



## Community Benefit Programs

### 1. Mental Health

#### **Objective:**

Behavioral health is viewed as a critical and growing issue with a need for more resources and collective action to make change. Assessment participants view mental health as the highest priority issue in the community. Stress, anxiety, and depression were mentioned as particularly prevalent, and these issues were often described as leading to substance use as a means of self-medication. Economic stress on adults and academic and social pressures on youth have taxed individuals and the mental health system. Access to and use of mental health and subspecialty providers and services is limited by multiple factors, including stigma, health insurance, and fragmentation of services.

#### **Strategies:**

- Newton-Wellesley Hospital (NWH) will address the need for better pediatric mental health access through an ongoing relationship between our Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the school systems in our Primary Service Area (PSA).
  - Development of professional relationships between the hospital and schools that will include a psychiatrist and a social worker.
  - Professional development for school faculty and staff. Educational sessions for students and parents.
  - Expanded access to the Child/Adolescent Triage Program in the NWH Child/Adolescent Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic.
- Conduct mental wellness education programs to parents in low-income housing units.

### 2. Elder Care

**Objective:** The need for support for our elder community on issues regarding safety and adequate access to care has been identified as a need among our service area. There are also concerns identified with respect to the support provided to those caring for the elderly in the community and the need for support mechanisms to adequately address caregiver needs.

#### **Strategies:**

- Provide educational programming for seniors on the topic of chronic disease management, medication management, home safety, nutrition and other subjects.
- Provide educational programming for caregivers of seniors focused on tools for caregivers.
- Provide education on the subject of elder abuse.

### **3. Waltham, In general**

**Objective:** Waltham is a unique community in the NWH service area. While the other cities and towns in the service area tend to have similar demographic profiles, Waltham looks somewhat different. Waltham has a more affordable cost of living and has more racial and ethnic diversity. However, Waltham residents have lower median household incomes and educational attainment. Waltham also experiences disproportionately worse health outcomes compared to the other cities and towns in the area.

Being identified as the community in need of the greatest number of resources, NWH will seek to engage with the City of Waltham through a variety of high-impact initiatives that will address the aforementioned needs.

#### **Strategies:**

- Create the Waltham Wellness Collaborative in partnership with Healthy Waltham
- Provide screening mammograms for women at the Home Suites Inn
- Provide school physicals for underprivileged youth
- Conduct mental wellness seminars for parents at the Home Suites Inn
- Conduct healthcare related seminars for the homeless
- Provide taxi vouchers to homeless shelters

### **4. Access to Care/Transportation**

#### **Objective:**

During the CHNA process, nearly all interviewees and focus group members discussed the high cost of living including housing costs among the NWH service area. This high cost of living has been responsible for families leaving their communities for more affordable alternatives and has also dictated population trends. The majority of assessment participants also discussed how the lack of reliable local public transportation is a serious barrier to accessing healthcare services for certain segments of the population including youth, the elderly and those with behavioral health issues.

As a result of transportation to and from appointments cited as a major issue for NWH patients, NWH will seek to provide medical transportation and access option for healthcare. NWH realizes, however, that transportation is an issue that needs to be addressed at a higher level and in collaboration with other community participants, those within healthcare, those involved in government and with other agencies.

#### **Strategies:**

- Provide means of transportation for health appointments through a taxi voucher program.

- Provide a data set to all communities in the catchment area, which lists type of Emergency Department visit, by age group. This will allow cities and towns to follow trends, and address them within their individual communities.

## **5. Substance Abuse**

**Objective:** Substance abuse was raised consistently during the CHNA process. Drug use cuts across all socioeconomic and geographic boundaries.

### **Strategies:**

- NWH will provide nasal naloxone kits (Narcan) for use by first responders including police and fire personnel as well as Departments of Health.
- NWH will provide or arrange any necessary/appropriate training for use of the kits.
- Sponsor high school-based on-site event as a means for an alternative social outlet.
- Sponsor on-line alcohol education program for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents.