

Copley Hospital
Community Needs Assessment
2007 Update Report

Copley Hospital has a strong history of engaging the community on a wide variety of issues ranging from community perception studies and community needs assessments to public forums designed to review the hospital's quality performance. Copley was one of only two hospitals in Vermont to publish its own report card prior to the mandates of Act 53. Even today, Copley reports annually on the details of patient satisfaction, quality, safety and financial measures. These detailed reports often exceed the states requirements and the distribution includes every postal address in Lamoille County and beyond.

2005 Public meetings

As in years past, Copley held five community meetings during 2005. The details of those meetings were as follows:

1. Monday, May 16th at 8:00AM – Hilary's, Morrisville
2. Wednesday, May 18th at 7:00PM – Copley Woodlands, Stowe
3. Thursday, May 19th at 6:00PM – Smugglers' Notch Inn, Jeffersonville
4. Monday, May 23rd at 6:00PM – Hardwick Office Memorial Bldg
5. Thursday, May 26th at 6:00PM – Hilary's, Morrisville

In attendance were Copley's President & CEO, Warren K. West and Sr. Dir. of Planning, Development and Medical Group Operations, Peter J. Wright. Light snacks and beverages were made available. The format of the meeting was a PowerPoint presentation on the hospital's report card (both Act53 Hospital Community Report, though not required, and Copley's own report card on quality) as well as a question and answer period regarding needed community health services. While the question and answer section was opened ended, prepared questions included:

1. What improvement activities would you like Copley to work on?
2. What are the most important community health needs that are not being met?
3. How can Copley better meet your needs?

Attendance at these well publicized community meetings was limited. The two meetings that attracted the most participants were at Copley Woodlands in Stowe (eight participants) and in Hardwick (five participants). Both meetings in Morrisville attracted only one participant. No one attended the meeting in Jeffersonville.

In each meeting, community members commented that they felt we should focus our efforts on maintaining our high patient satisfaction and low infection rates. Nearly all felt facility improvements were needed. Community health needs identified were access to mental health and treatment/prevention for chronic illness, specifically obesity, diabetes and cancer.

2006 Public meeting

Due to a transition in leadership, Copley was only able to schedule one community meeting during 2006. It was held on Wednesday, September 20, 2006 at Hilary's in Morrisville (see attached ad). In attendance were Interim CEO Jeffrey G. White and Sr. Dir. of Planning, Development and Medical Group Operations, Peter J. Wright. Light snacks and beverages were made available. The format was a PowerPoint presentation of

Copley's Community Hospital Report and a discussion regarding the healthcare needs of the community. While the forum was established to be an open discussion, the following prepared questions were posed to the attendees.

1. What are the most important community health needs that are not being met?
2. How can Copley better meet your needs?

Despite publicizing the event for more than two weeks in three local newspapers, there were only two additional people in attendance, a registered nurse employed by the hospital and a citizen running for the state legislature.

There were two concerns brought forward by the participants. First, they were both concerned about the "time, cost and effectiveness of these types of public meetings" and felt a collaborative planning meeting between community healthcare providers and agencies would be more productive. The second item was a need to better educate the community about the services that the hospital currently offers. Cancer treatment was specifically mentioned

Other community input

Copley Hospital works diligently to maintain an open door policy to staff, medical staff and the community we serve. We emphasize a culture of openness and transparency. In addition to the identified community meetings above, Copley also seeks regular input on quality, community needs and strategic planning at our annual meeting of our corporate members and other public gatherings through out the year, e.g. our community health fair.

More importantly, Copley has made a strategic decision to maintain a strong level of involvement in the majority of community groups within our service area to allow a constant and less formal connection with community leaders, business owners, legislators, other healthcare providers and local government officials. These include but are not limited to: local civic organizations such as Rotary, Mason's and the Grange, battered women's shelter, chambers of commerce, downtown business groups, sports teams and other athletic groups, select boards, school boards, fire departments, rescue squads and much more.

Lastly, we encourage our staff to be ambassadors of Copley within their home communities. This supports a broader more complex approach to having a two way dialog with people we serve.

2009 Community Needs Assessment

Copley will take a broad approach to the next assessment. While following the letter and spirit of the law, we will try to broaden the scope of the assessment to engage other community healthcare partners and develop the most comprehensive assessment possible. We plan to use raw data analysis, patient surveys, community forums, key constituency focus groups as well as a thorough internal interview analysis with staff, medical staff and trustees.

As in the past, we will use our existing data and resources to try and identify trends in the health status of our community. It will be essential to benchmark that data against state and national statistics. We will also attempt to include a community perception study as we have in previous years. Understanding how the community feels about the hospital often uncovers needs not overtly expressed using other tools.

Progress since the 2004 Assessment

There were a number of priorities identified in the last assessment that were broken into two categories: health improvement and health resources. The overwhelming majority of the priorities identified fell in the resources category. Below is an update on the progress of addressing the priorities.

Health improvement

Reduce anxiety, depression and rates of suicide attempts/death among area residents, including adolescents: We triaged this priority to our physician practice division, Copley Professional Services Group (CPSG). In October of 2005, CPSG separated from Copley Health Systems to become an independent community not-for-profit. Shortly thereafter, CPSG applied for and was awarded Federally Qualified Health Clinic Look-A-Like status (FQHC-LAL). This new federal status has allowed CPSG to focus more on their outreach programs that include the identified needs.

Reduce substance abuse, including heroin, particularly among area youth: As with the goal above, mental health and substance abuse priorities were triaged to CPSG. The Department of Behavioral Medicine has outpatient and outreach programs to address substance abuse for adults and adolescence. Their outreach programs include collaborative efforts with local schools and in-school presence. Copley continues to work collaboratively with CPSG and Lamoille County Mental Health Services on these needs.

Reduce obesity: In late 2004, Copley's Outreach Department developed and introduced a diabetes education program to address the most prevalent chronic disease in our service area, obesity. To date, the program has been very successful establishing key relationships with primary care providers, training programs for both inpatient and outpatient nursing staff and a regular newsletter to all providers.

Health Resources

Maintain and Expand Copley Hospital's 5 Core Services (Primary Care, Women's & Children's Services, Emergency Services, General Surgery and Orthopedics): Copley has made a significant investment in its five core services to date. We supported the application of CPSG to become a FQHC-LAL and continue to support them financially through a community grant. We work closely with primary care providers in our strategic and master facility planning efforts to ensure we can meet their needs into the future. We are currently grouping specific aspects of our diagnostic imaging to form a "women's diagnostic area" which will create a more personal environment. Copley applied for and was awarded a grant to enhance our pediatric emergency transport services. Since the assessment, Copley has strengthened the call diversity for general surgery as well as worked with the general surgery team to enhance and improve access to cancer services within the community. Investments in Orthopedics include a new EMR, digital radiology within the office practice and the recruitment of a third surgeon to handle the current volume and augment the needs of the Newport area.

Maintain Specialty Services: Copley has maintained, and in some areas improved, access to specialists by providing space and staff to providers from other communities. These specialists see patients in this multi-specialty clinic ranging from once a month to several times a week. Providing this opportunity reduces the need for patients to travel upwards of an hour to access specialty care.

Improve Copley Hospital Facilities: Over the past two years, Copley has continued its master facility planning project. A facility needs analysis was developed and approved by the Board of Trustees and Medical Staff. We are currently in the process of prioritizing our needs and identifying our ability to be more efficient with our existing resources.

Improve Technology at Copley Hospital: Within the last year, Copley received a grant to develop a strategic information technology plan. This effort will identify and prioritize our current and future needs including, but not limited to: implementation of a PACS system, full integrated electronic medical record, network capacity, security and remote access. We will continue to plan and put forward an appropriate capital budget to support these projects.

Expand Awareness and Resources for Healthy Lifestyles and Behavior: Copley's Community Outreach team continues to work with three main constituencies on the education of healthy behaviors and life styles to help bend the curve of chronic illness such as obesity, diabetes and cancer. We work directly in local schools, with businesses in our community and our own staff to provide the direct contact needed to both treat those that are ill and help educate our community on how best to stay well. Specific outcomes include, developing healthier menus with school dietary programs, helping businesses lower smoking rates among their employees and working to reduce workers compensation cases within the community, including our own staff.

Conclusion

Each of the above projects is an on-going effort. They require time, energy and resources to ensure they remain effective and are successful. Copley's on-going investment in the community has many dimensions and is supported at every level of the organization. As the organization rounds out its first 75 years of service, the providers, staff and volunteers at Copley are all committed to ensuring that the hospital is here to continue to meet the needs of citizens and visitors we serve for the next 75 years to come. We understand that this means on on-going assessment of community need, perception and satisfaction.