

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A CHNA is a systematic process involving the community to identify and analyze community health needs and assets in order to prioritize those needs, and to plan and act upon significant unmet community health needs. The following is a broad outline of the CHNA process.



1. DEFINE THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES

Defining the community is an important first step, as it serves as the foundation on which both current and subsequent assessment and implementation strategies are developed. The final regulations clarify that the “community served” may not be outside of those areas in which the facilities patient populations reside. The regula-

tions also state that facilities may not define their communities in a way that excludes medically underserved, low-income or minority populations.

Medically underserved populations are defined as those, “at risk of not receiving adequate medical care as a result of being uninsured or underinsured or due to geographic, language, financial or other barriers.” The regulations underscore that the key issue is the community that *needs the care of the hospital, not simply current patients.*

2. ASSESS THE HEALTH NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

Assessing community need involves first collecting data that describes significant unmet needs for health care, but also significant health needs arising from social, environmental and behavioral factors that influence health. The inclusion of social determinants of health are a strong message that the IRS is reinforcing community health, not just access to health care.

The facility may rely on information collected by third parties and when it does, must cite or identify data sources. Facilities may use portions of a public health department CHNA if it is conducted consistent with IRS guidelines and other CHNA requirements are met.

In assessing community health needs, the facility must solicit input and take into account input received from at least the following three sources:

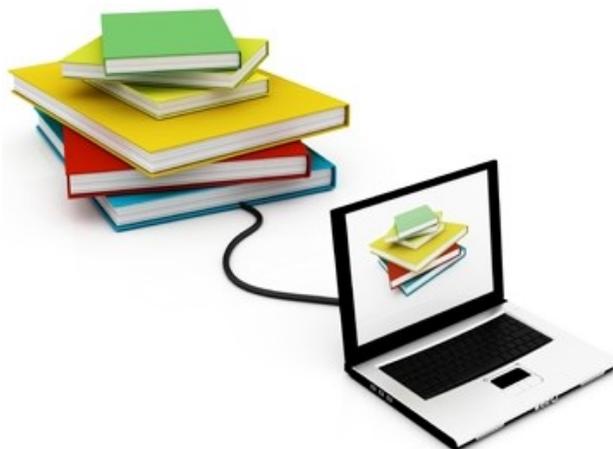
- (1) At least one state, local, tribal, or regional governmental public health department (or equivalent department or agency) with knowledge, information, or expertise relevant to the health needs of the community.
- (2) Members of medically underserved, low-income, and minority populations in the community, or individuals or organizations serving or representing the interests of such populations.
- (3) Written comments received on the facility’s most recently conducted CHNA and most recently adopted implementation strategy.

The regulations allow facilities to use any criteria to prioritize the significant health needs it identifies, including, but not limited to, the burden, scope, severity, or urgency of the health need; the estimated feasibility and effectiveness of possible interventions; the health disparities associated with the need; or the importance the community places on addressing the need.

3. DOCUMENT THE CHNA IN A WRITTEN REPORT THAT IS ADOPTED BY AN AUTHORIZED BODY OF THE HOSPITAL FACILITY

The written report must be approved by the governing board of the facility. The written report must include the following elements which are outlined in the regulations and are included in IRS Form 990, Schedule H.

- A definition of the community served and a description of how it was determined
- Demographics of the community
- Existing health care facilities and resources within the community that are available to respond to the health needs of the community
- How data was obtained
- The significant health needs of the community
- Primary and chronic disease needs and other health issues of uninsured persons, low-income persons and minority groups
- The process for identifying and prioritizing community health needs and services to meet the community health needs
- The process for consulting with persons representing the community's interests
- Information gaps that limit the hospital facility's ability to assess the community's health needs
- Input from persons who represent the broad interests of the community serviced by the facility, including those with special knowledge of or expertise in public health



4. DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

An implementation strategy must be developed, and approved by the governing board, on or before the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of the taxable year in which the facility finished conducting the CHNA. The purpose of the 4 ½ month window is to allow sufficient time for collaboration with other hospitals, providers, public health departments and community organizations.



The implementation plan must include a description of the actions the facility intends to take to address any significant health needs including resources to address the need. This includes interventions designed to prevent illness or to address social, behavioral, and environmental factors that influence community health.



The implementation plan must also include an evaluation of the impact of any actions that were taken since the facility finished conducting its immediately preceding CHNA.

A discussion of any significant health need that was not addressed must be included. This includes an explanation of the reasons for not addressing the health need, including resource constraints or a lack of expertise, even if reasons could be mitigated through collaboration.

5. MAKE THE COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT WIDELY AVAILABLE

The written CHNA report must be conspicuously posted on the facility website. Facilities must provide individuals who ask how to access a copy with the direct website address or URL of the web page on which the CHNA Report is posted. In addition, the website must clearly inform readers how to download the report, the download may not require special equipment or fee and the report must be maintained on the website until two subsequent CHNA reports are made available. Paper copies must be available for public inspection without charge.

Written comments received about the facility's CHNA, including the implementation strategy, must be considered as a part of subsequent CHNAs. A method for soliciting and collecting input is critical.



STEPS TO COMPLETE A COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The estimated timeline for completing a CHNA is usually 4 – 6 months, not including development of the implementation strategy. However, the amount of time required will depend on both the size of the facility and the number of participating organizations. The following is brief overview of the steps involved.

STEP 1: INITIAL PLANNING

- Determine if the CHNA will be developed by a single or multiple organizations
- Engage the governing board, medical staff leadership and executive leadership
- Identify a community advisory committee
- Determine staff committee or participants to assist with CHNA
- Develop a preliminary timeline
- Develop a preliminary budget for assessment and data collection

STEP 2: DETERMINE THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- Determine the purpose of the CHNA
- Determine the scope of the CHNA , including geographic area and priority populations
- Revisit timelines, resources and budget if needed, based on the purpose and scope of the CHNA

STEP 3: IDENTIFY AND COLLECT DATA

- Review and evaluate prior assessments and reports
- Describe community demographics and priority populations
- Describe community health indicators
- Develop a list of existing healthcare facilities and resources
- Develop a comprehensive data collection plan for collecting community input
- Collect community input thru a combination of focus groups, interviews, direct mail, and surveys

STEP 4: ANALYZE THE DATA

- Analyze and interpret data
- Identify disparities – opportunities
- Review causal factors



STEP 5: DEFINE AND VALIDATE PRIORITIES

Identify who will be involved in reviewing data and establishing priorities

Establish criteria for setting priorities

Identify priority health needs

STEP 6: DOCUMENT AND COMMUNICATE RESULTS

Complete written report

Request governing board approval

STEP 7: DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR PRIORITIZED NEEDS

Identify who will be involved in developing the implementation strategy, including other community providers and agencies

Identify interventions (actions), responsible individual(s), timeline for completion, and quantifiable measure(s) of success for each prioritized need

Request governing board approval of the implementation strategy

Post CHNA and Implementation Plan on facility web site

Review and update implementation plan at least annually including feedback from the community

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