

## **STRATEGIC DOING, Community Health Needs Assessment Public Forum**

On October 19, a group of citizens joined leaders from Cheyenne County Hospital to provide public input on the 2020 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). Due to a local spike in Covid-19 cases, the hospital allowed participants to attend via Zoom web conferencing if they did not feel comfortable joining in person at the American Legion Hall in Bird City.

Rance Ramsey, hospital CEO, began the meeting by presenting the results of the CHNA public survey conducted in May and June 2020. The anonymous survey asked 34 questions and was broadly distributed throughout Cheyenne County.

More than 300 people responded to the survey and mostly mirrored the local demographics of Cheyenne County. The top concerns of community health in Cheyenne County were:

- Attracting and retaining youth / businesses (job creation, decrease in population),
- Cost of living (including health care, food, housing and high taxes),
- Health care providers (retain, recruit, consistency, availability and quality of care),
- Mental Health Services (local availability, cost and substance abuse),
- Local access to health care specialists and
- Confidentiality/trust (including public officials / government).

Mr. Ramsey stated that the survey showed 20% of respondents seek health care out of Cheyenne County. This concerned the hospital leadership team as they want all Cheyenne County citizens to seek care locally to support the local economy and to be a partner in patient-centered care ensuring citizens are obtaining the health results they need.

The top reason expressed for people seeking care outside of Cheyenne County was a lack of trust with quality of care or competence of health care staff. When asked how the hospital plans to address this concern, Mr. Ramsey said that lack of trust did not happen overnight and rebuilding that trust will also take time.

“I believe we have already started to address that,” he said. “We take this concern very seriously. We are working from the inside out, starting on building trust within the organization. We are hiring quality team members and putting a focus on confidentiality and quality.”

Regarding provider recruitment and retention, Mr. Ramsey informed those present that a new Physician Assistant has been hired and will start this month (October). A new Medical Doctor has also been hired to start on November 4. The addition of medical providers will allow the clinic see more patients in a timely manner.

After Mr. Ramsey presented the survey data, facilitator Betty Johnson led the group through a Strategic Doing process on the top priorities identified by those present. During the exercise, participants ranked the following as of most concern to them:

1. Health Care Services (specialty services, elder care, respite services),
2. Economic Development (youth retention, job creation, business development),

3. Community Development (collaboration, communication, working beyond county borders),
4. Mental Health (including substance abuse)
5. Covid Response
6. Schools

An open dialogue was held with many in attendance expressing their views and concerns on these topics.

Regarding economic development, Jacque Hays indicated there is a group of local business owners that are working on creating and maintaining a complete list of businesses / contractors in Cheyenne County as there is not a current listing maintained by any entity in Cheyenne County. Lists exist on multiple websites, but none are current. Sandi Ramsey echoed the need for this sort of list. She stated when they recently moved to town, it was difficult to know what was available: even googling businesses in Cheyenne County brought up old or no results

Mila Bandel indicated that regarding health care workers and creating / encouraging youth to return home to work after college, the hospital, Cheyenne County Village, EMS, and schools created a strategic doing project in 2018 in which students toured health care facilities and shadowed certain jobs if interested in more in depth view. They also conducted a job fair alternating between the two schools in Cheyenne County for the past 2 years. The tours and shadowing have been put on hold due to Covid, but she would like to see another strategic doing group revisit and expand this concept in the future.

At the end of the meeting, attendees were asked to sign up for committees to address the top four issues identified during the meeting. If anyone is interested in joining the committees, they are encouraged to contact Carol Sloper at 785-734-2406 or [info@gnwkcf.org](mailto:info@gnwkcf.org). Mrs. Sloper will put interested people in touch with those signed up for each committee.

Betty Johnson said she is available to come back and facilitate Strategic Doing meetings at no charge for each of the priorities identified or for the hospital to address other priorities noted in the CHNA.

A copy of the survey results is available upon request by emailing [info@gnwkcf.org](mailto:info@gnwkcf.org) or by contacting Shawna Blanka at 785-332-2104.

Click [HERE](#) to download a summary of the Community Health Needs Assessment.

