

TMC Health 2021 CHNA Implementation Strategy

The COVID-19 pandemic has required all of us to think and act differently across all spectrums of our lives. This is especially true in health care; we have had to take a different approach to caring for our patients, interacting with families and visitors, and engaging with the community. As a result, many of our planned initiatives that would address concerns from the 2018 CHNA were limited due to the restrictions the pandemic required. Below is an overview of how TMC Health was able to address the identified needs:

Priority Area 1: Behavioral health, including addressing substance abuse and deaths by suicide

As with most cities across the nation, Tucson continues to struggle with how to meet the behavioral health needs of our community. TMC Health has found some unique ways to address the behavior health needs of our patients.

- TMCOne offices are offering more robust behavioral health services for their patients by integrating Concert Health, a tele-behavioral health service, into their practices.
- In an attempt to address the increased incidences of unintentional opioid overdoses, the TMC Emergency Department has started to offer naloxone hydrochloride as a treatment option for patients.
- In the past two years, we have seen an unprecedented level of stress, anxiety and burnout among our own health care workers. Resiliency has been the focus for the TMC Wellness department and resulted in the creation of the Healing the Healer program. We offered staff on-site counseling, a care shop where staff could get essential items that were not readily available in stores, and a variety of pop-up events to allow staff to take a break throughout the day.

TMC understands the value of building coalitions and creating partnerships when addressing the behavioral health needs in our community. In addition to work at the Grant-Craycroft campus, we are proud of the work we have done with CODAC, the Southern Arizona Hospital Association and Palo Verde Behavioral Health:

- The Connie Hillman Family Foundation House provides treatment for mothers recovering from substance abuse. The 16-unit complex provides aftercare treatment, pediatric and maternal care, life-skills training and other services to help women be successful in their recovery, to keep families together and to provide a bridge to independence.
- The Southern Arizona Opioid Consortium provides education and resources to help those struggling with substance abuse to find help and treatment close to home.
- TMC works closely with Palo Verde Behavioral Health, which shares our campus. Palo Verde assists in evaluating patients who present at the TMC Emergency Department to ensure a safe disposition and treatment. Palo Verde also works closely with TMC when needs are identified on the inpatient unit.

Priority Area 2: Obesity and related chronic disease

TMC Health offers comprehensive services to help patients struggling with obesity and related chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

We offer a variety of programs ranging from a supervised weight-loss program for those who need support to surgical options for those who have struggled to lose weight. Additionally, TMC provides comprehensive medical services for those grappling with heart disease, cancer and diabetes:

- TMC remains an accredited Chest Pain Center and performs more cardiac procedures than any other hospital in Southern Arizona, from minimally invasive treatments to traditional open-heart surgery. We have added a diuresis clinic in collaboration with Pima Heart for patients suffering with heart failure to reduce hospitalizations.
- TMC Cardiac Rehabilitation focuses on helping our patients return to an active lifestyle and reduce the risk of future cardiac events through inpatient programs and post-hospital therapy.
- Clinical diabetes educators work closely with adult and pediatric patients in the hospital as well as after discharge to provide education about how to best manage their disease. We have employed additional specialists in endocrinology to help patients who are newly diagnosed or to help those having difficulty managing their conditions. The Centers for Disease Control formally recognized our diabetes prevention program.
- The TMC Bariatric Program is an accredited center through the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery. In addition to medical treatment, it offers education and support both pre- and post-surgery.
- Outpatient nutrition counseling offers weight-loss programs and our registered dietitians are available to provide medical nutrition therapy for chronic disease management. Additionally, TMCOne offers nutrition counseling for pediatric weight loss and diabetic patients, as well as a non-surgical weight-loss program.

Priority Area 3: Access to Services

TMC Health is committed to creating better health in our community by providing care to people where and when they need it most. We have done this by helping individuals obtain health insurance, making a full spectrum of health-related services easier to access, and expanding options for receiving the appropriate level of care. Since our last implementation strategy, we have accomplished:

- TMCOne has expanded the number of primary care offices around the community to make it easier for adults and children to access routine health care needs. We also have added many specialty care providers targeting areas we saw as gaps in service availability in the community.
- We know that members of our community rely on TMC for emergent care and that waiting to be seen can be stressful. To help alleviate some of the waiting and improve access to care in our Emergency Department, we instituted online scheduling through MyChart; we also have changed our processes to create a Zero-Wait Emergency Department.
- For patients with less emergent care needs but still would like to be seen by a provider without waiting for a primary care appointment, we are able to see patients virtually 24/7 with TMC Now, our virtual visit platform, or in one of our two Urgent Care facilities that are open seven days a week 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
- Tucson Collaborative Community Care (TC-3) is a partnership between Tucson Medical Center and the Tucson Fire Department. TC-3 works with the most fragile members of our city and matches them with services they need that they historically access through 911 emergency

services. TC-3 creates pathways to connect vulnerable people to resources and support by uniting with community agencies

- Insurance enrollment: In 2021, we held two in-person events and were able to help six (6) community members.
- TMC is committed to extending services into the community in order to make health care more accessible in medically underserved areas. We have expanded our reach in the southeastern sector of Pima County with more medical services available on our Rincon Campus and the opening of Vail Valley HealthCare.
- We understand that collaborating with other health care providers is essential to meeting the needs of our community. We continue to work closely with Pima County Health Department as well as El Rio Community Health Center to support those most in need of health care.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, TMC not only accepted more patients from the Arizona Surge Line than any other area hospital, we were also the first hospital to offer vaccine clinics for the public.
 - TMC Vaccination Clinics:
 - Administered 296,552 vaccines
 - Utilized 2,700 volunteers
 - Directly provided 322 doses of monoclonal antibodies
 - Assisted with two pop-up clinics in partnership with Pima County Health Department

2021 Community Health Needs Assessment Process

The Pima County Community Health Needs Assessment Steering Committee represents a community-wide partnership between the health department, community health centers, hospitals and community organizations. The steering committee acknowledged the impact and role of areas throughout Southern Arizona but narrowed our focus to the entirety of Pima County only.

The assessment relied on both an analysis of secondary quantitative data, as well as primary, qualitative data from community focus groups, forums and key informant interviews to fully understand, contextualize and prioritize health needs.

TMC Health Implementation Strategy to Address Areas of Health Concerns

The next section describes strategies and resources that TMC Health will rely on to address the areas of greatest health concern identified in our most recent CHNA report. A committee comprised of TMC Health staff and board members, reviewed the findings in the report and came together to build a plan that will help to guide TMC Health's activities towards addressing our community's greatest health needs. As part of our planning process, the committee reflected on criteria such as:

- To what extent can TMC Health's expertise and resource availability impact the need?
- Is the need addressed by other partnering organizations?
- Can we address the need through collaboration and support of other entities within the county?
- What resources are already focused on the need? By TMC Health? By the community?

Through a combination of focus groups, individual meetings and a drafting process, we have identified the following needs that will be the areas of focus for this Community Needs Health Improvement Plan (CHIP):

- Behavioral and Mental Health
- Substance-Use Disorders
- Access to Care

We recognize that social determinants of health — specifically transportation, our built environment and poverty — influence and greatly impact individuals’ beliefs and behaviors around health and health care. As such, when creating programs and plans that support our strategies to address identified needs, we will keep in mind but not address the impact of social determinants of health.

Health Priority 1: Behavioral and Mental Health

Behavioral and mental health refers to emotions, behaviors and biology related to a person’s mental well-being. Throughout the CHNA process, this area was consistently reported as an important issue in our community.

Data shows that in 2018, 13.6% of Pima County adults reported 14 or more days of poor mental health per month, compared to 12.8% and 13% of Arizona and U.S. adults, respectively. In 2018, 16.6% of Medicare beneficiaries in Pima County were treated for depression, compared to 14.9% in Arizona and 18.4% in the U.S. overall.¹

In 2020, Pima County had 192 mental health providers* per 100,000 people, which is nearly 1.4 times the rate in Arizona overall (140 providers per 100,000 population). This is up from 2016, when the rate was 160 providers per 100,000. 7.7% of households in Pima County had at least one person who received mental health care medical services in the past three years.¹

In 2020, Pima County reported 225 deaths by suicide, with a majority (61%) by firearm. Reported suicide deaths decreased 11% from 2019. In 2020, 78% of deaths by suicide occurred among males, and 7% of total suicide deaths occurred among children and adolescents ages 6-19.

Services and resources TMC Health currently provides:

- Inpatient Geropsychiatric Center at Handmaker, a 16-bed center, providing high-quality treatment in a caring and compassionate environment to our community’s senior population.
- Ongoing partnership with Palo Verde Behavioral Health to provide evaluation, treatment and community-placement services to patients in the Emergency Department. This will help patients in need of longer-term treatment to receive care they need more quickly.
- TMC Case Management connects a patient with continued medicine-management needs post-discharge who does not have a provider with a mental health provider in the community
- Behavioral health provider within TMCOne offices
- Use of the Columbia-Suicide Severity rating scale on inpatient units, providing the care team with a tool to assess suicidality in patients in order to put in place appropriate precautions and treatments for patients in acute behavioral health crisis.
- Use of Concert Health in TMCOne offices to better integrate medical care and behavioral health care.

- Primary care providers refer their patients to Concert Health for management of behavioral health needs; if a medication change is recommended, the behavioral health provider places a note in the electronic health record for the primary care provider to process; behavioral health providers have direct access to referred patients' electronic health record to assure continuity of care.
- Use of telemedicine to increase access to behavioral health providers
- With the limited number of mental health providers across the nation, TMC is always looking for the best way to provide services both to our patients and employees. As such, the new Employee Assistance Program provider has increased availability of resources for our staff, thereby improving its utilization.
- Understanding that having an infant in our Newborn Intensive Care Unit can be stressful for parents and family, TMC Case Management routinely assesses their mental health status and provides them with a wide range of resources and support in the community including support groups, individual counseling as well as reflective journaling.
- In our NICU, case managers work collaboratively with CODAC and Arizona Department of Child Safety to provide [treatment and support to families of babies exposed to drugs during pregnancy](#).

Future programming plans:

- TMC is working on creating a behavioral health provider team for TMC (adult and child)
 - To include: a psychiatrist, psychiatric NP for adult and child and licensed social workers
- With the increase in medical patients who also have secondary mental health issues that go unaddressed, Case Management will create a behavioral health resource list to provide to patients on units; we can use our in-house neuro-psychologist to help create this resource list.
- TMC Wellness looking to add an app-based mental health resource for employees and families that includes a variety of services: group sessions, self-paced practices and individual counseling.
- Pediatric inpatient behavioral health needs remain a gap in the community. We continue to work with our community partners to find long-term solutions for our patients.

**Mental health providers include psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, counselors, and advanced practice nurses specializing in mental health care*

Health Priority 2: Substance Use Disorder

Substance-use disorder is the excessive use of alcohol or drugs, including prescription medications or illegal drugs.

Data shows that in 2018, 20.5% of adults reported heavy drinking or binge drinking on at least one occasion in the past 30 days, which was higher than average rates in Arizona overall and nationally. The average percentage of adults who reported heavy drinking in the 30 days prior to the survey or binge drinking on at least one occasion during that period between 2015-2019 was 26.2%, indicating a 25% decrease from the 2010-2014.^{1,3}

The overdose mortality rate in Pima County was 37.8 between 2015-2019.⁴ In 2020, there were 446 overdose deaths in Pima County, signifying a 32% increase from 2019.³ The rate of overdose deaths per 100,000 population in 2020 was over twice the rate in 2011. Male deaths from overdose accounted for

70.9% of all overdose deaths; 3.8% of overdose deaths were among those ages 19 and under. Most (94%) drug overdose deaths were determined to be accidental.³ Opiates were involved in 48% of all overdose deaths in Pima County in 2020. Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine that is often mixed with other illegal drugs with or without the user's knowledge, was the leading drug involved in overdose deaths, accounting for 28% of deaths. See **Table 1**.

Table 1. 2020 overdose deaths

2020 Pima County overdose deaths by top 5 drugs, Office of the Medical Examiner	
Drug	Deaths
Fentanyl	207
Methamphetamine	182
Heroin	78
Cocaine	61
Alcohol	57

Services and resources TMC Health currently provides:

- Tucson Collaborative Community Care's "Leave Behind Narcan program"
 - All Tucson Fire Department stations have been educated on this program
 - TFD responded to 3,000 overdose calls in 2020 with 250 units of Narcan provided
 - When TFD responds to an overdose call, they can leave units on site of Narcan with patient, family or friend.
 - If TFD leaves Narcan, they notify Community Medical Services, which then follows up with the patient to try to get them recovery assistance
- TMC physicians in the Emergency Department and the TMC Integrative Pain Center are able to provide one dose of Narcan to patients who are assessed to be at risk for an opioid overdose. This is in partnership with Pima County, which provides TMC the Narcan kits.
- TMC Opioid Stewardship program to ensure that all our providers are appropriately and effectively prescribing opioid-based medications.
 - This multidisciplinary team created order sets for antepartum patients as well as medical adult inpatients for the induction of methadone and saboxone to help patients with secondary diagnosis of substance-use disorders.
 - Case Management connects patients with community resources for long-term treatment.
 - TMC Pharmacy monitors frequency and dosing for narcotic-based medications prescribed at discharge as well as offering suggestions for alternative pain-relieving medications.

- On our adult medical units, Case Management has developed relationships with HOPE, CODAC, COPE, ARC and La Frontera to place patients ready for medical discharge but with continued needs around substance-use disorder.
- On our maternal and pediatric units:
 - TMC collaborates with other organizations to get patients connected with resources needed after discharge.
 - TMC has a Perinatal Nurse navigator to help mom and baby receive the care they need after discharge; this includes opioid-withdrawal management for baby and medication-assisted treatment for mom.
 - TMC collaborates with the Arizona Department of Child Safety to have a representative on our Mother-Baby Unit to help patients navigate the best solution for their family.
 - TMC has implemented specialty care based on best practice for infants withdrawing from exposure to drugs in the womb. The Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) unit has staff specially trained in caring for this special patient population as well as an environment that is supportive for the infant. Recent research shows that rooming with the mother when possible produces better outcomes for both; TMC has created the Eat, Sleep and Console model in response.

Future Programming Plans:

- Establish a collaborative between TMC and substance-use disorder clinics in the community to establish best practice for treatment across the continuum of care
- TMC would like to collaborate with children's clinics in the community to provide services for mom during a child's visit to the clinic for treatments related to substance-use disorder.

Health Priority 3: Access to Care

Access to care includes primary health care, specialized health care and mental health services.

Primary Care

Seventeen of 23 primary care areas in Pima County are designated health professional shortage areas by the U.S. government and 19 are designated as medically underserved areas by the state of Arizona.⁵

In 2018, the ratio of population to primary care physicians was 1,167:1 in Pima County.⁶ This ratio has decreased from 1,249:1 in 2010. The Drexel Heights PCA has the highest ratio of population to primary care physicians (27,400:1) while Tucson Central has the lowest (121:1). The Picture Rocks PCA does not have a primary care provider.

In Pima County, 10.3% of the total population is medically uninsured, which is lower than Arizona overall.¹ Most people without insurance are adults 19-55 years old; low-income households are more likely to be uninsured. The percentage of uninsured people in Pima County under age 65 has decreased 35% since 2008.

Health Care Usage

In 2019, the rate of hospital discharges per 10,000 persons was 998 in Pima County compared to 926 in Arizona overall.⁷ Diseases of the circulatory system, mental disorders, injury and poisoning, diseases of the digestive system, and heart disease were the diagnoses with the highest rates of hospital discharges.

More than 43% of the population receives some type of public health insurance, such as through Medicare, Medicaid (Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System), Veterans' Health Administration or Indian Health Service (alone or in combination with other insurance).³

In 2018, 73.1% of Pima County adults reported having visited a doctor for a routine checkup within the past year, which is lower than the U.S. rate of adults overall (73.7%).¹

In 2018, 47% of female Medicare enrollees ages 65-74 received an annual mammography screening in Pima County, 7% higher than in Arizona overall. 13% of Native American female Medicare enrollees received the annual screening compared to 49% of White, 43% of Black/African American, 39% of Asian, and 35% of Latina/Hispanic female Medicare enrollees in Pima County.⁶

Services and resources TMC Health currently provides:

- TMC recognizes how important it is to speak with and educate patients in their preferred language. We have a very robust Language Services department focused on aiding staff and physicians with interpretation and translation services. In addition to a staff of interpreters, we have an in-house training program that certifies core staff as language assistants. Additionally, we have selected a new language services vendor, AMN Language Services that has a great variety and number of languages and dialects to meet all our patients' language needs.
- Patients without insurance:
 - Vendor inside TMC helps qualified patients file for AHCCCS
 - Others are referred to our local federally qualified health centers (FQHCs)
- TMC Business Office has several certified application counselors (CAC) to assist community members with Marketplace insurance enrollment
- TMC also holds enrollment events each year during the open enrollment period
- TMCOne:
 - A five-year projection for primary care provider needs for our community estimates a deficit of 220 full-time providers.
 - We will add three adult PCP offices with 15 new providers and one new pediatric office with five new providers in 2022.
 - We are improving provider utilization through innovative scheduling and patient-tracking practices.
 - MyChart video visits went live in March 2022; the video capabilities within the patient portal makes it easier for the patients to use, more secure, and easier for providers to track outcomes of visits directly in a patient's electronic health record.
 - Language: providers have access to CyraCom and interpretive services whenever required; additionally, TMCOne has 31 bilingual providers, including those fluent in Arabic, Hindi, Vietnamese and French.
 - Time to be seen:
 - New patient: 39 days, goal is under 60 days
 - Established patient: 15 days, goal is under 14 days

Future programming plans:

- TMCOne to partner with more virtual-care provider groups to enhance care options and increase availability of providers; concept of virtual hands caring for our patients to create a more robust care experience without overtaxing provider network
- [Brilliant Care](#):
 - Virtual care for chronic disease management
 - Focus is on patients with hypertension and diabetes.
 - Patients followed closely by a nurse, who then coordinates care with their primary care providers, reducing office visits thereby increasing PCPs' availability.
- Cologuard: This is a potential way to eliminate patients having to schedule an appointment with a gastroenterologist, obtain additional lab work and incur more medical bills associated with a colonoscopy. The goal is to increase access to preventive screening by making it available as part of a primary care annual visit.
- TMC is formalizing a collaborative agreement with Select Medical to transition an inpatient medical unit into a long-term care unit, targeting vented patients with longer-term care needs. This will help our patients and their families more easily receive the treatments they need to aid in recovery.
- We are partnering with [Dispatch Health](#) to provide various levels of in-home care to some of our most vulnerable patients. A medical team provides diagnostics, procedures and treatments to patients in their own home making it easier for them to access the care they need.
- TMC Health is growing and changing into a system so that we can better provide care across the community and meet patients' needs where they are.
- As part of TMC Health's growth, we will target the growing area in and around Southeast Tucson with the opening of an ambulatory surgery center in the summer of 2022 and a new hospital in 2023.

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