



Date: 12/31/16

To: Members of the General Public

From: Elaine Swift, Family Health Practice Director; with Dr. Chris Schmidt, CMO;  
and Crystal Mansfield, Director of Rehabilitation, Wellness & CHT

Re: 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan  
ANNUAL UPDATE

## Summary:

On August 21, 2015, the Grace Cottage Board of Trustees adopted a 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan. Copies of the CHNA Report and the three-year Implementation Plan are available online at [www.gracecottage.org](http://www.gracecottage.org).

Following is a reminder of the priorities established as a result of the needs assessment, and an update on the efforts we have made since the plan was adopted.

From a broader CHNA list of priorities, the Grace Cottage Leadership Team selected a smaller number of issues to focus on in order to maximize our ability to meaningfully impact these significant and complex health needs within a reasonable time frame.

Six “High Priority” items were established:

- **Aging**
- **Breast Cancer**
- **Colorectal Cancer**
- **Diabetes**
- **Heart Health – High Blood Pressure/Heart Disease**
- **Mental Health**

For each priority, the fifteen page Implementation Plan summarizes the problem as it exists in our service area, our goals in addressing the problem, intended actions, resources and possible collaboration with other community organizations.

## Update:

The following actions have been taken in Year One of the Three Year Plan.  
(FY16: Oct. 2015 – Sept. 2016.)

## Aging:

### Action #1:

Evidence-based care plan protocols for COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and CHF (congestive heart failure) have been developed and built into our EMR for clinic providers, staff and our Community Health Team to utilize. Future care plans to be considered or developed include those covering diabetes, falls and depression.

### Actions #2 & 3:

We have organized a wellness conference that is specifically targeted to elders/aging adults. The program is scheduled in collaboration with the Windham Foundation, and is to be held at the Grafton Inn in early November, 2016. Topics include: nutrition as we age, financial planning, advance directives, making amends, the psychology of aging, and more.

The Rehabilitation Services department at Grace Cottage is implementing its “Falls Prevention Clinic” in collaboration with other hospital departments. This is a provider referred, insurance reimbursable comprehensive program designed to evaluate folks who are at risk for falling, or who have had a fall recently. Occupational and Physical Therapy, Pharmacy, CHT, Social Services, and mental health services will be available to assist folks with prevention, individualized activities, and counsel to prevent further falls and improve balance and safety in the home.

## Breast Cancer:

Evidence-Based Guidelines: The American Cancer Society recommends that all women 40-45 should have annual mammograms. It is the policy of Grace Cottage Family Health to recommend annual mammography for this patient population.

Actions: The Practice generated a report of all female patients aged 40-45 who have not had a mammogram within the last year. Patients were notified via first-class mail that breast cancer screening is recommended and to contact their primary care provider’s office to arrange this screening. Educational materials were also sent.

## Colorectal Screening:

Evidence-Based Guidelines: The US Preventive Services Task Force recommends that screening for colorectal cancer begin at age 50.

Action: The Practice generated a report of all patients aged 50-55 who have not had an initial screening colonoscopy according to the EMR. Patients were notified via first-class mail stating that a screening colonoscopy is recommended for their age and to contact their primary care provider’s office to arrange this screening. Educational materials were also sent.

## Diabetes:

Evidence-Based Guidelines: The American Diabetes Association recommends that all diabetic patients have a hemoglobin A1c drawn a minimum of twice a year.

Action: A report was generated of all patients with a diagnosis of diabetes. A second report was generated of patients who have had a hemoglobin A1c  $\geq 9$  who have not been seen in the last year. Outreach was conducted by Registered Nurses who called these patients.

## Heart Health/High Blood Pressure:

Evidence-Based Guidelines: US Preventive Services Task Force recommends annual screening for hypertension in adults age 40 and older.

Action: A report was generated of all patients with a diagnosis of hypertension who have not been seen at GCFH in the past year. Outreach was completed by Registered Nurses who called the patients to encourage a check-up.

## Mental Health:

Evidence-Based Guidelines: The US Preventive Services Task Force recommends screening for depression in the general adult population, including pregnant and postpartum women. Screening should be implemented with adequate systems in place to ensure accurate diagnosis, effective treatment, and appropriate follow-up; however, there is little evidence regarding the optimal timing and interval for screening.

Action: A report was generated of all patients with a problem list that includes depression who have not been seen at GCFH in one year. Outreach was completed by Registered Nurses who called the patients.

Grace Cottage Family Health hired a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner to treat and counsel patients in the provider practice. We also have been actively recruiting to hire another Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner and a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker to join the practice.

## Additional:

Beyond the six high priority items identified, additional Community Health Needs were noted which Grace Cottage Leadership acknowledged as items which need to be addressed.

Items identified as a “Medium Priority” included Alcoholism & Substance Abuse, Cultural Competence, Difficulty Navigating the System, Financial Barriers, Flu vaccinations, Obesity/Overweight/Physical Fitness, Smoking/Tobacco Use.

Health Needs categorized as “Low Priority” were Chronic Pain, Dental Issues, and Transportation.

Again, the level of priority was weighed by several factors including the problem’s alignment with existing strategic plans, community prioritization, Grace Cottage resources and areas of expertise, availability of other resources in the service area, and more.

These issues and others recognized in the 2015 Community Health Needs Assessment Report are problems of long-standing concern to the community and to Grace Cottage. Accordingly, programs are already in place at Grace Cottage and elsewhere to address these significant health needs and barriers and new programs, workshops and collaborations continue to be formed on an on-going basis.

In accordance with a request by the Vermont Department of Health, this annual update has been posted on the Grace Cottage website. Members of the public are invited to inquire about our specific Community Health Needs initiatives by contacting Director of Community Relations Andrea Seaton at [aseaton@gracecottage.org](mailto:aseaton@gracecottage.org) or at 802-365-9109.

###