

Hospital encourages participation in October 19 health care forum

Cheyenne County Hospital (CCH) will be hosting a public forum on October 19 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Bird City American Legion Hall to review the recent findings from the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and seek input on priorities to address. The evening will be led by Rance Ramsey, hospital administrator, and Betty Johnson, facilitator with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation strategic doing process.

In May and June of this year, 316 people, 14.7 percent of Cheyenne County adults, responded to the community health needs assessment survey. The results indicate the biggest challenges facing local citizens are: attracting and retaining youth / businesses (job creation); retaining / recruiting health care providers; locally available and affordable mental health care services; the high cost of health care and living (including taxes); local access to health care specialists; and lack of confidentiality or trust (including public officials / local government).

The survey indicated younger adults have concerns around anxiety, stress, depression and suicide. Older adults ranked agricultural stressors as a significant factor impacting their overall health. The elderly population placed the need for resources to stay in their own home and support services for those on fixed incomes as a priority.

“The survey data really made it apparent that economic development, quality / consistent health care, privacy / confidentiality, and local mental health services are important to tackle as priorities,” said Rance Ramsey, CCH Administrator, “but not every age group viewed these problems in the same way. It will be important for the public to join us on October 19 to determine what can be done to address these priorities with our limited resources.”

The purpose of this assessment is to identify major community health challenges, gaps in service, and other factors that may contribute to unmet health needs locally. Produced every three years, the CHNA provides critical data gathered from public surveys and focus groups to determine the health needs of Cheyenne County citizens.

The first step in the CHNA process was conducting a citizen survey. The survey responses will help guide action steps in addressing the health needs in Cheyenne County. Now that the survey is complete, community input will be sought through October 19 forum to help prioritize goals, develop objectives, and establish a strategic plan to improve the health outcomes of Cheyenne County.

“The CHNA is an essential part of the hospital leadership teams visioning,” stated Mr. Ramsey. “While it’s a requirement of tax-exempt hospitals to comply with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, we view it as more than just checking a box. It helps us take a look at the services we provide and how they are delivered compared to what our community really needs. It is a chance to make adjustments to ensure health equity in Cheyenne County.”

A copy of the survey results is available upon request prior to the October 19 meeting by emailing info@gnwkcf.org or by contacting Shawna Blanka at 785-332-2104.