

Advancing the Culture of Health: Baltimore City's First collaborative Community Health Needs Assessment

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In March 2010, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was enacted and added many new requirements for hospitals and healthcare organizations. One of the most significant new regulatory requirements which became effective in 2012 was the requirement of completion of a triennial community health needs assessment (CHNA) by all non-profit hospitals in the country. The University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) completed its first CHNA in fiscal year 2012 and then completed its second assessment in fiscal year 2015. Like UMMC, all other hospitals were beginning their needs assessments cycles as well. Within Baltimore City, there are six hospitals or health systems all of whom have completed community health needs assessments individually for two cycles.

Several of the larger Baltimore city hospitals started collaborating in 2015 with the advent of changing reimbursement environment in the State and to discuss population health strategies. Based on this early collaboration, the six Baltimore City hospitals (University of Maryland Medical Center, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Medstar Health, Sinai Hospital, St. Agnes Healthcare, and Mercy Medical Center) committed to partnering together and completing aspects of the needs assessment process together in fiscal year 2018. This approach provides the partner hospitals with additional quantitative and qualitative data as well as providing efficiencies to the overall process. For key community stakeholders, the process was greatly streamlined as well which has led to improved stakeholder relationships. As the community health needs assessment process winds down this fiscal year, there have been clear advantages of working together. While there were some early challenges to identifying a common timeline and operational details, the benefits have far exceeded these challenges. The process for the assessment will be outlined with early challenges and lessons learned. Findings from the community health needs assessment will be provided coupled with early collaborative strategies based on identified health priorities. The University of Maryland Medical Center and its other hospital partners have had a long commitment to working to eliminate health disparities by creating programs that focus on prevention and wellness, which leads to better health outcomes for the communities we serve. With the combined synergies of six hospitals/health systems aligned closely, a stronger, more comprehensive approach to community health improvement will be realized which in turn will more efficiently and effectively address health disparities in Baltimore City.