resource for community organizations,” says Catherine Rees, director of the Hospital’s community benefit program. “We are grateful to our community partners who participated in our most recent assessment and who continue to collaborate with us to ensure that we are meeting the needs and providing equal access to care for those community members who are at risk and most vulnerable.”

To view the Hospital’s community health needs assessment and implementation strategy, visit:

middlesexhospital.org/middlesex-and-the-community/serving-our-community/community-health-needs-assessment.

Middlesex Health System

Based in Middletown, Conn., the award-winning Middlesex Health System, a member of the [Mayo Clinic Care Network](#), includes [Middlesex Hospital](#), a not-for-profit, 296-bed magnet hospital, and the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center. It also features three emergency departments, three urgent care centers and an assisted living facility, along with many other programs and services. The health system's primary care physicians, surgeons, specialists, nurses and other employees work hard to meet the needs of the Middlesex County and Connecticut shoreline communities.

Using cutting-edge, innovative technology, the health system's vision is to be the clear, first choice for medical care, and its mission is to provide the safest, highest-quality care and best experience possible.