

2016 AtlantiCare Community Implementation Strategy

Priority Community Health Needs

In 2013 and 2016 AtlantiCare completed a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment. While multiple needs emerged as a result of our data review and community feedback sessions, all could be categorized into the following themes:

- Ineffective care coordination to address chronic conditions
- Unaffordable medical services and prescription therapies
- Insufficient provider access, including specialty and mental health providers
- Deficient community support to encourage and sustain healthy living practices

AtlantiCare Actions to Address Needs and Themes

To address the needs and themes identified in the report, AtlantiCare developed the following operational strategies to be deployed over a two-year period, concluding in 2018. Below please find our updated progress to date.

Care Coordination

Support patients by extending the medical team via care coordinators and/or health coaches to ensure that patients understand and have access to all the services necessary to carry out their treatment plans.

- **Action:** Embed care managers into Primary Care *Plus* practices to assist chronically ill patients with complex medical needs.
- **Action:** Deploy health coaches via three of the six clinics to increase patient education and engage in ongoing dialogue with patients who have chronic medical conditions.
- **Action:** Implement programming (BOOST) to assist with needs prior to and post-discharge as a means to prevent readmissions. These include medication reconciliation, post-discharge phone calls, and scheduling primary care follow-up appointments prior to leaving the hospital.
- **2016 Update:** Currently two health coaches, fourteen nurse care managers, and one social worker have been added to the primary care delivery team. In addition enhanced offerings such as the BOOST program continued to be implemented and support four hospital based clinical areas. These efforts all contribute to better coordinated care, with a special emphasis on patient transitions. Early evidence demonstrates that a prioritization around aiding patients as they meet with various healthcare providers and move from one care setting to the next have resulted in a reduction in admissions and/or readmissions.



Support existing primary care providers with enhanced resources (care managers, telemedicine, specialty consultations, and evidence-based care pathways) to address chronic diseases, substance abuse, and mental health issues within their patient populations.

- **Action:** Embed care managers into Primary Care *Plus* practices to assist chronically ill patients with complex medical needs.

- **Action:** Bring services (e.g., certified diabetes educator, registered dietitian) to the primary care office to support and enhance medical home offerings.
- **Action:** Pilot the integration of behavioral health resources into primary care medical home, including in the clinic setting (i.e., complete wellness center).
- **Action:** Pilot telemedicine consults for specific specialties to further assist primary care practices and minimize unnecessary referrals to specialty care.
- **Action:** Deploy evidence-based care models (obesity, heart failure) via Primary Care *Plus* practices.
- **2016 Update:** To best maximize the limited time our primary care providers have to meet with patients, and to best utilize the many roles that have the ability to enhance the care team, specialized support is essential to ensuring patient outcomes and reducing unnecessary costs. By having positions, such as a Certified Diabetes Educator expand their role, or adding a Health Psychologist to support the primary care office, patients can continue to seek the care necessary to best manage their condition in a setting that is convenient and where they are most comfortable.

Facilitate provider-directed communication around healthy living practices and other evidence-based preventative practices.

- **Action:** Implement print, web-based, and smartphone applications and materials (e.g., Rx for a Healthier You, Diabetes Meet Me @ 7, medication reconciliation cards, and the AtlantiCare app) in the practice setting to support providers with patient education opportunities.
- **Action:** Develop and distribute health promotional communications (e.g., mailers, electronic newsletters, and Well4Life wellness website) to educate patients and the general community on healthy living practices.
- **2016 Update:** Further innovation to dually meet consumer demands and the need to have increased communication around healthful living practices and disease management skills continues to occur. Examples of current innovations include mobile applications such as Meet Me @ 7 for diabetes management, tablet technology for educating and monitoring congestive heart failure patients, interactive Well4Life Videos and Blogs promoting healthy behaviors, and on-line appointment self-scheduling.

Implement electronic medical records in all Primary Care Plus and Specialty Care Plus practices.

- **Action:** Implement electronic medical records (EMRs) in all AtlantiCare-owned Primary Care Plus practices.
- **Action:** Make EMR grants available to affiliate providers to assist in defraying implementation costs, which can be prohibitive to implementation.
- **Action:** Launch patient portal so that patients can have access to their personal medical reports and records, providing the tools they need to become better healthcare advocates.
- **2016 Update:** AtlantiCare has gone live with the patient portal and continues to evaluate how best to leverage this tool to engage patients around the management of their health.

Cost of Care

Continue our ongoing investment in medical and information technologies that facilitate quality and process improvements, reduce unnecessary or redundant procedures, and increase access to care in our community for those who need it most.

- **Action:** Increase the number of providers equipped with EMRs, which allow for ready access to patient files across the health system and reduce the likelihood of redundant procedures.

- **Action:** Expand the triage capabilities of the AtlantiCare Access Center to ensure that patients get to the right place for care the first time. This should be an additional action to centralize the Access Center and other patient registration functions to share resources and to further establish one call center to access all AtlantiCare services.
- **2016 Update:** AtlantiCare continues to support community providers who are affiliated with our organization with the funding necessary to secure EMR capabilities. All AtlantiCare owned practices utilize EMR technology. In addition the Access Center, our call center, in response to community and organizational needs, continues to ramp up capabilities and expand the scope of services provided, including patient triage.

Improve efficiencies to reduce the cost of providing care.

- **Action:** Apply LEAN methodology exercises led by an internal project management office to operational processes to eliminate inefficiencies and excess costs.
- **2016 Update:** LEAN methodologies continue to be applied to clinical and non-clinical processes to eliminate unnecessary efforts and costs.

Provide coordinated quality care to all through our mission, clinic, and other community health services, regardless of ability to pay.

- **Action:** Provide quality care to the under- or uninsured population via services available at one of six clinics housed at the AtlantiCare HealthPlex.
- **Action:** Institute and expand the Enhanced Care Center to improve care and reduce costs through the provision of primary care to under- or uninsured patients with diabetes and hypertension.
- **Action:** Implement multidisciplinary case reviews with a team consisting of key members of the six clinics, the Access Center, the Emergency Department, and others who are charged with recommending system improvements to better meet the needs of our patients.
- **Action:** Launch an ED over-utilizer project, which works to address barriers to patients who readily frequent our Emergency Departments (EDs).
- **Action:** Implement a Community Healthcare Access Program to assist unemployed casino workers maintain health insurance coverage.
- **2016 Update:** Providing care to all continues to be priority for AtlantiCare. Continued discussions take place with internal and community partners to better provide services to those who are underserved through the removal of barriers. In addition, enhanced efforts have been applied to evaluate and enhance services in Atlantic City, one of our communities of greatest need.

Provide education and services to the community to assist with insurance enrollment and obtaining individual or family coverage.

- **Action:** Provide on-site financial counseling at the HealthPlex and hospital campuses to ensure that patients who are uninsured have the support they need to apply for charity care, enroll in Medicaid and/or Medicare, or seek coverage via the health insurance marketplace.
- **Action:** Train and certify members of both the financial counseling team and the Access Center to be certified as health insurance marketplace navigators, providing unbiased counseling and assistance to consumers who are selecting healthcare coverage.
- **Action:** Extend certified marketplace navigator resources out into the community via participation in community events and partnering with other area agencies to enable community individuals to have access to enrollment services and information.
- **2016 Update:** As appropriate, resources continue to be provided to connect individuals to healthcare and insurance coverage. In addition, programming has been established via our Community Healthcare Access Program to assist individuals who have recently lost jobs due

to casino closures in their pursuit of education and skills necessary for a new career where healthcare benefits might be provided.

Access to Care

Expand the AtlantiCare Physician Group and affiliations to include additional primary, specialty, and behavioral providers.

- **Action:** Launch Specialty Care Plus, a high-value network of specialty providers, to advance population health priorities, including reasonable access to an appointment.
- **Action:** Add new physicians and acquire additional practices to expand our primary care offerings.
- **2016 Update:** Providers and practices continue to be added to the AtlantiCare Physical Group enterprise, including specialty practices to ensure that gaps in care are addressed.

Expand access in Primary Care Plus offices.

- **Action:** Expand nurse-triaging capabilities via AtlantiCare Access Center to assist patients in getting the care they need from the onset of their medical journey and to assist in preventing avoidable emergency visits.
- **Action:** Institute advanced access across most Primary Care Plus practices, ensuring that patients receive same-day or next-day sick appointments.
- **Action:** Establish “reasonable access” criteria for providers who participate with population health activities.
- **Action:** Extend office hours to include weekend and evening appointments
- **2016 Update:** Efforts continue to address access as evidenced by the expansion of primary care office hours to include evening and/or weekend hours, and the growth of Urgent Care facilities to treat patients during hours when a primary care provider might not traditionally be available.



Provide the community with opportunities to learn about and participate in healthy behaviors (healthy eating, stress management, smoking cessation, physical activity, breastfeeding).

- **Action:** Make wellness offerings available to employees and their covered family members to address a broad definition of wellness, including financial health and stress management.
- **Action:** Launch Well4Life, a wellness and health promotion website that provides daily blogs on health behaviors.
- **Action:** Provide resources (e.g., lunch-and-learns) to assist area employers in their efforts to influence healthy habits and reduce overall medical costs.
- **Action:** Extend health educators out into the community to engage with groups around health promotion messages.
- **Action:** Continue and support community-based programming such as Healthy Schools, Healthy Children; Growing Green; and the AtlantiCare Behavioral Health Teen Centers, which provide direct education on life skills and healthy behaviors.
- **2016 Update:** Efforts to meet the needs of various populations in our community continue to be refined. Specific programming to partner with area employers and senior groups to meet their unique healthcare needs demonstrate AtlantiCare’s commitment to improving individual behaviors and population health outcomes.

Community Support

Work with community partners to develop shared accountability and actionable improvement plans, with a focus on disease prevention and management of chronic illness.

- **Action:** Share implementation strategies with a diverse group of community leaders to seek input and shared interest.
- **Action:** Design and implement programming aimed at supporting patients via transitions between care facilities. (i.e., BOOST, Enhanced Care Center, Skilled Nursing Plus, embedded care managers).
- **2016 Update:** AtlantiCare continues to seek out ongoing feedback from patients and advisory groups to improve programs and offerings.

Increase outreach to specific populations (students, seniors, etc.) to provide targeted health education and activities that encourage a healthy lifestyle.

- **Action:** Expand offerings of AtlantiCare's Healthy Schools, Healthy Children program to new geographic areas within our regional service area and include behavioral health components to better assist schools in meeting the rising need for mental health education and life skills development.
- **Action:** Offer educational resources (e.g., senior mailer) and presentations (i.e., Senior U) to select populations to promote health and increase participation in healthy behaviors.
- **2016 Update:** Senior programming continues to be offered and will be modified as a result of patient and participant feedback in 2016. These modifications include implementing a new educational curriculum.

Support the construction of healthy communities through strategic programming that addresses both environmental and policy changes internally (benefit design and wellness initiatives) and externally (gardens, employer health solutions).

- **Action:** Work with local employers to determine solutions to rising healthcare costs and establish a culture of wellness within their workplaces.
- **Action:** Construct local community gardens as places where individuals can access healthy foods and engage in physical activity.
- **2016 Update:** Evidenced based policy and environmental changes continue to be evaluated and when appropriate are implemented to ensure the sustainability and impact of AtlantiCare's efforts to address community needs.

The strategies and actions in this report are reflected in AtlantiCare's corporate Strategic Plan. These strategies and others are designed to improve the health and well-being of individuals and population that make up our greater community.

Closing Statement

AtlantiCare remains committed to living out its vision of building healthy communities. It continues to proactively identify and respond to the complex and evolving needs within Atlantic County and its surrounding communities. In 2019 AtlantiCare will complete a new Community Health Needs Assessment to ensure its efforts continue to address the priorities of the population it serves. While AtlantiCare offers a broad range of services to care for patients and promote health and wellness, in some cases it may be unable to solely address every community need identified in the 2013 and 2016 assessment. To bridge this gap, AtlantiCare continues to support and foster relationships with many social services agencies and other community partners that offer assistance to Atlantic County residents. AtlantiCare looks forward to working in partnership with those whom it is privileged to call friends and neighbors to meet the complex needs of this shared community.