Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center
2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)
Implementation Strategy

Introduction

WRMC Hospital Operating Corporation, d.b.a., Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center, a North Carolina non-profit corporation, is a community hospital in North Wilkesboro, NC.As a network facility of Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center has the resources of a preeminent, internationally recognized academic medical center, enabling the facility to offer world class health care close to home. Wilkes Medical Center operates 120 licensed acute care beds and 10 post-acute care beds in a skilled nursing facility. Wilkes Medical Center is fully accredited by The Joint Commission.

Vision

Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center's vision is to be the first and best choice for care.

Mission

Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center's mission is to improve health, elevate hope and advance healing – for all.

Culture Commitments

Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center's culture commitments include the following:

- We create a space where all ***Belong***
- We ***Work as One*** to make great things happen
- We earn ***Trust*** in all we do
- We ***Innovate*** to better the now and create they future
- We drive for ***Excellence –*** always

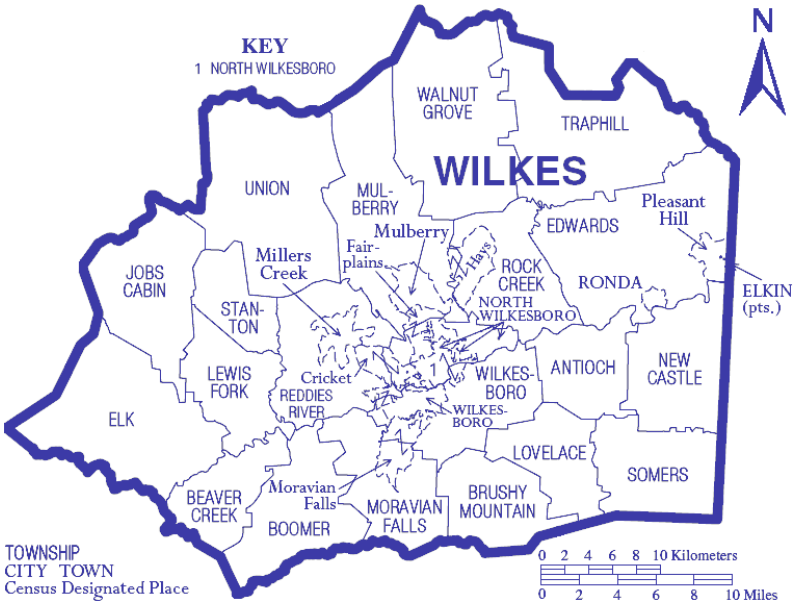
Mission Alignment

As Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center strives to be a leader in population health, we must look beyond the walls of our hospitals and medical offices and address those social, economic, and environmental conditions that contribute to poor health outcomes, shortened lives, and higher health care costs of the patients we serve. This needs assessment is based on a set of best practices for community health assessments with the purpose of identifying regional priority areas to focus on for calendar years 2022–2024. The process was designed to rely on existing public data, directly engage community stakeholders, and collaborate with local public health resources, other health providers, and community partners (such as faith networks and other non-profit organizations) relevant to the social factors underlying patterns of access.

Community Demographics

Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center's community served is defined as Wilkes County, North Carolina. Wilkes County is located in the foothills region of North Carolina. The county has a total area of 757 square miles, and is located on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains, a part of the Appalachian Mountain chain. Neighboring counties include Surry, Yadkin, Ashe, Alleghany, Watauga, Caldwell, Alexander, and Iredell. With 1,160 employer establishments in the county, the most common industries are manufacturing, healthcare, and retail sales.

There are 65,969 residents in Wilkes County, or 87 residents per square mile. Race and ethnic origins are characterized as: 86.7% white, 4.7% Black or African American, 6.9% Hispanic or Latino, and 1.7% other. The population is 50.9% female and 49.1% male. Persons under 18 years of age represent 20.1% of the population while persons 65 years of age and over represent 22.2%. The percentage of persons without health insurance under the age of 65 years is 16.4%. In addition, the median household income in 2019 dollars is $44,107. The percent of persons in poverty is 18.9%. The percent of children living below the poverty level is 29.4%[1]



While Wilkes Medical Center serves a portion of several surrounding counties, the majority of inpatient admissions and emergency department visits are provided to Wilkes County residents.

[1] U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Wilkes County, North Carolina

The primary service area with zip codes is comprised of: Hays (28635), Millers Creek (28651), Moravian Falls (28654), North Wilkesboro (28659), and Wilkesboro (28697). The secondary service area is comprised of: Boomer (28606), Ferguson (28624), Purlear (28665), Roaring River (28669), and Taylorsville (28681) in Alexander County.

2022-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment

During 2021, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center, in partnership with Wilkes Health and The Health Foundation, Inc., conducted a Community Health Needs Assessment ("CHNA") for the years 2022-2024 to identify the health needs of Wilkes County. The CHNA process involved the collection of primary data from community surveys, conversations, focus groups, and interviews. In addition, secondary data sources were examined that included state level data (e.g., North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, Healthy North Carolina 2030), county level data (e.g., State of the County Health (SOTCH) Reports from health departments), and community level data (e.g., neighborhood initiatives, community organizations). The process to identify priority health needs and to locate primary and secondary data sources involved close collaboration with partners, particularly the Wilkes County Health Department. In determining our criteria for priority health needs selection, the highest weights were placed on the health disparities associated with the need, the burden of the health need, the feasibility of possible interventions, and the importance the community placed on addressing the need. Upon completion of the CHNA, results of the assessment were shared with leaders at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center and other key contributors for input. In addition, six videos are currently available on the Wilkes Health website (www.wilkescounty.net/Health-Department) presenting the following information to the public and public health stakeholders: an Overview of the report, Health Status, Healthcare Resources, Economic Stability, Education Access and Quality, and Social/Environmental/Community Context.

The following CHNA priorities were identified and approved by the Board of Directors on December 13, 2021:

1. **Access to Care**: with a focus on special populations who do not have access to consistent and reliable **transportation, rural access to urgent cardiac care, maternal health services, access to affordable medications, and addressing the healthcare worker shortage.**
2. **Social Impact and Injustice**: with a focus on addressing **poverty** especially the issue of community members not being able to **afford transportation, access to free and low cost healthcare, access to food,** and **public health safety measures-infant and maternal safety**.
3. **Chronic and Emerging Diseases**: with a focus on supporting chronic disease management related to **Cancer, Stroke,** and **Heart Disease**

The 2022-2024 CHNA process found that social impact and injustice was identified by the community as a significant health priority that greatly influences the health of the community particularly its most vulnerable and underserved populations and individuals. The distribution of behaviors and health outcomes consistently follows social and economic patterns. Furthermore,

some barriers to accessing care continue to prevent current programs and initiatives from reaching the populations in need. These challenges present important opportunities for the future. As we move forward as an integrated community of healthcare, social services and community leadership, we can leverage community assets and access to resources from the Atrium Health enterprise to improve the health of residents in Wilkes County.

Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center acknowledges the importance of all health needs in the Wilkes County community even though the hospital's resources and assets were best aligned to focus on the prioritized health needs addressed above. Community needs that were identified but not prioritized for the 2022-2024 CHNA are as follows:

1. Access to healthcare for the elderly and child populations
2. Lack of physical activity and affordable recreational facility options
3. Access to career and job centers

Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center leaders will continue to partner with community and non-profit organizations, including public health, other governmental agencies, and the broader community to help address these health needs. A comprehensive list of available resources to meet these needs

2022-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategy Development

This accompanying document to Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center's 2022-2024 CHNA outlines strategies designed to improve health through hospital programming and support for external community initiatives led by community coalitions and organizations. The list of outlined strategies will describe planned actions to address the community health needs that were identified through its CHNA process. In addition, hospital leaders will use this document to communicate the goals, objectives and approaches that the hospital will undertake to address community needs over the next three years, and help the community understand its role in addressing those needs.

The current set of strategies and related resources were identified by reviewing the Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Social Impact Inventory, the hospital's Program Inventory, the previous strategies outlined in the 2020-2022 CHNA Implementation Strategy, and other sources of information identified by the CHNA team leads. Additional existing programming and resources were identified through conversations with hospital and community leaders who have leadership responsibilities in addressing the priority health needs in Wilkes County. These existing strategies were evaluated to determine if the hospital could build upon community assets, refocus the existing program to meet prioritized health needs, and reallocate internal resources for the strategies.

After identifying existing strategies & programming that would continue to meet the priority needs of the current CHNA cycle, attention then focused on identifying new strategies that would allow the hospital to:

1. be consistent with the hospital's organizational strengths and community capabilities

2. assess availability of hospital and/or community resources to carry out the strategy
3. achieve short-term and long-term results
4. identify barriers that might exist
5. create partnerships and generate community support
6. efficiently leverage community health funding available to the hospital
7. effectively align strategic initiatives that were unable to be completed from the 2019 CHNA due to the pandemic

In developing new strategies, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center initially reflected on how it might effectively lead, compared to being a supportive partner for other organizations designed to achieve collective impact. Additionally, the three levels of prevention were considered during the development process: 1) Primary prevention – preventing disease from occurring, 2) Secondary prevention – finding and treating the disease early, and 3) Tertiary prevention – targeting people with symptoms and making them healthy again. Multiple factors were considered that impact health, including individual behavior, community/social supports, and government health policies. Finally, the following evidence-based interventions were investigated:

- Community Health Improvement Navigator, CDC (http://www.cdc.gov/chinav/database/index.html)
- Evidence-based Practice Centers, AHRQ (http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/epc/)
- Guide to Community Preventive Services, CDC (www.thecommunityguide.org)
- The Cochrane Collaboration (http://www.cochrane.org/)
- County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (www.countyhealthrankings.org/)
- Healthy People interventions and resources (www.healthypeople.gov)
- Healthy North Carolina 2030: https://nciom.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/HNC-REPORT-FINAL-Spread2.pdf
- Healthy Communities Institute (www.healthycommunitiesinstitute.com)
- National Resource for Evidence-based Programs and Practices, SAMHSA, US DHHS (www.nrepp.samhsa.gov)

2022-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategy Action Plan

HEALTH NEED: ACCESS TO CARE			
Goal	**Strategies**	**Metrics**	**Potential Partners or External Organizations**
Improve access to care with a focus on special populations who do not have access to consistent and reliable transportation, drug use and drug prevention education,	**Strategy 1**: Support tele-health initiative to improve access to cardiac care by supporting the Wake E-VICTORS (Enhancing Rural Health via Cardiovascular	• Number of program participants (patients) • ED Volume (reduction in visits for primary health	• Wake Forest Department of Emergency Medicine • Wilkes EMS • Wilkes County Health Department

mental health services, and access to affordable care.	Telehealth for Rural Patients) program	department/FQHC pts)	
	Strategy 2: Increase locations/access for Women's services to improve access through shared Family Medicine/OB positions	• Number of Family Medicine (FM) provider office visits • Number of FM live births (expected to increase)	• Wake Forest Department of Family Medicine • Private primary care providers in Wilkes County
	Strategy 3: Support Discharge Prescription Service (DPS) at no cost for qualified patients, to include co-prescribing of naloxone with opioids (through Care Connection Pharmacy)	• Number of DPS encounters • Number of naloxone doses provided	• Care Connections • Duke Endowment • The Health Foundation • Wilkes County recovery agencies
	Strategy 4: Improve access to care by supporting Wilkes County Schools Health Sciences senior students (fund out of pocket costs for Nursing Assistant [NA] certification)	• Number of students funded • Number of NAs graduated and in the workforce • Number of Apprentices hired at WMC	• Wilkes County Schools

HEALTH NEED: SOCIAL IMPACT AND INJUSTICE			
Goal	**Strategies**	**Metrics**	**Potential Partners or External Organizations**
Address social impact and injustice with a focus on addressing poverty; especially the issue of community members not being able to afford necessities including health care	**Strategy 1**: Provision of medical and other transportation services to underserved patients	• Number of transports provided • Cost of program	• Surge Transportation Services • Chaplaincy and FaithHealth
	Strategy 2: Support Foothills Free Clinic to increase hours of clinic access	• Number of employee volunteers • Funding amounts	• Foothills Free Clinic

and safe and healthy housing			• Wilkes County Health Department
	Strategy 3: Car Seat provision and education	• Number of car seat clinics/fairs provided (goal = 2/year) • Number of car seats provided	• Wilkes County Health Department • Wilkes County Sheriff's Department
	Strategy 4: Support Samaritan's Kitchen food pantry	• Funding amount provided by year/CHNA period • Number of employee volunteers • Number of employee monetary donations	• Samaritan's Kitchen • Wilkes County Health Department
	Strategy 5: Conduct smoking cessation classes at no charge to the public, with emphasis on smoking in pregnancy	• Number of clinics/year (goal=2/year) • Number of participants in programs	• Wilkes County Health Department • Care Connections Pharmacy • The Duke Endowment

HEALTH NEED: CHRONIC AND EMERGING DISEASES			
Goal	**Strategies**	**Metrics**	**Potential Partners or External Organizations**
Address chronic and emerging diseases with a focus on supporting chronic disease management related to cancer and heart disease	**Strategy 1**: Re-engage efforts for Primary Stroke Center and Chest Pain Center designations	• Engage Heart/Stroke coordinator • Successful designations within 3 years	• American Heart Association • The Joint Commission
	Strategy 2: Conduct heart and stroke public education (*continuation from prior CHNA period)	• Number of health fairs/clinics conducted (goal=2/year)	• Cities of Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro • MerleFest, Inc. • FaithFest

			• The Health Foundation • Communications, Media, and Marketing
	Strategy 3: Offer mobile mammography screening services at Wilkes County Businesses	• Number of screenings offered per year (goal=2/year)	• Tyson Foods • Louisiana-Pacific • Wilkes County Health Department
	Strategy4: Host community blood drives	• Number of drives per year (goal=4/year)	• American Red Cross

Implementation Strategy Adoption

The Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Wilkes Medical Center Board of Directors approved this Implementation Strategy through a board vote on April 26, 2022.