

Community Health Needs Assessment



2020

Introduction

Barlow Respiratory Hospital (Barlow) is a 105-bed, long-term acute care hospital that serves Los Angeles County and the surrounding regions. Barlow's Main campus is located In Downtown Los Angeles and we have satellite campuses within both PIH Health Hospital in Whittier and Valley Presbyterian Hospital in Van Nuys. We treat patients with medically complex conditions, many of whom are ventilator-dependent, that need the continued long-term acute care we provide after they are discharged from a short-term acute care hospital. Barlow admits patients from all over Southern California, but our primary service area is Los Angeles County, where approximately 94% of our patients reside.

In December of 2020, Barlow completed a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) as required by state and federal law. The CHNA is the basis for our Community Benefit Plan, which outlines how Barlow will give back to the community it serves. The CHNA Includes primary data collection and secondary data analysis that focus on the health needs of the community area we serve.

This document is a descriptive summary of the process and outcome of the CHNA. It is accompanied by an Implementation Plan that describes the activities we plan to undertake in order to address some of the needs identified by the CHNA, in keeping with our not-for-profit status and mission.

Methodology

We conducted a series of interviews from people who represent the broad interests of the community served by Barlow, including community representatives and health care providers. A list of those that were interviewed is included with this report as Attachment 1.

We also collected Information and data from a variety of sources to examine our service area demographics, economic indicators, and other important factors that affect the health needs of our patients and community.

Despite our best efforts there are certain Information gaps that impact our ability to assess the health needs of our community, including the fact that some raw and tabulated data was several years old.

Identification and Prioritization of Community Health Needs

Based on the results of the primary and secondary data collection, health needs were identified. The identified health needs were:

- Access to Care, Including Diagnostic Testing and Well Care (Most vitally in response to the COVID 19 pandemic.)
- Chronic Disease Conditions
- Homelessness
- Mental Health
- Nutrition and Physical Activity

After identifying the health needs of the community we serve, we then prioritized those needs based on the following criteria:

- Our Existing Organizational Infrastructure and Capacity
- Our Pre-Existing Competencies and Expertise
- Our Existing Relationships in the Community
- Any Available Ongoing Investment

The health needs were prioritized as follows:

- Access to Care, Including Diagnostic Testing and Well Care - High
- Chronic Disease Conditions - High
- Homelessness - High
- Mental Health - High
- Nutrition and Physical Activity – Moderate

Community and Stakeholder Input

Interviews with community members and stakeholders were conducted in December, 2020. The individuals that were interviewed addressed community health matters that affected the residents of Los Angeles County. They were asked to share their perspectives on a number of topics including:

- The biggest health and social issues or concerns facing the community.
- Any challenges or barriers faced in obtaining health and social services.
- Any challenges or barriers to obtaining prevention and treatment services.
- Specific challenges or barriers faced in obtaining behavioral health services.
- Specific challenges or barriers faced in obtaining prevention and treatment services for chronic diseases.
- Any existing and needed actions/activities to address these issues.
- The recommended roles for hospitals and healthcare providers in addressing community health needs.

Responses and trends relative to each of these topic areas are summarized below.

Biggest Health Issues or Concerns Facing the Community

The biggest Issues and concerns in the community were identified to include:

- Response to the COVID 19 pandemic, including education, diagnostic testing, and the financial support necessary to implement recommended public health practices.
- Income disparities and resulting in lack of insurance or access to health care.
- Homelessness, and associated complications.
- Health disparities that Impact communities of color and lower-income communities.
- High Incidence of depression.
- Obesity and diabetes stemming from poor nutrition and lack of access to grocery stores or physical activity.
- Increase in respiratory diseases and chronic lung diseases such as asthma and COPD.

Barriers Faced in Obtaining Services, Including Prevention and Treatment

Interview respondents were asked about the problems and challenges children and families face in obtaining healthcare. The most frequently identified challenges included fear, lack of insurance and cost. Additional challenges were:

- Lack of compliance with physician recommendations.
- Lack of awareness of the importance of ongoing preventive and primary health care in the absence of symptoms.
- Lack of knowledge of existing community clinic options or eligibility requirements.
- Health care, other than responding to the COVID 19 pandemic, is not seen as a priority in the spectrum of issues facing some people.
- General confusion about the health care system and how to access services.
- Limited availability of social services along with long waits for services and significant paperwork/bureaucracy to obtain services.
- Lack of knowledge of how to access social services or which services people may be eligible for.
- Lack of reimbursement or payment structures.

Barriers Faced In Obtaining Behavioral Health Services

Interview respondents were asked about the specific challenges or barriers faced in obtaining behavioral health services. Responses included:

- Under-diagnosis of depression.
- Lack of inpatient psychiatric treatment resources.
- Lack of outpatient treatment options.
- Lack of knowledge of affordable treatment options in the community.
- Stigma associated with mental health problems.

Barriers Faced in Obtaining Chronic Disease Services

Interview respondents were asked about the specific challenges or barriers faced in obtaining prevention and treatment services for chronic diseases.

Response Included:

- Lengthy authorization processes.
- Pressure on appropriate lengths of treatment due to cost and limited insurance coverage.
- Lack of availability of local or easily accessible treatment options.
- High cost of medications and durable medical equipment.

Suggestions Regarding Needed Actions/Activities

Interview respondents were asked what would make it easier to obtain health and social services, including prevention and treatment, as well as chronic disease and behavioral health services. Suggestions included:

- Public education about free COVID 19 testing and affordable primary care.
- Establishment of mobile testing clinics.
- Transportation assistance to medical appointments.
- Increased number of primary care physicians and Incentives for people to practice primary care, especially in lower-income or less desirable areas, where quality, affordable health care providers are needed.
- Increase specialty care appointments/capacity to better meet the need for uninsured patients.
- Better funding for outpatient clinics to help prevent the need for hospitalizations and to help people transition from an inpatient setting.
- Conduct outreach and engage with people regarding available services and eligibility.
- More affordable housing and other social services needed for the homeless.
- Reform/redesign services to improve access and improve payment.
- More acknowledgement and recognition of the issue of depression.
- Reduce stigma associated with mental illness and treatment.

Recommended Roles for Hospitals and Health Care Providers in Addressing Community Health Needs

Interview respondents were asked for recommendations on how hospitals and other health care providers can help address community health needs.

Suggestions included:

- Providing free or sliding fee scale services such as COVID 19 testing.
- Providing medical homes and case management to ensure that there is follow-up with patients regarding their care and treatment.
- Focus on keeping patients at home instead of using the hospital or emergency room.
- Establishing mobile health services or screening clinics at community agencies and other settings in lower-income communities where residents have trusted relationships.

- Provide health care services during extended hours.
- Provide outpatient obesity and diabetes clinics for children.
- Conduct education campaigns and community outreach on making healthy choices.
- Increase the availability of nurses in schools to better meet the needs of children with asthma, diabetes or other health conditions who may require care at school.

Other Comments

Interview respondents were given an opportunity to share any final thoughts or comments.

Most commented on the incredible challenges presented by the COVID 19 pandemic to the community and healthcare system. Others commented on Barlow's long tenure as a vital part of the health care infrastructure in Los Angeles, and its outstanding reputation in the medical community, especially in regard to ventilator weaning and caring for patients with complex chronic illnesses.

Health Care Facilities and Community Resources

The following are links to sources for health care facilities and community resources.

Hospitals

A list of hospitals and hospital systems is available through the Hospital Association of Southern California and can be found at www.hasc.org/member-hosottals-systems.

Community Clinics

A list of community clinics is available at: www.ccalac.org.

Community Resources

Community resources throughout Los Angeles County can be found at: 211 LACounty www.211la.org.

Attachment 1: Community Members

1. Sanjay Vadgama, MD Medical Director/Pulmonologist Barlow Hospital and Valley Presbyterian Hospital
2. Michael Karapetian, MD Medical Staff /Internal Medicine Barlow Hospital and Glendale Memorial Hospital
3. Nadeem Chishti, MD Medical Director/Pulmonologist Barlow Hospital and PIH Health
4. Sharon Lee, MD Community Physician Private Practice
5. Constance Roenick, PhD. Community/Child Welfare Activist/Consultant

Community Need Assessment and Plan

- Required by State and Federal Law, Every 3 Years
- Interviews With Healthcare Providers and Community Members
- Los Angeles County Community Healthcare Needs Identified:
 1. Access to Care, Including Diagnostic Testing and Well Care (Most virtually in response to the COVID 19 pandemic.)
 2. Chronic Disease Conditions
 3. Homelessness
 4. Mental Health
 5. Nutrition and Physical Activity
- All Impacted and Exacerbated by COVID 19 Pandemic
- Required Implementation Plan to Address:
 1. Because of Pandemic and Limited Resources, Continue to Provide LTACH Services to Community, Focused on Patients With Respiratory Ailments