

Community Health Needs Assessment Report & Implementation Strategy



ASPIRUS[™]

Passion for excellence. Compassion for people.



2016-2018

ASPIRUS MEDFORD HOSPITAL & CLINICS

135 South Gibson Street

Medford, WI 54451

A partnership between Taylor County Health Department, Price County
Health Department and Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics.

Acknowledgements

Sincere gratitude is extended to those who helped in the 2016-2018 Taylor and Price County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Without the support of those who gathered local statistics, including the Northern Regional Office – Division of Public Health; made data available; surveyed community members; and attended the Community Health Improvement Plan meetings; this work would not be possible. It is our great fortune to have committed partners and civic members who demonstrate such a great interest in improving the communities we serve. It is our intention and hope that the 2016-2018 plan will gather momentum toward a safer and healthier community and will improve the health of our citizens. We look forward to working in collaboration with our community partners and residents toward a common goal of healthier, happier lives!

Respectfully,

Patricia M. Krug, RN, MSENPH
Health Officer
Taylor County Health Department

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Health Officer
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Table of Contents

Introduction

Executive Summary

Steering Committee

Community Health Needs Assessment Methodology

- Our Community
- Assess the Health of the Community
- Prioritize the Strategic Issues

Prioritized Community Health Needs

- CHIP Action Plan for Impact

Health Education

INTRODUCTION

A community health improvement plan is a locally based initiative in which committed individuals, local representatives and leaders with knowledge of the community come together to discuss local health priorities and to develop a plan to address these issues in order to create a healthier, better community. This process includes identifying local factors causing health concerns, recognizing community assets and resources, and mobilizing community resources to improve the health of residents. A community health improvement plan, while targeting local health priorities, is often linked to state and national health priorities. The process of creating a community health improvement plan, called the community health improvement process (CHIP), is mandatory for Wisconsin health departments and non-profit hospitals.

Local health departments are required by Wisconsin State Statute 251.05 to complete a CHIP every five years and affected hospitals every three years. Health departments and designated hospitals are required to collect, assemble, analyze and make available information on the health of the community. This includes statistics on health status, community health needs, and epidemiological and other studies of health problems. Taylor and Price Counties are very similar – they are both rural counties and demographically comparable. The 2013 CHIP for Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics (Aspirus Medford) and the Taylor County Health Department focused on three areas:

1. Access to Care
2. Nutrition
3. Physical Activity

Throughout the implementation of strategies identified in the previous plan for these health focus areas, ongoing evaluations were completed to help measure the effectiveness of the previous initiatives.

Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics is a 25-bed, non-profit, primary health care organization that serves Taylor, Price and Clark Counties in north central Wisconsin. Our hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission and is a Critical Access, Level III Trauma Care Center.

Our mission: Aspirus is an integrated, community governed healthcare system, which leads by advancing initiatives dedicated to improving the health of all we serve.

Our vision: Aspirus is the region's healthcare system of choice. We deliver value, innovation, excellence and compassion.

We've embarked on a Journey of Excellence, whereby we will take our organization from 'very good' to 'excellent.' Every patient, family member and visitor who enters our facility will experience or witness our passion for excellence and our compassion for people. In recent years, Aspirus Medford has received several honors related to excellence in services provided:

- National Rural Health Association TOP 20 Critical Access Hospital (2015-2016)
- iVantage Health Analytics – TOP 100 Critical Access Hospital (2013-2015)
- iVantage Health Analytics - HEALTHSTRONG Hospital (2014-2015)

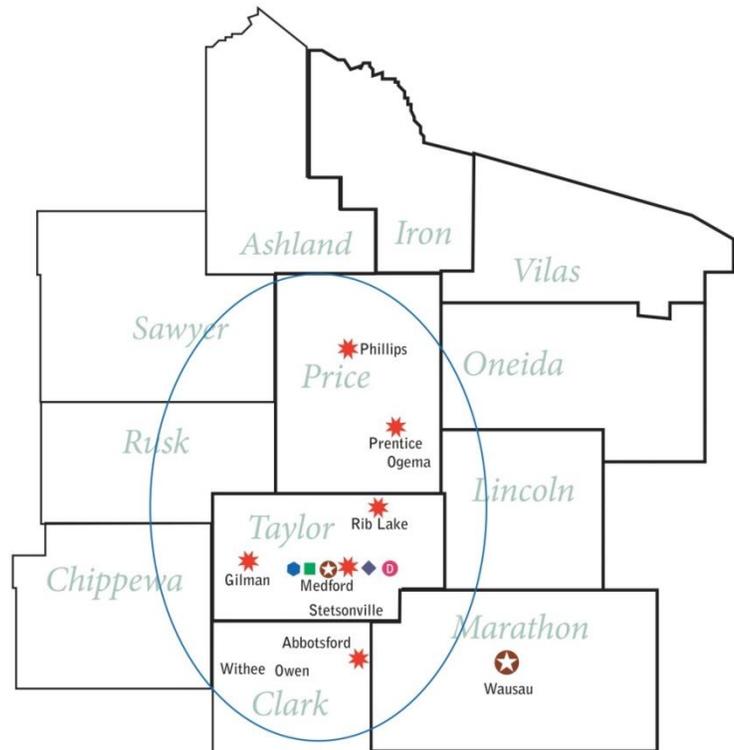
- CMS 5-Star Hospital (2015-2016)
- Becker’s Hospital Review - 100 Great Community Hospitals (2014)
- Nationally Certified – Pathway to Excellence organization by the ANCC (2012-2018)
- PRC 5-Star Excellence Awards for Inpatient Overall Rating, Quality of Care, Communication of Discharge Information and Responsiveness of Staff (2016)



We take seriously our role as a healthcare provider and steward, promoting health and wellness, and giving back to the community we serve. We, as an organization, and our employees are tremendously active within the communities we serve – volunteering, participating in civic and social organizations, youth sports and academic events, in addition to county services and chamber events.

In addition to the hospital in Medford, Wisconsin, Aspirus Medford includes:

- Primary care clinic locations in Gilman, Medford, Phillips, Prentice and Rib Lake;
- FastCare clinic in Abbotsford
- Retail pharmacy
- Therapy centers in Medford and Prentice
- Public fitness center
- Kidney care (dialysis center)
- Behavioral Health
- Outpatient surgery center
- Cancer & infusion center providing chemotherapy and IV therapies
- 99-bed skilled nursing facility
- CBRF & two assisted living facilities
- Senior income-eligible apartments



- ★ Hospital Care
- Nursing Home Care
- Ⓛ Dialysis Center
- ★ Physician Offices
- ⬢ Home Care Service Area
- ◆ Assisted Living

In addition, we are satellite campus location for the Aspirus Heart & Vascular

Institute and the Aspirus Joint Replacement Center.

In collaboration with the Taylor County Health Department and Price County Health Department, Aspirus Medford is pleased to submit this Community Health Needs Assessment. We do so both as a matter of compliance with Section 501(r)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as mandated in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and as an obligation to those we serve. As an organization, we have embraced this opportunity to improve our community service and continuously focus on meeting the changing healthcare needs of our community.

Consistent with the requirements of Section 501(r)(3) the Aspirus Medford Community Health Needs Assessment Report will cover the following:

- Community
- Community Health Needs Assessment Methodology
- Prioritized Community Health Needs
- Implementation Strategy
- Health Resources

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the course of 2014 and 2015, the Taylor County Health Department, Price County Health Department and Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics embarked on a collaborative effort to assess and prioritize the health needs of the region and, in turn, create an action plan to create real and sustained change within the communities we serve.

We turned to residents within the three counties to understand the impact these issues had within our local communities. This included feedback collected during our Community Health Improvement Planning session. We compiled this data and partnered with state experts for additional quantifiable data on these issues. This information was shared with local stakeholders during a day-long session that included analyzing what services are currently available, gaps in services and prioritizing key health concerns within Taylor and Price Counties.

Using this community guidance and extensive research, the top three issues identified include Alcohol & Drug Use, Mental Health, and Nutrition & Healthy Foods.

Recognizing the limited resources and scope of these areas, the collaborating organizations concluded that to create real momentum and substantial change, an effort should be made to have the Taylor County Health Department focus on the Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) priority through their Drug Free Communities grant. In addition, the health departments along with Aspirus Medford would form an active Wellness Coalition with key stakeholders and community representatives to address the remaining health priorities.

Steering Committee

Michele Armbrust, Lead Public Health Nurse, Taylor County Health Department

Debbie Berends, Public Health Nurse, Taylor County Health Department

Michelle Edwards, Director, Price County Health Department

Patty Krug, Director, Taylor County Health Department

Amanda Lange, Occupational Health & Wellness Manager, Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics

Peggy Nordgren, Family Living Agent, Associate Professor, UW-Extension

Technical Support

Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Northern Regional Office

Jim Lawrence, Health Education Consultant

Angela Nimsgern, Epidemiologist, Regional Director, Northern Regional Office

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Our Community

For the purposes of our CHIP we have defined our “community” as a broad area, including all of Taylor County, the southern area of Price County, the northeastern portion of Clark County and the northwestern corner of Marathon County. Throughout this document, any reference to “community” is meant to indicate this broad service area.

In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau conducted the nation’s most recent census and published that data by county. Similarly the Population Health Institute collects and reports health data and demographic data by county on an annual basis. Although county borders do not exactly align with our community, the data does provide a reasonable approximation of our community. Because our community consists of mostly Taylor and Price Counties, this report focuses on those two counties. U.S. census data is as of 2010 while Population Health Institute data is as of 2015.

	Wisconsin	Taylor County	Price County	Clark County
Population	5,686,986	20,689	14,159	34,445
Age <18	23.6%	24.6%	19.1%	23.9%
Age 65+	13.7%	16.1%	21.0%	15.6%
Female	50.4%	49.0%	49.3%	49.5%
Caucasian	86.2%	97.9%	97.1%	97.5%
African American	6.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%
American Indian	1.0%	0.2%	0.4%	0.7%
Asian	2.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%
Hispanic	5.9%	1.5%	1.1%	4.2%
Median Household Income	\$51,598	\$44,489	\$41,026	\$43,515
Per Capita Health Care Cost	\$8,153	\$9,504	\$8,705	\$7,942
Uninsured Adults	12.8%	14.2%	11.7%	19.3%
Free Lunch - Eligible Children	32.1%	24.2%	23.1%	52%
Illiteracy Rate	7.3%	9.1%	8.2%	10%

Taylor, Price and Clark Counties are largely Caucasian and are almost exclusively rural. The median household incomes in Taylor and Price Counties are both below the state average, while the state average is also below the national average. The major occupations in the community are manufacturing, trade/transportation/utilities, education and health, which includes Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics.

While the Hispanic population in our community is relatively small and below the state average, we provided special consideration to this minority group for two reasons. First, the Hispanic community consists of both documented and undocumented individuals who frequently have communication

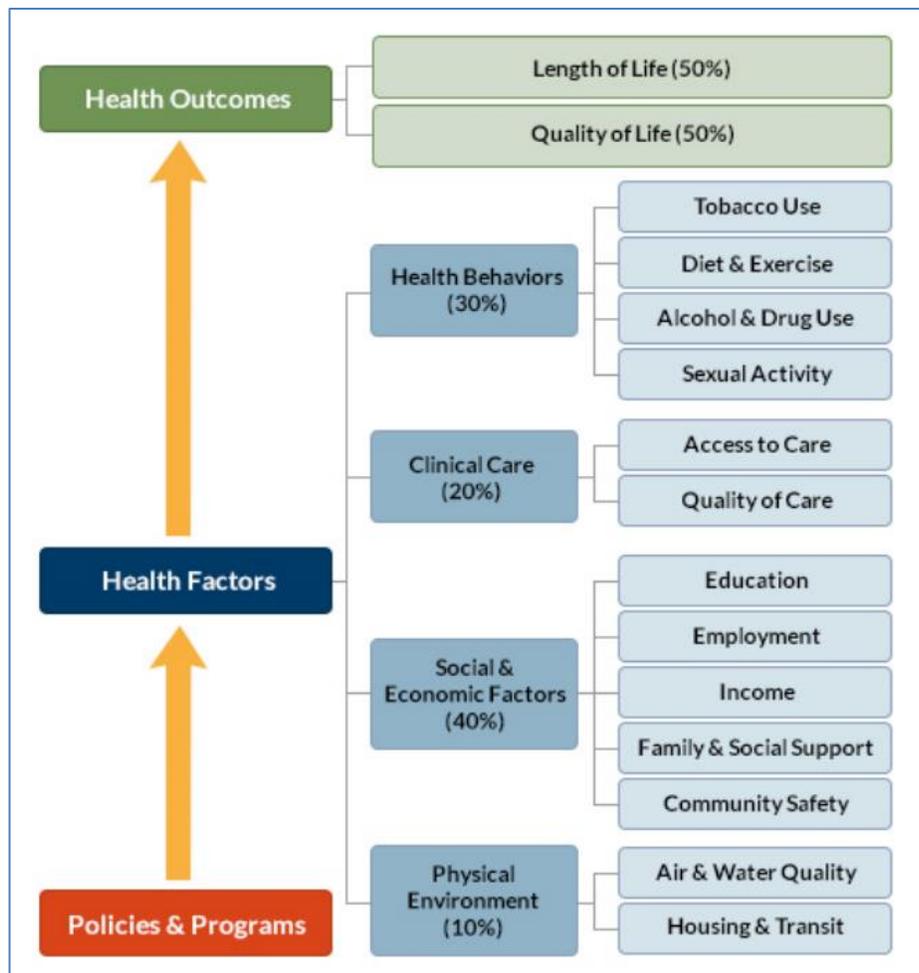
challenges. Second, demographic-growth estimates indicate that the Hispanic population is likely to grow more rapidly than any other group in our community in the next ten years due to agriculture growth. Each of these factors requires special consideration by both Aspirus Medford and the Health Departments in how to best provide for the health needs of this group.

Another small, but important, group within our community is “the Plain People,” consisting of individuals from the Amish, Mennonite, German Baptist and Old German Baptist religions. The Plain People also require special consideration by Aspirus Medford and the Health Departments because of their non-mainstream lifestyle. Depending on the group, beliefs may influence their use of preventive health care, treatment for illnesses and injuries, use of insurance, electricity, transportation and various other facets of daily life.

The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (“PHI”) publishes annual health data for every county in the United States. The data is aggregated into *health outcomes* and *health factors*. The PHI separates health outcomes into mortality (length of life) and morbidity (quality of life). Health factors are separated into four factors that largely influence the health outcomes: physical environment, society and economics, clinical care and health behaviors.

In 2015, the rankings are based on 72 counties in Wisconsin. Taylor County’s health factors ranked 40th and Price County’s ranked 25th. In the same year, Taylor County’s health outcomes ranked 11th, while Price County’s ranked 48th. Because health factors lead to health outcomes, the disparity in Taylor County’s rankings indicates that its residents are currently benefiting from positive health factors in the past while the current health factors are likely to lead to worsening future health outcomes.

Source: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute



HEALTH OUTCOMES

County	Rank	County	Rank	County	Rank	County	Rank
Adams	63	Florence	4	Marathon	22	Rusk	68
Ashland	49	Fond du Lac	34	Marinette	61	Sauk	36
Barron	24	Forest	70	Marquette	65	Sawyer	41
Bayfield	44	Grant	20	Menominee	72	Shawano	46
Brown	39	Green	28	Milwaukee	71	Sheboygan	25
Buffalo	31	Green Lake	52	Monroe	54	St. Croix	9
Burnett	37	Iowa	29	Oconto	47	Taylor	11
Calumet	3	Iron	51	Oneida	40	Trempealeau	43
Chippewa	21	Jackson	57	Outagamie	23	Vernon	27
Clark	35	Jefferson	10	Ozaukee	1	Vilas	56
Columbia	26	Juneau	67	Pepin	2	Walworth	45
Crawford	38	Kenosha	64	Pierce	6	Washburn	69
Dane	15	Kewaunee	5	Polk	30	Washington	12
Dodge	33	La Crosse	19	Portage	7	Waukesha	14
Door	8	Lafayette	18	Price	48	Waupaca	55
Douglas	50	Langlade	59	Racine	66	Waushara	60
Dunn	17	Lincoln	58	Richland	32	Winnebago	42
Eau Claire	13	Manitowoc	53	Rock	62	Wood	16

Source: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

HEALTH FACTORS

County	Rank	County	Rank	County	Rank	County	Rank
Adams	70	Florence	56	Marathon	18	Rusk	53
Ashland	38	Fond du Lac	20	Marinette	58	Sauk	33
Barron	54	Forest	68	Marquette	64	Sawyer	67
Bayfield	55	Grant	21	Menominee	72	Shawano	52
Brown	23	Green	11	Milwaukee	71	Sheboygan	10
Buffalo	32	Green Lake	41	Monroe	47	St. Croix	6
Burnett	60	Iowa	24	Oconto	42	Taylor	40
Calumet	5	Iron	63	Oneida	28	Trempealeau	30
Chippewa	35	Jackson	59	Outagamie	8	Vernon	45
Clark	61	Jefferson	27	Ozaukee	1	Vilas	46
Columbia	39	Juneau	69	Pepin	13	Walworth	37
Crawford	50	Kenosha	65	Pierce	9	Washburn	49
Dane	2	Kewaunee	16	Polk	44	Washington	7
Dodge	29	La Crosse	3	Portage	15	Waukesha	4
Door	17	Lafayette	22	Price	25	Waupaca	34
Douglas	51	Langlade	48	Racine	66	Waushara	57
Dunn	26	Lincoln	43	Richland	36	Winnebago	19
Eau Claire	12	Manitowoc	31	Rock	62	Wood	14

Source: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

Assess the Health of the Community

The first step in creating a CHIP is to evaluate the progress of the previous plan, assess the surrounding community and identify health priorities. For the 2016-2018 Community Health Plan, community outreach was obtained by holding Data in a Day sessions, utilizing participant worksheets and opinion surveys.

We asked representation of community residents, businesses, schools, medical/health, law enforcement, human services, judicial, other community partners and county/local municipality policymakers within the two counties to understand the impact these issues had within our local communities. We compiled this data and partnered with state experts to examine data framed around Healthiest Wisconsin 2020's eleven health priorities, including morbidity, mortality, risk factors and community opinion for additional quantifiable data on these issues. This information was shared with local stakeholders during a day-long session that included analyzing what services are currently available and prioritizing key health concerns within Taylor and Price Counties. We identified priority health problems and the factors that can be impacted as well as identified community assets and resources to be supported or utilized.

Community Health Needs Prioritization

To assist in prioritizing the identified community health needs, we developed a list of possible criteria for prioritization. Our stakeholders conducted a Nominal Group Technique exercise, in which each member of the group was asked to identify his/her top three criteria. The group's top choices were Alcohol & Drug Use, Mental Health, and Nutrition & Healthy Foods. Secondary choices were Physical Activity, Healthy Growth & Development, and Injury & Violence Prevention. Tertiary choices were Tobacco Use & Exposure, Chronic Disease Prevention & Management, and Communicable Diseases.

Weighted Rank	Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 Focus Areas	Number of Votes				Weighted Score (1=3 pts, 2=2 pts, 3=1 pt)
		1	2	3	Total	
1	Alcohol and Drug Use	8	6	2	16	38
2	Mental Health	7.5	2	4	13.5	30.5
3	Nutrition and Healthy Foods	2	6	2	10	20
4	Physical Activity	2	4	4	10	18
5	Healthy Growth and Development	1.5	2	1	4.5	9.5
6 Tie	Injury and Violence Prevention	0	2	3	5	7
6 Tie	Tobacco Use and Exposure	1	0	4	5	7
7	Chronic Disease Prevention and Management	0	1	2	3	4
8	Communicable Diseases	1	0	0	1	3
9	Environmental and Occupational Health	0	0	1	1	1
0	Oral Health	0	0	0	0	0
0	Reproductive and Sexual Health	0	0	0	0	0

NOTE: Respondent 21 voted 1 twice

Wisconsin conducts a statewide health assessment every decade and requires each county to conduct a health assessment every five years. The results of these assessments are community health improvement plans (“CHIP”). These two government documents were given significant consideration in our prioritization process:

- “Healthiest Wisconsin 2020” from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services in 2010.
- “Price County Health Improvement Plan 2016-2020” from the Price County Health Department.

PRIORITIZED COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS

Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics is responding to the identified community health needs through a series of steps that we collectively refer to as our “implementation strategy” or “action plan for impact.” Included in this strategy is the establishment of a community benefit program.

There are many organizations that have great ideas and talents that want to help educate, provide the understanding and motivate the public to make healthy lifestyle choices, but they lack the financial resources to develop and implement their strategies. To assist these organizations, Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics launched its Community Benefit Program in October 2014. Community agencies and members can apply for funding to support their programs and initiatives that have a direct impact on an identified health need.

Throughout the CHIP process, both the Price County and Taylor County Wellness Coalitions were formed. Both of these coalitions’ missions and initiatives focus on identified risk factors. Their members represent the county health department, the UW-Extension office, local healthcare providers and other various community agencies. These coalitions are great examples of how community agencies can collaborate to strategize on common goals to impact the health of our communities.



Primary Community Health Need: Alcohol & Drug Use

Wisconsin leads the country in adult alcohol consumption, binge drinking and heavy drinking. According to “Healthiest Wisconsin 2020,” Wisconsin recently ranked worst among states for adult binge drinking, worst for current alcohol use among youth, third in binge drinking among youth and fourth in the incidence of youth riding with a driver who had been drinking. The alcohol problem in our community can be summarized in four examples:

- Children and youth spend time in bars (which is legal in Wisconsin) accompanying a parent or sibling who is drinking alcohol.
- Parents host parties, with alcohol, for their children.
- The Youth Risk Behavior Survey documented that 26% of Taylor County middle school students self-reported consumption of alcohol (more than a sip) prior to age 13.
- Baseline data from the 2014 survey indicated that 32% of Taylor County high school students and 5% of total middle school students report current drinking. Ten percent of Taylor County high school students self-reported opiate use for non-medical purposes.

The common justifications for these behaviors were the importance of adult supervision and avoiding drinking and driving. However, such behaviors also teach youth the acceptability of drinking large quantities of alcohol. Although Alcoholics Anonymous operates in our community, we lack the necessary facilities for detoxification and rehabilitation for any substance abuse problems.

Abuse of prescription drugs and illicit drugs in our community is concerning. According to local law enforcement officials, the most abused prescription drugs in our community are Oxycodone and Vicodin. The most abused illegal drugs are marijuana, cocaine and heroin.

The Taylor County Drug Opposition Partners (TCDOP) Coalition is comprised of a group of individuals representing sectors dealing with alcohol and drug issues impacting the lives of our community. In 2015, the coalition was awarded a Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant to address underage youth alcohol and drug use. This grant award is for \$125,000 each year for the next five years and the ability to reapply for the next 5 years. The committee this past year developed a logic model and action plan approved by DFC utilizing evidence-based strategies. It will take the commitment of our schools, policymakers, youth and communities to reduce the risk factors which contribute to the use of alcohol and drugs by the youth.

The coalition’s efforts to enhance the presence and capacity of TCDOP in the community has been evidenced by presentations to each of the three Taylor County school boards and increased communication with the superintendents of the schools resulting in new commitments and acknowledgement of shared goals related to youth alcohol and drug use. The three school districts are collaborating to support “Taylor County Pure Performance – Committed to Success.” This is a student-led, adult-guided group developed to enhance principles of nutrition, sleep, participation in extracurricular activities and avoidance of alcohol and drugs. The three programs (Medford: Raiders Committed, Rib Lake: Culture of Champs, Gilman: Pirate Pride) have been active and participation has varied with the activity and meeting times. These youth leaders have been invited to present at

schools in neighboring counties, Parent Network organizations and state organizations' annual meetings. This is because of their enthusiasm, leadership skills and initiative to be role models to their peers and younger students. They have continued to demonstrate their development as future leaders of our communities.

The coalition continues to provide funding for education and training of individuals, school staff, policymakers and community organizations to assist in identifying those risk factors that impact youth to start using alcohol and drugs. They also learn mechanisms on introducing how to change and sustain policies to reduce access and identification of risk factors to reduce/prevent our youth from substance abuse.

Price County has been working to increase community awareness of AODA (Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse) resources available to community members through a directory provided to AODA professionals. In addition, Price County has increased the "party patrol" in which patrol officers are more actively seeking out underage drinking events that may be a source of alcohol and drug use.

There have been increased efforts in Price County surrounding increasing awareness and knowledge of AODA issues that included a media campaign for "Parents Who Host Lose the Most" and the implementation of a Security Health grant in 2015 to train community members and professionals regarding "Good Drugs Gone Bad."



Action Plan for Impact

The key to a healthy and happy future is making smart lifestyle choices. The younger a person is when he or she learns this lesson, the better. That's why Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics contributed nearly \$17,000 toward bringing the Life of an Athlete program to Taylor County in March 2015.



The Life of an Athlete program stresses the importance of making smart decisions to improve academic and athletic performance. The program teaches why and how getting proper sleep and nutrition, limiting use of energy drinks and over-stimulating technology, making time for recovery, managing stress and avoiding the use and abuse of social drugs like alcohol and marijuana can make someone a better student and athlete. The Taylor County Drug Opposition Partners was also a major sponsor of the program. Other proud contributors and collaborators included the Medford Senior High Student Council, Taylor County Lions and Lioness Clubs, Medford Kiwanis and Medford Rotary Club.

Students, faculty, parents, law enforcement and other public officials have heard the three-hour Life of an Athlete presentation. Three active student groups have been formulated, one at each of the school districts located in Medford, Rib Lake and Gilman. The Navy SEALs program is the second phase of this program. This is a student-led, adult-guided movement to implement principles of nutrition, sleep, involvement in extracurricular activities and avoidance of alcohol and drugs by Taylor County youth. These four principles are evidence-based protective factors for enhancing positive social development in youth and avoidance of adult-related consequences of alcohol and drug use.



Life of an Athlete Program Presentation to Area High School Students

In addition to these efforts, our organization plans to support a grant that was awarded to Taylor County Health Department/Taylor County Drug Opposition Partners Coalition in 2015 to prevent youth substance use. The Taylor County Drug Opposition Partners will specifically work to address delaying the age of onset of alcohol consumption, decreasing the amount of current use and binge drinking of alcohol among Taylor County youth, decreasing youth access to opiates (pain killers) and increasing perception of harm related to opiates and other illegal drugs. The coalition will partner with Gilman, Rib Lake and Medford Area school districts, law enforcement, healthcare providers, the faith-based community, businesses, parents, youth, service organizations, alcohol and drug abuse specialists, and local media to create a healthy environment for Taylor County youth.

In addition, we offer regular tobacco cessation classes that are aimed at helping people quit smoking. Single sessions and more extensive programs will continue to be offered.

Primary Community Health Need: Mental Health

Mental health problems, ranging from mild depression to schizophrenia, occur about as often as in other communities. However, stress from economic situations, including unemployment and underemployment, has added to the normal mental health problems, especially in parents.

While the occurrence of mental health problems is not especially high, the lack of accessibility in obtaining professional treatment is a problem. Individuals in our community feel psychiatrists, behavioral health specialists and counselors are all lacking. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration has designated our service area as a mental health professional shortage area.

Although several options are available in Medford and a few options are available in Phillips, Gilman and Prentice, most other areas lack any opportunities. Additionally, the options available in Medford and Phillips generally require insurance or self-pay, or focus on low-income individuals. The insurance and self-pay options generally have availability, but many in our community lack insurance and cannot afford to pay. In contrast, the low-income options are affordable, but lack availability. In addition, severe mental health problems require at least 2-3 hours travel, each way, to reach inpatient psychiatric centers.

Price County has been working to increase community awareness of mental health resources available to community members through a directory provided to mental health professionals.

Action Plan for Impact

Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics has expanded, and is in the process of expanding still further, availability of behavioral health services. In the past, only Aspirus Medford Clinic had on-site licensed counselors and social workers. Aspirus has since added an LCSW, LPC, who splits her time between Prentice and Phillips. Another LCSW started at Aspirus in January 2016, providing behavioral health services in the Aspirus Medford, Prentice and Phillips clinic locations.

Active recruitment for a psychiatrist is underway. The Medford Clinic is developing telemedicine psychiatric services, allowing individuals to consult with a professional psychiatrist over the Internet.

And, depending on the success of this program and available Internet bandwidth, the telemedicine program could be expanded to other health services in the future.

We've established an Alzheimer's Support Group that meets monthly for friends and families of those afflicted with Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias, a monthly Stroke Support Group, a Commit to Quit (Smoking) program, and a monthly Memory Café support group for people with memory loss, mild cognitive impairment, early Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Spearheaded by the school district's Director of Pupil Services, the community has developed a Mental Health Council to address suicide prevention and other related ailments. Active participants of this Council include Medford Area Public School District, Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics, Taylor County Health Department and Taylor County Human Services Department.



*Deanne Fechhelm
of Medford, WI,
positively copes
with life post-
stroke with the
assistance of
Aspirus Medford
Hospital's
monthly Stroke
Support Group.*

Primary Community Health Need: Nutrition & Healthy Foods

Nutritional choices are a significant issue in our community. "Nutrition and Health Foods" was identified as one of Price County's top priorities in its 2016 CHIP. Most of the nutritional problems relate to a limited number of alternatives, high cost of healthy eating and/or personal choices.

Restaurants and in-the-box store-bought meals are increasingly popular meal choices in our community. Although Medford is the largest city (pop. 5000) in our community, it is small enough that there are not many options for quick, healthy meal options. For those restaurants that are available, whether in Medford or any other town, there are limited healthy menu options. Most communities have one grocery store (Medford has two) or convenience store, which means if an individual isn't willing to drive 30-50 miles, they don't have a choice as to where to purchase their

groceries and are subject to the potentially limited food offerings provided by their grocery store. According to the county health rankings, there is strong evidence that residing in a food desert is correlated with a high prevalence of overweight, obesity and premature death.

Although our community involves a large amount of farming, the crops tend to be feed corn and soy beans or are transported out of the community. Because of size constraints at stores and limited demand, the stores outside of Medford tend to have relatively small selection of healthy fruits, vegetables and meats.

WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. WIC helps income-eligible pregnant and breastfeeding women, women who recently had a baby, infants and children up to five years of age who are at risk due to inadequate nutrition. The program improves pregnancy outcomes by providing or referring to support services necessary for full-term pregnancies; reducing infant mortality by reducing the incidence of low birth weight; and providing infants and children up to 5 years of age with a healthy start in life by improving poor or inadequate diets while saving long-term medical costs. The WIC program provides essential health and nutrition education for families.

The Price County Wellness Coalition has offered a variety of nutrition-related information, including crock pot cooking classes, promotion of healthy eating through increased awareness of local farmers markets, media outreach and participation in the “4 Health” program in conjunction with the Chequamegon School with a focus on physical activity and obesity. In addition, promotion of cooking meals in the home was provided at local food pantries that included directions and ingredients to prepare the meal at home.

Beginning in 2015, the Price County Wellness Coalition established its goal to “create a culture of healthy eating and active living in Price County in order to reduce the impact of chronic disease and connect people with resources and opportunities for high quality nutritious foods and physical activity.” It was determined that the coalition would use an evidence-based program – the Let’s Go! 5-2-1-0 Campaign – as a tool to guide it through the next few years to reach its goals. Let’s Go! 5-2-1-0 is a nationally recognized program that promotes evidenced-based strategies to increase healthy eating and active living. This program is being introduced throughout Price County in schools, daycares, health care settings and local businesses. The coalition worked on getting the schools, businesses, daycares and general public excited for the January 2016 launch of the 5-2-1-0 campaign. Booths were set up at Flambeau Rama in Park Falls and at the Price County Fair in Phillips to promote the campaign launch. Meetings with schools and local businesses were well received. The coalition continues to evaluate the program and make adjustments to make it as effective as can be.



Marla Hemke, of Medford, WI, feels she has the key to a healthy lifestyle after participating in Move to Improve Families.

Action Plan for Impact

While individual choice is an important factor in individual nutrition, we see a variety of opportunities to encourage better nutritional choices. Aspirus offers numerous free *Heart Healthy Cooking* and *Heart Healthy Eating* sessions for the public to attend. We've coordinated Women's Retreats that featured either a motivational keynote or multiple break-out sessions addressing food and nutrition.

We've collaborated with the local grocery stores in our community and developed many free-standing inserts that included a "\$3-Off Fresh Produce" coupon; these inserts were circulated throughout our community by our local newspapers. Other programs include *SHAPEDOWN*, a 10-week program developed for overweight

children that consisted of weekly consults with nutritionists, assignments and group exercise sessions with a physical therapist; *Spring Meltdown*, a team competition similar to the "The Biggest Loser;" and *Move to Improve* programs for adults and families. These 12-week programs included physical activity and nutrition class requirements. We are continually evaluating snacks, drinks and foods made available to employees and patients at our hospital and clinics. Additionally, Aspirus Medford partners with area organizations to conduct wellness events, often with a nutritional focus, for the general public. Some of these partners include the Medford County Market, the Medford Area Chamber of Commerce and NorthCentral Technical College.

Aspirus Medford hired a second Nutrition Therapist; educating the public through free seminars and food demonstrations is a portion of her responsibilities.

We funded a variety of activities through our Community Benefit Program including:

Life of an Athlete Program for Taylor County Schools: Nutritional components of this program teach students how nutrition impacts their ability to perform in the classroom and on the field. The program emphasizes eating for performance and how to successfully meet the nutritional needs of our growing youth.

National Eating Disorder Association Awareness Speaker: This speaker was sponsored to raise awareness about eating disorders among our community and provide an educational session related to coping with common eating disorders.

Price County 5-2-1-0 Program: In January 2016, the Price County Wellness Coalition kicked off its 5-2-1-0 campaign in which participants aim to achieve 5 or more fruits and vegetables per day, 2 hours or less of recreational screen time, 1 hour or more of physical activity, and 0 sugary drinks to include more water and low-fat milk instead.

We recognize the significant effort already put forth by community groups and coalitions, especially with Taylor and Price Counties. We plan to continue to promote and encourage participation in community groups by health department and hospital personnel, and our organization continually seeks opportunities to utilize hospital resources to further the community's best interests.

Secondary Community Health Need: Physical Activity

Obesity, resulting from both poor nutrition and lack of physical activity, is a major problem in Wisconsin. In Taylor County and Price County, 25% and 20% of adults aged 20 and over, respectively, report spending no leisure time on physical activity, compared to the state average of 21%. In Taylor County and Price County, 28% and 32% of adults, respectively, are classified as "obese," compared to 29% across the state.

The physical activity issues in our community can generally be described as either "a lack of opportunities" or "personal choice to not participate." The city of Medford generally has more opportunities for physical activities, including fitness facilities and organized sports, than the outlying rural communities. Occupational changes are also impacting our physical activity. Occupations are increasingly sedentary in nature, leading to less physical activity in the workplace. While various employers offer activities for employees, most employees opt out of participation. Community members feel that we, as a community, have adopted a culture of inactivity in all we do.

The lack of physical activity is similarly a problem for our youth. In-school physical education is required for all elementary and middle school students; in high school a student must obtain 1.5 physical education credits to graduate. Unfortunately, this isn't enough. While the school districts and a multitude of youth groups and clubs provide many physical activities and opportunities, some individuals find the offerings too expensive, time prohibitive (e.g., practices are 4 days/week at undesired times) and/or transportation to and from practices and games prohibit their participation. According to the Medford High School athletic director, 47% of the 2014/2015 Medford High School population (645 students, grades 9-12) were involved in at least one sport; 54% were involved in a club, and 28% were involved in choir or band. If we assume the typical club, choir and band obligation doesn't require much physical activity, then the other 53% of the student population is either working or, more likely, choosing non-physical leisure activities, such as video games, television or simply "hanging out."

Obesity is one issue that impacts the Hispanic community less than the rest of our community because their jobs tend to be physically demanding and their foods tend to be less processed.

The Strong Women, Strong Bones Program continues to promote physical activity and strength training via weightlifting. Classes are held two times per week for eight weeks throughout Taylor County.

Krista Meier, of Medford, WI, runs through a color zone during the Colorfall 5K.

Photo credit: The Star News



The Strong Women, Strong Bones Program continues to promote physical activity and strength training via weightlifting. Classes are held two times per week for eight weeks throughout Price County.

The "Take the Stairs" Campaign was initiated in 2014 and promotes increased physical activity by encouraging participants to use the stairs instead of the elevator. This project was test piloted from April 28-May 1, 2014, among employees at Flambeau Hospital. Motivational posters and email communications were distributed at Flambeau Hospital in key areas to remind employees to take the stairs. The project's results and materials were presented at the Price County Worksite Wellness meeting.

In addition, the Price County Wellness Coalition works to keep walking-trail maps up to date and offer periodic walking events to promote physical activity.

Action Plan for Impact

Throughout the year, our Aspirus Therapy & Fitness Center offers "open house" days in which community members are welcome to try our fitness facility and classes free of charge. The fitness center also offers a variety of fitness-centered challenges for its members and special programs that take our fitness experts out into the community.

Aspirus Medford Hospital holds its annual Community Colorfall 5K Run/Walk each fall. Over 200 participants ran or walked through the non-toxic, biodegradable, colored cornstarch powder at the 2015 event, which left adults and children alike covered in color when they finished. The purpose of this untimed event is to provide the community a health and wellness activity the entire family can enjoy without being intimidated.

We also funded:

Life of an Athlete Program for Taylor County Schools: Physical Activity components of this program teach students how to properly train for competition as well as for lifetime health. The program emphasizes the importance of making time for muscle recovery and proper training, which can improve their ability to be the best student and athlete they can be.

Exercise Bands for Female Students: Aspirus Medford helped equip and start a new physical fitness program for girls that builds their physical strength, flexibility, stamina and endurance.

Ranger Sapper Run: Aspirus Medford sponsored the Ranger Sapper Run during the summer of 2015. The purpose of this run was for participants to complete the 5-mile run in 40 minutes or less – the Army standard for a Ranger or Sapper. All proceeds were donated toward helping veterans through the 4th HOOAH WI organization, a registered 501c(3).



'Bands for Every Girl' Program

Strong Women, Strong Bones of Price County: Strong Women, Strong Bones is an evidence-based strength training program for women and men. Aspirus Medford helped UW-Extension Services in Price County establish a new Strong Women, Strong Bones class series in a new location, thereby providing greater accessibility to an area of our community. In addition to providing management and execution expertise, we provided the funding for a new set of hand and ankle weights for the participants. (UW-Extension Services in Taylor County already has an active Strong Women, Strong Bones class series, of which we are a supporter.)

Centennial Hall Community Days: Aspirus Medford offered a 5K Run/Walk for the community. With over 120 participants running or walking in the run/walk or participating in the 3-on-3 basketball tournament, the event was a great way for families to get active and enjoy some friendly competition.

Exercise in the Park: Aspirus Medford approved a grant request that will provide all of the funding for one 'Exercise in the Park' station. It is one of five that will be erected within the Medford City Park by 2018. The public is invited to partake in the equipment for free and at their leisure.

In addition to continuing our sponsorships of numerous activities managed by our and other community organizations and/or youth groups, we will continue to offer reduced-fee WIAA sports physicals each summer at all Aspirus Medford Clinics.

Secondary Community Health Need: Healthy Growth & Development

The health issues facing adults, as discussed throughout this report, also apply to our children (birth to 17 years old). However, the children are even more of a concern because 1.) health decisions are frequently made by adults on their behalf and 2.) our children are still developing the health habits that will impact the rest of their lives. According to America's Health Rankings, in 2015 Wisconsin ranked 23rd among states in a combined measure of infant mortality. Similarly, we recognized the impact economic hardship can have on health care, growth and development. In our community, approximately 1 in 5 children live in poverty and 1 in 4 children qualifies for free lunch.

Community members indicated several health concerns for youth, such as a lack of prenatal care coordination for mothers who are not on Medicaid, smoking mothers, lack of understanding related to abnormal pregnancies, a decreased focus on children who are too old for WIC but too young for elementary school, child abuse and substance abuse. The most frequently mentioned concern by community members was that children – including teenagers – generally lack concern for their own physical well-being, primarily with regards to nutrition and physical activity.

**Action Plan for Impact**

We have offered, and will continue to offer, a variety of free classes, groups and events to encourage health care for children:

Baby Fair: Information is provided for the preconception through newborn stages. Topics include nutrition, exercise, relaxation, breastfeeding, infant development, car seat safety and picking a physician. Those attending also learn about community resources like child care, parenting, county health services and more. Events sometimes include car seat safety checks.

Exercise, Comfort & Relaxation: Led by physical therapy staff, this perinatal program provides information on posture and positioning for comfort, body mechanics and prenatal exercise. Self-treatment techniques common for prenatal pain symptoms are demonstrated. Partners are encouraged to attend to learn massage therapy techniques. Participants also have an opportunity to practice relaxation and diaphragmatic breathing techniques.

Labor and Delivery: This course covers signs and symptoms of labor and pre-term labor, labor pain management and interventions, breathing and relaxation techniques, medications and the process of birth.

Care of the Newborn: Class topics include routine infant care, new family dynamics and postpartum depression. A baby bath demonstration is featured and community resources are introduced.

Breastfeeding: This class provides an in-depth look at the benefits and management of breastfeeding for stay-at-home and working moms.

Child Development Days: A series of events and developmental screenings in Medford, Gilman, Rib Lake, Phillips, Prentice, Colby and Abbotsford for children ages 0-5 years to:

- Identify children in need of further assessment in physical, sensory, language and developmental skills;
- Provide a wide range of health and wellness information;
- Educate families regarding normal child growth and development; and
- Develop community awareness of resources available in areas of education, childcare, medical/health care and family services.

Club Scrub: A 3-week course for area 7th and 8th grade students to be on-site at the hospital and learn about health care and careers.

Holy Rosary: A 5-week course for area 5th and 6th grade students to be on-site to learn about health care and careers.

Aspirus Facebook: Page maintained by Aspirus to provide information and support for mothers, infants, children and more.

Prenatal Care Coordinator: Aspirus Medford hired a Prenatal Care Coordinator. This free program is available to all expecting moms, not just those who are financially challenged. Studies show that women who receive prenatal care services have significantly better birth outcomes, give birth to fewer low birth-weight babies, have fewer preterm deliveries and more.

The Taylor County Wellness Coalition (led by Aspirus Medford) is currently undergoing efforts related to healthy nutrition and physical inactivity as it impacts all members of the community. The Coalition is evaluating evidence-based programming to be implemented throughout Taylor County in an effort to positively impact healthy growth and development at all ages.



Club Scrub offers students a glimpse into the field of health care.

Secondary Community Health Need: Injury & Violence Prevention

Injury and violence encompass a broad array of topics. According to “Healthy People 2020,” injuries are the leading cause of death among Wisconsin people aged 1-44 years and are a significant cause of morbidity and mortality at all ages. Injuries and violence occur in all ages, races and socioeconomic classes. According to local law enforcement officials, the majority of violence and crime instances can be traced back to alcohol and other drug use issues.

Action Plan for Impact

Aspirus Medford Hospital & Clinics recognizes the need to be prepared and aware to prevent injury and violence. We are addressing this important issue by:

- Evaluating all our patients for risks associated with violence using a variety of screening techniques.
- Providing concussion education to youth organization and school district coaches, in addition to providing an actual pre-concussion screening to many high school athletes.
- Having Aspirus Medford athletic trainers and medical providers present at the sidelines of local high school football games, in addition to some soccer and volleyball tournaments.
- Collaborating with other organizations (e.g., Taylor County Fair, Nestle Pizza) to provide free bike helmets or the funding for free bike helmets for various community events.
- Increasing, through social media venues, the awareness of dating violence and the avenues a person can choose for help and guidance.
- Funding ALICE training in collaboration with the Taylor County Health Department. ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training prepares individuals to handle the threat of an Active Shooter. ALICE teaches individuals to participate in their own survival while leading others to safety. Though no one can guarantee success in this type of situation, this new set of skills will greatly increase the odds of survival should anyone face this form of threat.
- Supporting Stepping Stones, a non-profit organization that provides free support services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Taylor County.

Tertiary Community Health Need: Tobacco Use & Exposure

Tobacco use continues to create a devastating health and economic burden in Wisconsin. Individuals, families and communities across Wisconsin suffer from the effects of tobacco use and addiction. Tobacco use is also a common problem in our community. Each year, according to “Healthiest Wisconsin 2020,” approximately 15% of all deaths in Wisconsin are from illnesses directly related to smoking. Cigarette smoking causes an estimated 79% of all lung cancer deaths and 14% of deaths from cardiovascular disease in Wisconsin. While Taylor County and Price County each has lower prevalence of smoking adults (17% and 15% respectively) than the state average of 18%, those rates emphasize how common smoking is in our community. As with alcohol, the behavior of adults (especially parents) teaches our youth the acceptability of tobacco use.

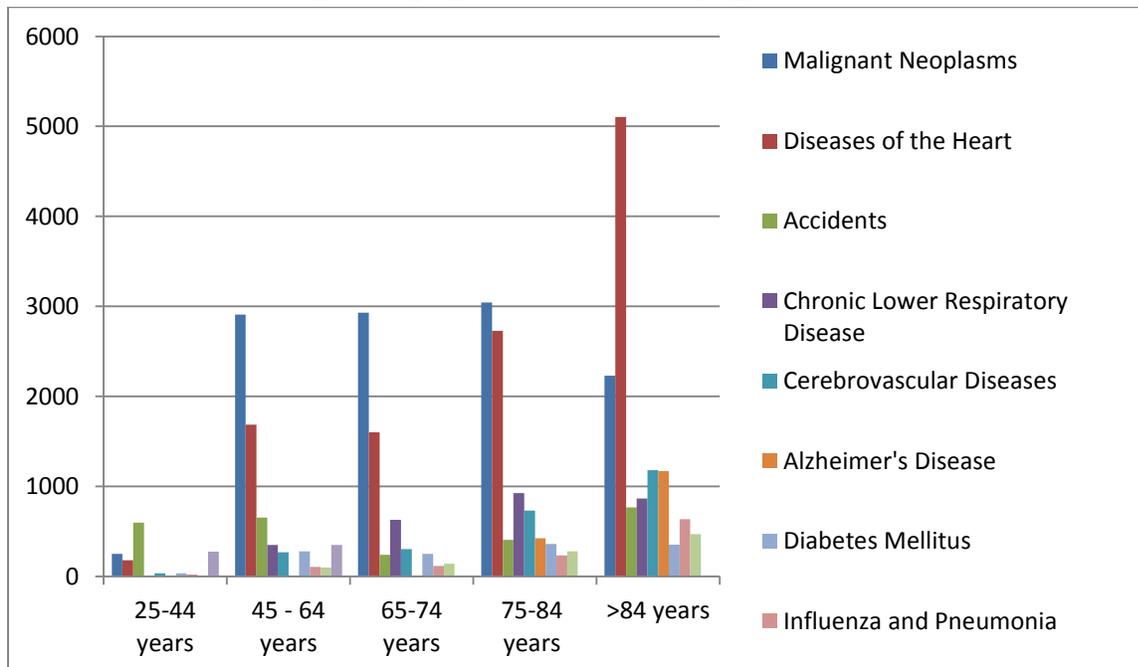
Action Plan for Impact

We offer regular tobacco cessation classes that are aimed at helping people quit smoking. Single sessions and more extensive programs will continue to be offered. Sessions are taught by trained Aspirus Medford respiratory therapy staff.

Tertiary Community Health Need: Chronic Disease Prevention & Management

According to “2013 Wisconsin Deaths” published by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the two leading causes of death in Wisconsin in 2013 were diseases of the heart and malignant neoplasms (cancer). Other significant causes were diabetes, cerebrovascular diseases (Stroke, aneurysm, etc.), chronic lower respiratory diseases and nephritis (kidney disease). The list of causes is fairly consistent when analyzed by gender and by race.

Leading Underlying Causes of Death by Age in Wisconsin in 2013



Action Plan for Impact

We have offered, and will continue to offer as much as possible, a variety of classes, groups and events related to chronic diseases:

Patient-Centered Medical Home Team: Medical Home Coordinators provide the extra glue and guidance needed between patients, their provider and support staff and the other medical resources available to patients. Medical Home Coordinators can provide diabetes and other chronic disease management, assistance in understanding medical options, medication review, coaching and support, access to community resources and healthcare equipment and much more.

Heart Healthy Cooking: A change in a person's cooking and eating habits can significantly improve health status. A dietitian teaches attendees how to make smart food choices from every food group, read nutrition labels to identify heart healthy foods and set achievable health goals.

Heart Healthy Eating with the DASH Plan: The DASH Plan is proven to improve health, offers a balance of healthy food groups and actually works. It is safe and nutritionally complete, can prevent or control diabetes and high blood pressure, and supports heart health. This class is taught by a dietitian.

Stroke Support Group: An uplifting support group for stroke survivors, their family members and caregivers. Classes are held monthly.

Stepping On: A 7-week fall prevention program for seniors sponsored by Aspirus Medford and the Taylor County Commission on Aging.



Aspirus Volunteers – Medford donated Yaktrax to Stepping On participants as a means of creating a safer environment when walking outdoors.

Focus on Health – A course for people ages 60 years and older aimed at helping them understand their health better, learn what they are doing that is good for them and discover information to help them live better. Topics range from nutrition, exercise fall prevention, dealing with loss, diabetes, eye health, heart health and more. Each session opens with blood pressure and blood sugar screenings and ends with a question-and-answer period.

Osteoporosis Screening: Free screening for adults ages 40 and older provided as part of Aspirus Medford's presence at numerous health fairs and community expos.

Blood Pressure Screening: Free screening offered as part of Aspirus Medford's presence at numerous health fairs and community expos.

Look Good, Feel Better: Cosmetology professionals teach beauty techniques to women undergoing cancer treatment, designed to overcome the appearance-related effects of cancer treatment. This is an American Cancer Society program.

Prostate Health and Cancer: Educational sessions for men ages 40 and older designed to help them take control of their prostate health. Topics include prostate issues, cancer, medical screenings and treatments.

Tertiary Community Health Need: Communicable Disease

In 2013, Taylor County had 155 cases of reportable confirmed communicable diseases. Price County had 93 cases. Communicable diseases (infectious diseases) are illness caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites that may be transmitted from human to human or from animal to human. Advances in clean water, refrigeration and sanitation, and the development of safe and effective vaccines, have greatly reduced the threat of communicable diseases; however, common diseases still cause outbreaks and new communicable diseases emerge. Vaccines protect more than the individual immunized; they prevent the spread of disease within the population. With persistently low adult immunizations rates, new efforts are needed to encourage vaccinations across all life spans. We need to increase access in all communities to eliminate disparities in immunization rates.

Action Plan for Impact

Vaccination is important to Aspirus Medford. In an attempt to protect our community from illnesses such as the flu, we offer a variety of flu clinics for community members to receive their flu vaccination. In addition, we also offer flu vaccination at area businesses to break down any transportation barriers that community members may face.

In January 2015, Aspirus FastCare opened in the East Town Mall in Abbotsford. People in this and surrounding areas now have a local option for convenient and economical basic healthcare services. FastCare clinics are open to anyone – not just Aspirus patients – for health care of minor conditions and symptoms. FastCare providers see and treat sore throats, fevers, flus and colds, bladder infections, earaches, sinus infections, skin rashes, allergies and more.

HEALTH EDUCATION

We recognize the need to provide educational opportunities for our community members. Educational opportunities we currently offer and/or plan to address for our community include:

- All of the primary and secondary community health needs identified in this report
- Disease prevention education
- The level of care mid-level providers can provide at clinics, even when physicians are absent
- The importance of identifying and seeing on a regular basis a Primary Care Provider
- Available specialties at Aspirus
- The patient's ability to change providers at any time at the patient's discretion
- Medical terminology
- Healthy living facts and tips
- Utilization of MyAspirus for efficient communication with providers

Currently we share our knowledge with the public through the:

- Aspirus *Aspire*, a 12-page health and wellness magazine that is circulated throughout our entire service area, free of charge, three times a year
- Development of brochures that are free for the taking at health fairs, expos and county fairs
- Public service announcements (PSAs) via the radio, news articles and paid advertisements
- Social media campaigns
- Free public health forums and seminars
- Free wall calendars that include a monthly “Be Smart” health-related educational paragraph, tips and important Aspirus phone numbers

Some of the educational events and courses have included:

- **Innovative Interpretation Services:** Video Remote Interpreting and Over-the-Phone Interpreting for people with Limited English Proficiency and those who are deaf or hard of hearing became available in January 2015. Video Remote Interpreting provides a reliable way for patients to communicate with doctors, improving health outcomes, reducing costs and raising the standard of care at hospitals worldwide.
- **Health Trivia Activity:** An interactive activity offered at Aspirus Medford’s booths at various expos and fairs in Taylor and Price Counties. Trivia questions for kids, adults and senior citizens deal with nutrition, physical activity, heart health, immunizations, osteoporosis and more.
- **Snack and Chat – Seasonal Allergies:** Education about seasonal allergies and tips for dealing with them, provided by an Aspirus Medford nurse practitioner.
- **Don’t Let Knee or Hip Pain Stop You!** Education about the causes of knee and hip pain as well as ways to treat such pain.
- **Do You Want to Help Children or Adults Who Struggle to Read?:** An annual 10-week training course (taught by an Aspirus Medford pediatrician) for adults who wish to help struggling children and/or adult readers. The course focuses on the Orton-Gillingham approach to reading instruction, which has proven very successful for individuals with dyslexia.
- **Tissue Donation:** Understand what tissue donation is and how to sign up to be a donor.
- **Basic First Aid:** This class is for anyone 12 years and older that is interested in learning first aid techniques ranging from bandaging and splinting to treating victims of poisoning or strokes.
- **Basic CPR:** This class includes training in lifesaving techniques of CPR for adults, children and infants, as well as training for dealing with respiratory distress.
- **CPR for Healthcare Providers:** This class is appropriate for professional healthcare providers, such as nurses, EMTs and CNAs. The course provides training in lifesaving techniques of CPR for adults, children and infants.
- **CPR Renewal for Healthcare Providers:** A CPR renewal course for people working in health care.

Many more educational events are planned for the future through a program called *Aspiring Women*. Health literacy opportunities, specifically for the Hispanic community, are also being reviewed.