

Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers 2010 One Year Community Service Plan Update

This report provides a Community Service Plan Update for St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester, part of Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers (SVCMC). SVCMC filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in April 2010 and St. Vincent's Hospital Manhattan Greenwich Village campus subsequently was closed. As this report was written, SVCMC was in the process of requesting approvals to transfer sponsorship of St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester to Saint Joseph's Medical Center of Yonkers. SVCMC is engaged in the process of receiving approval for sale from the United States Bankruptcy Court and Saint Joseph's Medical Center is in the process of securing the regulatory approvals necessary to complete a sale on or about November 1, 2010.

1. Mission Statement

No changes were made to the Mission Statement.

2. Hospital Service Area

No changes were made in the Primary Hospital Service Area.

3. Participants and Hospital Role

St. Vincent's Westchester was among the hospitals collaborating with the Westchester County Department of Health in 2009 to assess community needs and identify local priorities from the Prevention Agenda and develop a plan to address these priorities. This year, the Westchester Health Department, along with six other counties, received funding from New York State's Healthcare Efficiency and Affordability Law for New Yorkers (HEAL NY 9) to foster healthy communities and explore ways to improve the health care delivery system. As part of this effort, the Health Department hosted focus group sessions with health care partners and community stakeholders to discuss strategies that can increase access to health care, timely prenatal care and chronic disease prevention. St. Vincent's Westchester was among the providers that hosted focus groups. A final report summarizing the input received from the groups is expected to be released this fall.

4. Identification of Public Health Priorities

St. Vincent's Hospital Westchester has been part of the Westchester County Department of Health-led initiatives to Address Westchester County's Select Prevention Priorities:

- Chronic Disease – reducing sodium intake
- Physical Activity/Nutrition – increasing physical activity

5. Update on the Plan of Action

The Plan of Action addresses existing effective hospital strategies to be supplemented with community input and strategic partner support.

1) The Burden of Chronic Disease: Reducing Sodium Intake

- St. Vincent's Westchester continues to participate in the New York State Office of Mental Health's Wellness Self Management Program. The program is based on Illness Management and Recovery, an evidence-based practice for adults with serious mental health problems. The program is a curriculum-based practice that addresses topics such as a recovery, mental health wellness and relapse prevention, emphasizing the connection between a physically healthy lifestyle and mental health. Peer leaders have been recruited to provide an important perspective on wellness self-management.

- In 2010, the hospital's continuing day treatment program continues to host a rotating 8-week program on food and nutrition presented by Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- In addition to ongoing efforts to reduce sodium and fat in the cafeteria's offerings, the hospital's dietary department initiated a six-week education program beginning in March, which is National Nutrition Month, with the theme "Nutrition from the Ground Up - Eat Right" The weekly themes were:

Week 1: The New Food Pyramid

Week 2 - Reading Labels

Week 3 - Portion Control

Week 4 - Salts

Week 5 - Fat & Sugar

Week 6 - Fitness

The program was supported with education posters, visual aids and fliers featuring the topic of the week. A table in the hospital café provided brochures on the week's nutrition topic as well as having several interactive activities encouraging participation with prizes each week. A total of 120 entries were received from staff and patients. The Cafe Menu featured some healthy menu selections to try and offered several wellness recipe cards each week to take home. Dietitians were also available to answer nutrition questions. Since many of the patients in the hospital's ambulatory services attend programs that extend into the afternoon, they are offered complimentary lunch in the cafeteria, so the improved menu options benefit them as well as staff and inpatients.

2) Physical Activity and Nutrition: Increasing Activity

- The curriculum for the Wellness Self Management Program described above includes physical activity as a component of overall wellness. The program emphasizes that exercise can help prevent or improve health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease, as well as easing symptoms of anxiety and depression. In 2010, the Continuing Day Treatment Program partnered with the Rye YMCA to offer exercise classes to clients that include yoga, Zumba and *tai chi*. The program also provides instructional CDs to clients so that they can continue to exercise at home.
- To further support clients in developing more active lifestyles, the Continuing Day Treatment Program in 2008 opened an exercise room for clients that includes cardio and weight training equipment. Since the program's clients have limited access to private gyms or health clubs, the exercise room, staffed by volunteers, is open three to five days a week during the program's lunch period. In 2010, the program is seeking a grant from the hospital's auxiliary board to hire a part-time fitness trainer to provide additional support to the clients' fitness goals. The center is used regularly by clients and it is anticipated that a trainer will increase participation in, and satisfaction with, fitness activities.
- The Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team, which serves seriously mentally ill clients in the Sound Shore community, has developed a fitness group for its clients. While exercise is encouraged to improve health and weight control, ACT clients tend to be inactive and isolative, and will not go to the gym on their own. The program has requested a grant from the hospital's Auxiliary Board for a van to enable the clients to be transported as a group to fitness activities, which will improve their overall health, as well as provide opportunities for social interaction.

- During March 2010, as part of the dietary department's six-week nutrition education program, staff were invited to participate in a four-week walking fitness challenge. Pedometers were purchased and when people registered they received a pedometer with a walking log and a nutrition and fitness guide. Weekly check-ins were encouraged, and participants who walked more than four miles in a week received an entry into a drawing for prizes that included a customized TREK mountain bike, an Apple iPod Touch and a Europa sport watch.
- During the fitness challenge, the dietary department also started a walking club. Maps were created and distributed to help guide staff around the St. Vincent's Westchester campus on a 20-minute walk, or about two miles. Staff did not have to be registered in the fitness challenge to participate in the walking club. A number of staff members participated throughout the day, and many continue walking today.
- The St. Vincent's Westchester Auxiliary also hosted its first annual 5K Walk/Run fund raiser in May 2010. Approximately 200 staff members and community residents participated in the event, and the Auxiliary intends to continue it in future years.
- St. Vincent's also has initiated after-work activities to encourage fitness, such as an in-house basketball league and weekly yoga classes.

6. Dissemination of the Report to the Public

The full SVCMC Community Service Plan was available previously on the system's website, www.svcmc.org, which was taken down in early July due to the closure of St. Vincent's Manhattan. The plan is now available on the new St. Vincent's Westchester website, www.stvincentswestchester.org.

7. Changes (Actual or Potential) Impacting Community Health, Provision of Charity Care, and Access to Services

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8. Financial Aid Program

Patient accounts staff continue to work closely with patients and their families to ensure that they receive full information about the opportunities available to them to reduce fees. The current level of unemployment has increased the number of uninsured patients seeking care. These patients generally are ineligible for Medicaid due to receiving unemployment compensation, and some are unwilling to disclose information necessary to determine eligibility for financial aid, even though in many cases they would be eligible for a lower rate than the sliding scale fee. Other patients are reluctant to provide income documentation for reasons that include fear of revealing their immigration status, fear of identity theft, or view the request as intrusive and a violation of their privacy. Staff continues to focus on education to encourage all patients to take advantage of the financial aid program.