

**Community Health Needs Assessment  
Implementation Plan  
Five South Central Pennsylvania Counties**  
CUMBERLAND, DAUPHIN, LEBANON, PERRY, YORK

**Caring For Our Community  
2013-2016**

PENNSTATE HERSHEY



Milton S. Hershey  
Medical Center



# Our Mission

PENN STATE MILTON S. HERSHEY MEDICAL CENTER, PENN STATE HERSHEY HEALTH SYSTEM, PENN STATE COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, PENN STATE HERSHEY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, AND PENN STATE HERSHEY CANCER INSTITUTE ARE COMMITTED TO ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH IMPROVED HEALTH, THE PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION OF THOSE WHO SERVE THE HEALTH NEEDS OF OTHERS AND THE DISCOVERY OF KNOWLEDGE TO BENEFIT SOCIETY.

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## **EDUCATION**

We are committed to the education of medical and nursing students, basic science graduate students, medical residents and fellows, other students in health care related professions, and practicing health professionals. We seek to enroll students of exceptional quality, and their education is based on the present and future health needs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the nation. Special focus is given to the education of primary care providers.

## **PATIENT CARE**

Our objective is to provide a range of fully integrated patient care services for the people of central Pennsylvania and beyond. These services extend from wellness promotion, prevention of illness, and maintenance of health. Across the continuum—primary care to specialized tertiary care, evidence-based medicine and cutting edge therapies are provided.

## **RESEARCH**

We strive to be a national leader in pursuing scientific investigation and developing programs to advance medical and scientific knowledge, which will ultimately contribute to the health of the public, the practice of medicine, and the education of health professionals.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

We will provide community outreach services to the public through health education, patient care, community activities, and applications of research.

We endeavor to provide health education to the public. In turn, community support for our research mission fosters clinical applications that positively impact patient care.

# FOUNDING

In 1963, The Milton S. Hershey Foundation offered \$50 million to The Pennsylvania State University to establish a medical school and teaching hospital in Hershey. With this grant and \$21.3 million from the U.S. Public Health Service, the University built a medical school, teaching hospital, and research center. Ground was broken in 1966, and Penn State College of Medicine opened its doors to the first class of students in 1967. Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center accepted its first patients in 1970.

Penn State Hershey Medical Center is a 551-bed tertiary care hospital, with Magnet designation, and is the only facility in Pennsylvania to be accredited as an adult and pediatric Level I trauma center. It provides clinical and surgical specialties to south central Pennsylvania residents who otherwise would have to travel to Baltimore, Pittsburgh or Philadelphia to receive comparable care. These services are provided regardless of race, color, creed or national origin. Penn State Hershey operates an emergency room to all regardless of ability to pay, and accepts Medicare and Medicaid patients without discrimination. Although the Medical Center's charges are established based on market rate, virtually all patients receiving services pay a reduced rate ranging from a reduction in fees to wholly uncompensated health care.

The new Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, opened in early 2013, has seventy-two beds and 263,000 square feet of space designed to promote a model of care that is focused on the unique needs of sick children and their families with spaces including a pediatric cancer pavilion, dedicated pediatric operating rooms, healing gardens, a safety store, and a family resource center.

Penn State Hershey Medical Group is a practice of more than 900 clinicians, employed by the Medical Center. The Medical Group brings the exceptional quality of the Medical Center and its affiliated physicians to convenient locations throughout central Pennsylvania at sixty-two clinic sites.

Penn State Hershey Health System includes Penn State Hershey Rehabilitation Hospital, a partnership with Select Medical Corporation, the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, a collaboration with PinnacleHealth, and other specialty facilities.

As the region's only academic medical center, there is a very close relationship between the Medical Center and the College of Medicine. All physicians on the staff of the Medical Center are on the faculty of the College of Medicine. No physician may have staff privileges unless he or she is on the faculty. The Medical Center is a teaching hospital for the students of the College of Medicine and School of Nursing, who, in addition to learning in the Medical Center environment, provide patient care as residents. There are currently 563 residents enrolled within the College.

## **COLLEGE OF MEDICINE FUNDING:**

As part of the mission of Penn State Hershey to educate the next generation of health care providers and support research to improve the health of our communities at large, funds from the Medical Center are distributed annually to the College of Medicine. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, \$60,674,000 of operating funds were transferred to the College in academic support payments and other fund transfers.

## **UNCOMPENSATED CARE:**

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, the Medical Center received payments from Medicare and Medicaid totaling \$291,622,204. The full cost of providing services to Medicare and Medicaid patients was \$314,454,027, a shortfall of \$22,831,823. In addition, the total cost of uncompensated charity care (those without insurance coverage) for this fiscal year was \$17,563,793.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

During the course of the 2011-2012 fiscal year Penn State Hershey embarked on a journey to identify and define the health needs of its community. Penn State Hershey collaborated with two community health systems, Holy Spirit Health System and PinnacleHealth, to conduct a formal Community Health Needs Assessment, completed by Tripp Umbach.

The resulting thirty-three-page report (<http://goo.gl/5Ygqql>) identified critical disparities in specific zip codes across a five-county area (including Cumberland, Dauphin, Lebanon, Perry, and northern York counties). This five-county area is uniquely represented by populations living in urban, rural, and suburban settings, each facing their own set of health challenges. In the

report, published in September, communities were given a need index score to reflect the degree of health disparities compared to other communities within the evaluated region.

In reviewing each of the priority health needs, internal and external inventories were used to identify programs that are currently offered to the community in each of the three areas. In each area, existing programs and initiatives were identified for expansion to address the associated community health needs.

The needs assessment was conducted through data collection, interviews with community stakeholders, focus groups with key audiences, and community forums.



# Needs Assessment

The assessment established three over-arching priorities. First, we must help to **improve the lifestyle choices of our residents**. Physical activity levels are generally low and diets are generally nutritionally unbalanced. Obesity rates are high. Second, **health education** advocates for culturally appropriate messages targeted to populations with the highest need for improved health and a greater focus on good health education for school-aged children. The third priority, **access to affordable health care**, is intended to address limited access to primary care, specialty care, mental health, and dental care.



# PRIORITY: Promotion of Healthy Lifestyle

The needs assessment revealed that more information and new or expanded programs about diet and nutrition and physical activity are needed in the region. Penn State Hershey plans to address this need by:

- Focusing on health and wellness in schools
- Promoting healthy eating
- Increasing cancer prevention behaviors
- Increasing opportunities for physical activity

## OBJECTIVE 1:

### Focus on Health and Wellness in Schools

#### Strategies:

**School-based assessments**—Nurses from Penn State Hershey team up with nurses in local school districts to expedite the process of performing school-based screenings (height, weight, vision, hearing, and scoliosis) that are required annually. This project was piloted recently in the Lebanon School District. Primary research findings in the CHNA demonstrate that Lebanon County has a childhood obesity rate above the state average and is among the state's lowest in health education.



**Healthy Champions**—The Penn State Hershey PRO Wellness Center Healthy Champions program was developed ten years ago to support health and wellness efforts in schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The program provides complimentary curriculum and promotional materials for four signature events—Apple Crunch Day, Walk to School Day, Go for the Greens, and Move it Outside—all based on encouraging children to make healthy food choices and to become physically active. The program is now expanding to include community groups and employers, in addition to schools.

#### Goals:

1. **Provide more relevant and specific information for families in the body mass index (BMI) letter that is sent out to parents of all school-aged children in Pennsylvania.**

As a result of school-based assessments and feedback from parents throughout the Commonwealth, our partners at Penn State Hershey PRO Wellness Center are revising the BMI letter. The new letter, proposed to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, will include more specific information on what the BMI rating means, potential health risk factors, and suggested courses of action for families of children with higher BMI scores (scores that constitute an overweight or obese rating). The letter is provided in both English and Spanish.

2. **Expand the number of organizations enrolled in the Healthy Champions program, from 370 participating organizations in 2013 to 450 participating organizations by the end of 2015.**

A star rating system is being developed to recognize organizations who are participating in the program. The rating system recognizes the organization's efforts to promote a healthy lifestyle (specifically nutrition and physical activity), based on the Institute of Medicine's recommendations for goals and strategies to prevent obesity.

3. **Increase the number of schools eligible for support through the school-based assessment initiative.**

Through continued collaboration with our partners at Penn State Hershey PRO Wellness Center, additional school districts in the five-county region will be identified as potential sites for our school-based screening initiative between 2013 and 2015. Districts will be identified through enrollment and questionnaires as part of the Healthy Champions program and corresponding star rankings. A framework model has been designed to share with other Magnet designated facilities in the region to help them provide this same service to their local schools.

**Partners Include:** Lebanon School District and Penn State Hershey PRO Wellness Center

## OBJECTIVE 2: Promote Healthy Eating

### Strategies:

**Farmers Market**—The Farmers Market in Hershey, located adjacent to the Penn State Hershey campus, joins a growing national trend of creating partnerships that strengthen the abilities of medical centers and clinics to provide complete, patient-centered care and serve community health through farmers markets. The Farmers Market distinguishes itself by providing preventive health programming throughout the season.



**Community Garden**—The community garden, on the Penn State Hershey campus, will celebrate a grand opening in the Fall 2013, and is being constructed to make more fresh produce available in the community and encourage increased physical activity. While plots of the garden are available to community members in general, a portion of the space is devoted to a “Food as Medicine” initiative to generate produce for distribution at the Medical Center and in the surrounding community. This program is founded on the belief that by supporting healthy diets in the region—particularly the underserved or at-risk individuals and families—Penn State Hershey is fulfilling its dual mission of serving the community and promoting wellness.



### Goals:

1. **Expand the educational programming offered by the Farmers Market to underserved populations, from two locations to five locations.**

Each week during the season, nursing and medical students and professional Penn State Hershey staff offer “Know Your Numbers” (blood pressure and BMI screenings), nutritional counseling, as well as targeted preventive health education. Additionally, last year the market launched children’s programming and a teaching garden. Currently, two regional prevention produce partnerships have been launched to extend the market’s products and programs to underserved populations in the region. A potential expansion of the prevention produce program is to make fresh produce available to physicians for their high-risk and or low-income patients who could benefit from increased access to nutritious, fresh produce.

2. **Increase the amount of fresh, local produce delivered annually to food banks, homeless shelters, halfway homes, and soup kitchens.**

Student volunteers from Penn State College of Medicine and the local charity Gemma’s Angels distribute all produce grown on their plot in the community garden to low-income populations, as well as a variety of homeless shelters, halfway homes, soup kitchens, and food banks in the region. Accompanying the produce will be culturally appropriate health education information.

3. **Expand the community garden.**

Increase the size of space available for gardening—from one acre in 2013 to two acres by 2015—allowing more space available to community members and for further “Food as Medicine” initiatives.

**Partners Include:** Foundation for Enhancing Communities, Gemma’s Angels, Hershey Entertainment & Resorts, Lower Dauphin Communities that Care, Milton Hershey School, The Hershey Company, The M. S. Hershey Foundation



### OBJECTIVE 3:

## Increase Cancer Prevention Behaviors in Populations of High Risk

### Strategies:

**Rural and Urban Cancer Networks:** Recognizing the unique set of health needs and challenges in both rural and urban communities, Penn State Hershey has established cancer networks to help residents in these populations decrease their risk of developing cancer.

#### **Northern Appalachia Cancer Network (NACN)—**

A network of community, clinical, and academic partners dedicated to reducing cancer incidence, morbidity, and mortality among rural and medically underserved residents of Pennsylvania. The network develops, tests, and disseminates evidence-based strategies that increase physical activity, improve nutrition, reduce obesity, increase cancer screening, and enhance cancer survivorship among persons at risk for cancer.

**Harrisburg Community Cancer Network (HCCN)—**This community-academic partnership strives to reduce the cancer burden and health disparities among minority and medically underserved populations in central Pennsylvania, with special emphasis in the city of Harrisburg. Current programs include: the annual Harrisburg Community Cancer Education Summit, an on-going African-American breast cancer support group, a cancer survivorship and awareness program, and a community health worker program.



### Goals:

- 1. Continue to complement the typical cancer studies that evaluate the biologic development of the cancer with comprehensive studies of people, their behaviors, their environments, and their risk of developing cancer.**  
Currently, the NACN is conducting randomized studies that test the impact of a twelve-month physical activity intervention in rural faith-based settings and a social-support intervention to increase colorectal cancer screening among Latinos in central Pennsylvania.
- 2. Expand existing community-based health education cancer programs.**  
This will be achieved by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate health-related materials and continued collaboration with community partners.
- 3. Provide evidence-based education, skills, and resources that improve cancer survivorship to patients, caregivers, and families in Harrisburg.**  
A variety of health education programs, developed from the community-based research, “Breast Cancer Survivors Needs Assessment among African American Women,” have been implemented in Harrisburg.
- 4. Utilize the community-based participatory research approach to develop, implement, and evaluate evidence-based interventions in rural and urban communities and clinics.**  
This approach allows community members and their organizations, as well as clinical and academic partners, to collaboratively work toward reducing health disparities and improving the health of our communities.

**Partners Include:** American Cancer Society, AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania, Capital Blue Cross, City of Harrisburg, Dauphin County Adult Probation and Parole, Derry Street United Methodist Church, Emmanuel Church of God in Christ, Family Health Council of Central Pennsylvania, Family Living Advisory Committee, First Zion Baptist Church, Gateway Health Plan, Giant Food Stores, Hamilton Health Center, Highmark Foundation, Highmark Inc., Kingdom Embassy Church, Latino Hispanic American Community Center, M&T Bank, Martin Luther King Baptist Church, Members 1st Federal Credit Union, Metro Bank, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Penn State Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians, Pennsylvania Breast Cancer Coalition, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Office of Health Equity, Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health, South Allison Hill Homeowners and Residents’ Association, South Allison Hill Ministerium, Twelve Stones Church of God in Christ, Weis Markets, Wesley AME Zion Church, YWCA of Greater Harrisburg, Zion Assembly Church of Harrisburg

**OBJECTIVE 4:**

**Increase Opportunities for Physical Activity with Community-based Exercise Programs**

**Strategies:**

**Band Together**—This physician-developed strength training program, initially intended for individuals age 65 years and older, is currently held in a local community center. The program offers twice-weekly training sessions, using resistance bands, in a group-based setting. The average 70-year-old has difficulty with three of ten activities of daily living, including walking for a quarter of a mile or standing up from an armless chair. Though many of these functions can be re-gained, unfortunately, only 15 percent of adults over age 65 participate in any regular strength training program.



**Strong Women**—This evidence-based strength training program from the Penn State Cooperative Extension is offered at the University Fitness Center, on the Penn State Hershey campus. Women in the program learn safe strength-building techniques, appreciation for regular physical activity, and proper nutrition. Participants gradually improve their physical and emotional health and reduce their susceptibility to osteoporosis, risk of falling, and other age-related ailments. As with many group-based exercise programs, the benefits of Strong Women go beyond the classroom into building strong social ties and friendships, as well.

**Goals:**

- 1. Increase the number of host sites that offer Band Together sessions, from one in 2013 to 100 by the end of 2015.**

Churches and community centers will initially be targeted to host sessions. Each site will be asked to identify several peer volunteers, who will be trained and expected to lead one session per week. There is some expectation that the familiarity of the site will help to recruit additional participants who may otherwise be intimidated with the exercise setting of a gym or fitness center.

- 2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Band Together program by measuring strength and functional limitations over time by tracking the fitness records of forty participants in 2013 and tracking the fitness records of 2,500 participants by the end of 2015.**

During each session, participants record the color band used for each exercise, the number of repetitions completed in each set, and the associated level of difficulty. On a regular basis, tracking sheets will be evaluated and participants tested to measure their strength and self-report functional limitations to determine the impact of their participation in the program.

- 3. Utilize Band Together and Strong Women as models for implementing new physical activity programs and interventions.**

As evidence-based clinically driven programs, Band Together and Strong Women provide successful models for bridging the gap between the health care continuum of care and the fitness setting. Assessing why these collaborations are successful, including content, marketing, and engagement strategies, will be done and applied to develop and implement programs targeted to other at-risk populations.

**Partners Include:** Penn State Cooperative Extension, Penn State Hershey University Fitness Center, Railroad Community Center

# PRIORITY: Health Education

The findings of the community health needs assessment pointed to a particular need to develop health education information that is appropriate for school-aged children and contains messages that are culturally appropriate to reach targeted high-need populations. With the resources of the area's only children's hospital, Penn State Hershey plans to address this need by:

- Providing general health education information on nutrition and physical activity
- Providing health and wellness education information on injury prevention
- Advocating for vulnerable children
- Providing education and resources for skin cancer prevention in the community

## OBJECTIVE 1:

### Provide General Health Education Information on Nutrition and Physical Activity for School-aged Children and Their Families

#### Strategies:

**Health information**—Create new materials—in print and online—for children and their families to rely upon as trusted resources for information about breastfeeding, nutrition, healthy meal choices, and the importance of physical activity for the prevention and reduction of childhood obesity.

**Project Health**—This series of one-minute segments airs on WGAL during the local news. Throughout the year, some of the segments are dedicated to topics specifically focused on nutrition and physical activity for families.

**e-Newsletter**—Penn State Hershey currently offers free subscriptions to a monthly e-Newsletter. Subscribers have the option to choose from any of the fourteen available topics, to create a newsletter with content that is specifically applicable to themselves and their family members. Topics that may be of interest to parents of school-aged children include: children and parenting, health news, men's health, women's health, and nutrition and fitness.

#### Goals:

1. Assess how effectively (via tracking, surveys, and subscribers) the education messages are reaching the target audience, and modify the communication program as indicated.

As consumers in the targeted audiences change the methods in which they seek health information, the delivery methods need to change accordingly. Through a multi-pronged approach of print, online, TV, e-mails, and targeted neighborhood events, we hope to effectively communicate the nutrition and physical activity messages to families and those in identified high-need areas.

**Partners Include:** Harrisburg Health, Wellness, and Recreation Initiative, Penn State Hershey Medical Group, Penn State Hershey PRO Wellness Center, WGAL



Champions for bringing  
**healthy choices** to life.

**OBJECTIVE 2:**

**Provide Health and Wellness Education Information, Focused on Injury Prevention for School-aged Children**

**Strategies:**

**No TXT Zone (NTZ) Campaign**—Penn State Hershey is partnering with WHP CBS 21 and WLYH CW 15 to sponsor the No TXT Zone Campaign. The community, adults and teenagers, will be encouraged to make their vehicles No TXT Zones.



**Pediatric Trauma Center and Injury Prevention**—Through an institution-wide, coordinated injury reduction initiative, the Pediatric Injury Prevention Program plans for a reduction in the number and severity of injuries for the citizens served by Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital. Every child and family should receive prevention information and have access to safety devices known to reduce injuries. *Child passenger safety and Pedestrian Safety—Safe Kids Walk This Way* are two specific programs that are provided in high-need populations.

**Goals:**

- 1. **Track the number of people who sign the TXT campaign pledge, targeting 5,000 new campaign pledges.**

The community, adults and teenagers, will be encouraged to sign the NTZ pledge, to help keep our communities and roadways safer for all.

- 2. **Implement and evaluate injury reduction initiatives that are linked to regional injury data.**

One of the leading causes of injuries for children admitted to Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital is motor vehicle related trauma. The new Safety Center at Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital serves as an additional community resource for area families to gain valuable information and participate in interactive educational displays focused on injury reduction and creating safe environments. Measured by tracking the number of families that are exposed to family safety materials annually.

**Partners Include:** American Red Cross of the Susquehanna Valley, AmeriHealth Caritas Pennsylvania, Capital Area Head Start, Hamilton Health Center, Harrisburg Area YMCA, Lower Paxton Police Department, Maternal Assistance Office-Holy Spirit Hospital, Morningstar Pregnancy Services, Pennsylvania Department of Health-Maternal Child Health, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Pennsylvania State Police Troop H, REDDCO, Inc., Sutliff Auto Group, WIC, WHP CBS 21 and WLYH CW 15, YWCA Greater Harrisburg



### OBJECTIVE 3:

## Be Effective Advocates for Vulnerable Children Throughout Our Society

### Strategies:

**Center for the Protection of Children**—In 2011, Penn State launched a broad-based effort to make a difference in the nation and the world by committing its expertise and research power to the development of the Center for the Protection of Children. Based at Penn State Hershey Children’s Hospital, the Center is a remarkable collaborative effort whose goals are to prevent maltreatment, improve reporting of suspected abuse, provide comprehensive care for children who have experienced abuse, and advance knowledge about how best to protect vulnerable children and support them and their families.

**Child Abuse Reporting**—The Look Out for Child Abuse website was launched two years ago and includes Pennsylvania’s only web-based tool for reporting suspected abuse. In addition to making the public more aware of this valuable resource, the next important step is to enhance the online capabilities of this tool so that any concerned citizen can securely and directly report suspected abuse to child protection professionals.



**e-Learning Program**—To address the overwhelming need to prepare individuals to become responsible mandated reporters, the Penn State Hershey Center for the Protection of Children is working to develop, test, and disseminate a multimedia, action-oriented e-Learning module to those on the front lines for protecting children. This multidisciplinary effort involves Penn State faculty with expertise in e-Learning, cognitive and educational psychology, graphic and web design, law, medicine, education, database design, and related areas. The goal is to create an evidence-based educational tool that opens people’s eyes to the problem of child abuse, and helps them see themselves as agents for protecting children from abuse.

**Research and Advocacy**—Researchers at Penn State Hershey Center for the Protection of Children will expand the scope and broaden the impact of existing research and advocacy efforts, notably: the Pennsylvania Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention and Awareness program, the Look Out for Child Abuse project, the Family Foundations project, and the Penn State Dickinson Center on Children and the Law.

### Goals:

**1. Create and assess the efficacy of e-Learning modules to prepare childcare center professionals to be responsible mandated reporters for children at risk for abuse.**

The fact that child abuse has a profound psychological, developmental, and medical impact on children makes it imperative to act as soon as abuse is suspected. Researchers within the Center for the Protection of Children are developing e-Learning modules that will change learners’ attitudes by:

- A. Helping them identify with the vulnerability of children at risk for abuse.
- B. Demonstrating that they as individuals can make a difference.
- C. Evoking a sense of responsibility to protect children at risk for abuse.
- D. Motivating them to take action.
- E. Tracking the number of individuals that attend e-learning sessions on a yearly basis.

**2. Disseminate and evaluate an online tool for individuals throughout Pennsylvania to report suspected abuse.**

Among the many barriers to prompt reporting of suspected child abuse, individuals often do not have ready access to the legal CY47 form that must be submitted, and often have difficulty finding the right words to explain their concerns. This reporting tool will be readily available free of charge twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and will provide standardized options (in addition to free text) to articulate the risk factors and findings that give rise to the need for a report to be made. Researchers within the Center for the Protection of Children will work with county and state Children and Youth agencies to better understand reporting patterns, and improve our ability to protect children at risk for abuse.

**Partners Include:** Center on Children and the Law at Penn State Dickinson School of Law, Penn State Network on Child Protection and Well-being, Center for Online Innovation in Learning

**OBJECTIVE 4:**  
**Provide Education and Resources for Skin Cancer Prevention in the Community**

**Strategies:**

Establish environments that are conducive to skin cancer prevention, making sunscreen and sunscreen education readily available.

Skin cancer is a growing public health concern; increasing the community's access to sunscreen stations at public venues and providing educational material about proper sunscreen application may help promote healthy skin cancer prevention behaviors. To this end, Penn State Hershey has already established a relationship with the Hershey Gardens to provide them with fifty sun shade umbrellas for patrons to use while visiting the Gardens.



**Goals:**

1. **Implement a sunscreen station at the community garden, where gardeners can access free sunscreen and read instructions on proper sunscreen application.**

A sunscreen station, including a supply of sunscreen, a protective box, and an educational poster, has been approved to be included in the plans for the community garden, when it is open for the first growing season, in the spring 2014.

2. **Work with area parks to explore the opportunity to install sunscreen stations, so park visitors can access free sunscreen and read instructions on proper sunscreen application.**

Public parks are popular local attractions that allow community members to take advantage of a variety of outdoor activities, including swimming, fishing, picnicking, walking, running, bicycling, and many others. While enjoying these activities, it is important to continue to remind park-goers of the importance of practicing proper skin cancer prevention behaviors.

**Partners Include:** Hershey Entertainment & Resorts, Hershey Gardens



# PRIORITY: Access to Affordable Health Care

Underlying factors identified by secondary data, input from community leaders, and focus groups with residents resulted in the identification of the need to improve access to affordable health care. Penn State Hershey plans to address this need by increasing access to:

- Affordable Primary Care
- Affordable Specialty Care
- Affordable Dental Care

## OBJECTIVE 1:

### Increase Access to Affordable Primary Care

#### Strategies:

**Address the shortage of primary care providers by preparing the next generation of providers**—As the first in the United States with a dedicated department of family and community medicine, Penn State College of Medicine has a rich history of focusing on education for primary care providers; in addition, a new physician assistant program in Hershey will begin in May 2014. Through grants (Advanced Nursing Education Expansion and Advanced Nursing Education Traineeship), funding is available to nurse practitioner students at Penn State School of Nursing who plan to work in rural, medically underserved communities or health provider shortage areas. For current employees of Penn State Hershey, educational privilege and tuition reimbursement programs are available to provide assistance to those wishing to pursue a new career in health care or to advance a current nursing degree.



**Identify emergency department patients who do not have a primary care provider**—The emergency department is often used as a site of primary care for those who do not have a primary care provider. If these patients can be identified through the patient registration process and ultimately connected with a primary care provider, they will have greater access to more affordable primary care, rather than seeking care through the emergency department.

**LionCare**—LionCare is dedicated to serving the medical and psychological needs of the indigent population in the greater Harrisburg region, an urban-suburban area with a population of approximately 49,000 in the city alone. The patients served by the LionCare clinic are individuals who would otherwise not have access to care, particularly the homeless and those transitioning from prison or drug rehabilitation facilities.

**Financial Counseling**—Penn State Hershey financial counselors have traditionally been available to provide guidance to patients once they have arrived into our system. Only recently, however, financial counselors have increased their presence in the community to help those in need to understand the resources and options available to themselves and their family members to receive support for health care services, including programs such as, medical assistance or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

**Patient-Centered Medical Home**—All thirteen of Penn State Hershey Medical Group's adult primary care sites have been awarded the highest level of patient-centered medical home (PCMH) certification from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

**Walk-in Clinics and After-Hour Appointments**—Walk-in clinic hours are currently offered at one of the Penn State Hershey Medical Group primary care sites in Dauphin County. Evening and weekend clinic hours are offered at the Penn State Hershey Pediatrics clinic for acute visits. These evening and weekend clinic times allow patients a greater access to primary care, which might otherwise be sought in an emergency room setting.

**Project Homeless Connect**—Last year, Penn State Hershey began supporting the Capital Area Coalition on Homelessness Project Homeless Connect by providing staff volunteers to help the participants navigate their way through the stations. Organizations, agencies, churches, and charities come together to help the homeless population in Dauphin County receive necessary services to help remove barriers to services, including primary health care.

**Goals:**

1. **Track the practice specialties, locations, and employment settings annually for new graduates in the M.D., physician assistant, and nurse practitioner programs, with the anticipation of more pursuing careers in Pennsylvania and in medically underserved areas.**

Nearly 50 percent of the Penn State College of Medicine Class of 2012 is pursuing careers in primary care and 27 percent of the class is pursuing residency in Pennsylvania.

2. **Implement a process, through patient registration and the electronic medical record, to identify patients who are being seen in the emergency department and do not currently have a primary care provider.**

Once the process is fully implemented, we will evaluate the best method to provide the identified patients with information on how to find a primary care provider; and how to schedule an appointment; and will track the number of patients referred to local physicians annually.

3. **Evaluate the opportunity to increase the number of primary care clinical faculty who accompany medical students to provide care at LionCare.**

LionCare provides a range of services from general wellness check-ups to acute care to the provision of health education. In 2012, 1,123 patients were seen.

4. **Increase the opportunities for financial counselors to provide beneficial information on navigating the health care payment system and support options that are available within the community.**

Educational opportunities for the community will be available through increased involvement in health and wellness fairs, particularly in identified high need areas in Dauphin and Lebanon Counties. To help medical students and attending physicians understand the pathways available to their uninsured patients, educational opportunities will be available through lectures and presentations. Target four wellness fairs attended by 2015.

5. **Continue to implement the PCMH approach across the clinical, educational, and research components of the Penn State Hershey mission.**

Utilizing a grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Penn State College of Medicine will lead an effort to develop a Primary Care Extension Service to support practice transformation across Pennsylvania. Curriculum provided to all medical students includes options to participate in longitudinal coursework immersing students in concepts and practice of PCMH. Actively managed by faculty from Family and Community Medicine, General Pediatrics and General Internal Medicine, this course will train the next generation of physicians in important practice principles of PCMH.

6. **Explore the opportunity for additional walk-in and evening or weekend clinics.**

Create avenues to inform those in need of the availability of additional walk-in and after hour appointments.

7. **Increase the number of staff volunteers at Project Homeless Connect each year.**

In 2012, Penn State Hershey provided 14 of the 130 volunteers. The volunteers helped participants understand what health care and other services were available to them and how they could take advantage of the services being provided.

**Partners Include:** Bethesda Mission, Capital Area Coalition on Homelessness, Penn State College of Medicine, Penn State School of Nursing





## OBJECTIVE 2:

### Increase Access to Affordable Specialty Care

#### Strategies:

**LionNet Telestroke**—The Penn State Hershey telestroke program, called LionNet, is a partnership between regional community hospitals and Penn State Hershey, and is designed to improve patient care through the access of telemedicine. Time is brain, and early assessment and intervention made possible through the telestroke technology, are key for successful functional outcomes for patients. LionNet provides real-time remote audio-visual access to a neurological consult with a stroke neurologist or neurosurgeon. Following a consultation and a review of patient scans, a treatment recommendation is made and the local emergency department physician determines the best course of action.

**Hope Within**—The Hope Within Community Health Center delivers free primary health care services to the medically uninsured (income under 200 percent of the federal poverty level) of Lancaster and Dauphin Counties. Penn State Hershey Medical Center provides support through funding for additional laboratory and radiology needs of these qualified patients.

**Prescription Assistance Program**—Assistance is provided to any Penn State Hershey patient. Assistance includes help applying to the pharmaceutical patient assistance programs, counseling on options to receive more affordable medications, and assistance in applying for grant funding (usually disease specific) to off-set the cost of medications.

**Cardiac and thoracic surgery expansion at Holy Spirit Hospital**—Penn State Hershey Heart and Vascular Institute and Holy Spirit Hospital have signed a collaborative agreement for cardiac and thoracic surgery services. Through this relationship, Penn State Hershey Heart and Vascular Institute cardiac and thoracic surgeons are able to perform surgery at Holy Spirit Hospital, allowing residents in Cumberland and Perry Counties greater access to specialized cardiac and thoracic surgeries closer to their homes.

**Creation of the Patient Logistics Department and Transfer Center**—The patient logistics department was created to improve patient flow from pre-admission, through the hospital stay, and culminate in appropriate discharge care. The transfer center, part of Patient Logistics, is comprised of a team of R.N. clinical liaisons, R.N. transfer center liaisons, and bed management associates who facilitate timely placement of the right patient into the right bed.

#### Goals:

1. **Increase the number of partner hospitals in the LionNet program, thus increasing the number of patients in the community that have a greater access to this level of specialty care.**

There are currently four LionNet partner hospitals, including one in York County. Plans are underway to develop the partnership more, to include additional partners in York, Cumberland, and Lebanon Counties.

2. **Evaluate plans to increase services for Hope Within patients.**

Currently funding is provided for laboratory and radiology services. Plans will be evaluated to determine if more funding for laboratory and radiology services is needed or if there is a greater need for additional specialty service offerings.

3. **Increase the number of patients who are provided assistance to receive more affordable medications.**

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, 855 applications were completed, with a total cost savings of more than \$1.2 million. In addition, fourteen Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute patients also received assistance in applying for grant funding from charitable organizations, for a total of an additional \$80,000 in medication support. The target for new and renewal applications is 900 annually.

4. **Continue to provide specialty surgical care in a local, community hospital for residents in the surrounding communities.**

Penn State Hershey works in collaboration with other health care organizations to expand access to expert care and the resources of the academic health center, while making it easier for more patients to receive this care close to home, increasing efficiency and controlling costs.

5. **Implement a philosophy of precision placement so patients are assigned to the right location for their level of care and diagnosis to optimize patient outcomes; decrease length of stay and improve the discharge process.**

By providing a more efficient process for patients to be referred to Penn State Hershey, the community receives greater access to specialty care. Optimizing patient outcomes and decreasing the length of stay should decrease the overall cost of care.

**Partners Include:** Hanover Hospital, Holy Spirit Hospital, Hope Within

**OBJECTIVE 3:**  
**Increase Access to Affordable Dental Care**

**Strategies:**

**Ronald McDonald House Mobile Dental Van**—Penn State Hershey provides business and technical support to the Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Central Pennsylvania to explore the feasibility and development of a mobile dental van to provide urgent and preventive dental services to children in the region.



**Framework for facilitating dental care for Medical Center patients in need**—Dental coverage and access to dental care is needed for low-income families and families with limited dental coverage who are not getting sufficient levels of needed care. The Medical Center recognizes and supports the importance of oral health for all members of our community.

**Goals:**

1. **Complete the exploratory phase of development for a Ronald McDonald Care Mobile van to provide diagnostic, preventive, and restorative dental care, along with oral hygiene education.**

The exploratory phase of development includes identifying the specific dental health needs that can be met with a mobile unit, the locations and neighborhoods that can benefit most from the presence of a mobile unit, and the additional community partners that will be available to provide additional support and dental health services through the mobile unit.

2. **Develop and implement a referral process for patients discharged from the emergency department, hospital, and medical group offices to direct them to the appropriate community provider whether they are in need of urgent or preventive dental care.**

The Medical Center staff will continue to evaluate the available referral options and community partners who assist in providing dental care.

**Partners Include:** Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Central Pennsylvania

**NEED NOT ADDRESSED:**

**Increase Access to Affordable Mental Health Care**

**Mental health illness was identified as a need under the umbrella of access to affordable health care.**

Mental health illness does not discriminate and can affect people from various backgrounds and ages. There are cases in which mental health illness can disrupt daily lives and can have an impact on one's physical health, as well. The importance of providing mental health services to our patient population in central Pennsylvania led Penn State Hershey and PinnacleHealth System to join forces to form the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute (PPI). Designed as a joint venture, PPI is dedicated to providing clinical excellence, diverse education, research, and community collaboration in a manner that evolves to meet the changing behavioral health care needs of the region.



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