

# Kittson Memorial Healthcare Center

## Community Health Needs Assessment

September, 2016

*“Caring for family and friends, Kittson Memorial Healthcare Center provides and cooperates with others to ensure area residents have access to services necessary to maintain their health and well-being.”*

Kittson Memorial participated in an area assessment in 2013 in conjunction with 4 public health agencies and their 2 of their hospitals. The northwest corner of Minnesota is unique, in that out of the 5 counties that make up the Quin County Community Health Services, 3 of the 5 county public health agencies are contracted from the counties to the hospitals. Therefore, Kittson County Public Health has been under contract to Kittson Memorial Healthcare Center since December, 1997.

For our 2016 assessment, we are reviewing our Assessment and Implementation Plan of 2013, as well as reviewing the current data for health trends for our county. We also did a selected mailing of “Quality of Life” surveys to a targeted audience throughout the county. The target list of individuals included school superintendents, county social services staff, senior citizen centers around the county, the mayors of all the communities in the county, public health staff and the county administrator. We requested their opinions on important services that they would like to see added to our facility or maintained by our facility.

Kittson Memorial Healthcare Center provides medical services to residents of Kittson County and residents who border Kittson County. Kittson County is designated as a frontier county. In essence, the definition of a frontier means a sparsely populated rural area with a population density of six or fewer people per square mile. Kittson County is also an aging county with a declining population. We have 3 public and 2 private schools in our county. County wide our schools are predicting declining enrollments over the next 5 years. This will impact our declining workforce available for some of our entry level positions in our facility, as well as “growing our own” professional staff that we would like to return and work for us.

Due to our decreasing workforce, our nursing home is now licensed for 60 beds. We placed 10 beds on hold with the Minnesota Department of Human Services in March, 2015. This is a change from our last community assessment in 2013.

In surveying key community members, the dominating theme of expressed needs was the continuation of Kittson Memorial and the health services that the county residents receive from the facility. There were several suggestions for additional services brought forward from the survey including reflexology, day care, weight management, mental health services, detoxification services and surgery.

The community continues to express concerns about the need for pharmacy as our lone pharmacist is looking to retire. Kittson Memorial has reached out to a pharmacy business regarding setting up a tele-pharmacy in our community. Our request was denied as they have a tele-pharmacy located in Karlstad 30 miles to the southeast of Hallock. We currently have 2 pharmacies in the county. We continue to look for a pharmacy service to come into Hallock as we have the larger clinic, hospital and a 60 bed nursing facility in this community.

The community also wants to maintain dental services in the county. Karlstad currently has 3 dentists serving their clinic while Hallock has a part-time dentist. With the nursing home residents in Hallock, continued dental support is very important.

While Minnesota is showing a significant drop in obesity from 2014-2015, accurate statistics for our small county are not readily available. Our data from our community assessment for 2013 showed our three county area (Kittson, Marshall, Pennington) had significant differences in obesity levels with 49.7% being overweight, compared to 36.1% for the state of Minnesota and 10.6% obesity in the three county area compared to 24.2% for the state of Minnesota. Epidemiological research suggests a steady progression from overweight to obesity in the next few years. Therefore, it would be worthwhile for Kittson Memorial to pursue additional weight management education and support.

Kittson Memorial was able to increase mental health services over the past 3 years. An agreement with Riverview in Crookston is bringing a nurse practitioner specializing in children's emotional and developmental issues such as ADHD and ADD to our facility twice a month. This allows parents to make appointments without traveling the 70 miles to Crookston. This has been a great time saver for both the student and the parent. We have also added additional counseling time through the Northwest Mental Health Center (NWMHC), also located in Crookston. In the fall of 2015, we added a counselor a second day a week (we already had a counselor coming one day a week). The initial plan was to have the second counselor come 2 days a month, but within 2 months the second counselor was coming every week. We have recently been approached by NWMHC to add a psychiatric nurse by tele-health once a week. We are pursuing this arrangement to assist patients with medication management and additional mental health services.

In May, 2016, the Kittson Memorial Clinic in Hallock, added a dermatology nurse practitioner once a month. This was not identified as a need during our 2013 community assessment but with our farming occupation in our county and the number of residents who work the majority of their day outside, this was a great addition to our current services.

In reviewing our Implementation Plan of 2013, we have made progress in nearly all areas of our 2013 Implementation Plan.

2016 update:

-Continuation of emergency services, dental, retail pharmacy and optometry services. Conversations have been held with local business men, as well as our local pharmacist regarding pharmacy options for our community. Dental services have been obtained on a part-time basis, but our dentist is thinking about retirement. The current dentist is currently pursuing another dentist for our community. The optometry business has been bought by a larger business in Grand Forks and they have hired a second optometrist to provide vision services. Therefore, this is an ongoing activity for our facility.

-Unmet senior needs: We conducted a Feasibility Study in September, 2015 looking at the demand for skilled nursing home beds and assisted living apartments. Since building our 8 assisted living apartments and opening in 2008, we have had infrequent turnover of tenants. We continue to maintain a 30+ waiting list, however, when an opening does occur, it can take up to 2 months to fill the apartment. Seniors want to be maintained in their homes for as long as possible, even under unsafe conditions. Home care services are always an option and we are considering increasing our home care staff if demand necessitates it. With our aging population, this is an ongoing area of assessment and activity. We will continue to have conversations with our senior population, being sensitive to their needs and requests.

-Nutrition: nutrition and weight management continue to be an area that we need to provide services.

-Alcohol and tobacco usage: With our Minnesota Student Survey results at about the same level as they were 3 years ago, we will continue to provide information and education, supporting the schools and the students. We have had Tobacco Free Communities grant money to utilize, but this grant is ending in October, 2016.

-Cancer and Heart Disease: These are still our leading causes of death in our county. We will continue to provide education and information as well as follow the American Cancer Society's recommendations for screenings and treatments. We have submitted newspaper articles about heart health and cancer. We have also used a bulletin board in a heavy traffic area in the facility to promote healthy messages and information. This is an ongoing area of concern for us.

-Prevention of Motor Vehicle Safety: We continue to promote vehicle safety to our school age students as well as to our general public. Public health has a nurse certified in Car Seat Installation and Safety. She gives free car seats out to families that qualify. Newspaper articles and posters have been put up in area schools and clinics encouraging seat belt use. This is an ongoing area of public information and education for us.

As our population continues to age and travel to nearby communities for the services that they need gets more challenging, we will continue to work hard at securing services here in Hallock as well as to continue supporting the health services in Karlstad for the health of the residents of Kittson County.