

**2022**

**Rutherford Regional Health System**

**Implementation Strategy**

**To Address Significant Community Health Needs**

**Rutherford County, North Carolina**

Paper copies of this document may be obtained at Rutherford Regional Health System 288 S. Ridgecrest Street, Rutherfordton, NC 28139 or by phone (828) 286-5000. This document is also available electronically via the hospital website: [www.myrutherfordregional.com](http://www.myrutherfordregional.com).

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## **Overview**

The Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) defines priorities for health improvement, creates a collaborative community environment to engage stakeholders, and an open and transparent process to listen and understand the health needs of the community served by Rutherford Regional Health System (RRH) in Rutherford County, North Carolina. This document is the RRHS Implementation Plan outlining how RRHS plans to address significant health needs in the community.

The CHNA is contained in a separate document.

RRHS's Board of Directors will formally approve and adopt this Implementation Strategy at the April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, Board Meeting.

On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, this implementation report will be made widely available to the community via RRHS's website, [www.myutherfordregional.com](http://www.myutherfordregional.com), and paper copies are available free of charge at the RRHS hospital at 288 S. Ridgecrest Street, Rutherfordton, NC 28139 or by phone (828) 286-5000.

## **Community Health Improvement/ Implementation Plan**

To successfully make our community healthier, it is necessary to have a collaborative venture which brings together all the care providers, citizens, government, schools, churches, not-for-profit organizations and business and industry around an effective plan of action. The community health improvement and implementation plan will be completed in and will be added to this document at this time.

Based on the results of this CHNA, Rutherford Regional Health System (RRHS) has selected four (4) of the identified significant health needs to address.

- 1. Obesity**
- 2. Prevalence of Diabetes**
- 3. Prevalence of Heart Disease**
- 4. Food Insecurity**

RRHS plans to meet the significant health needs by:

## 1. Obesity

- **Strategy**: Hospital to increase access to primary care.
- **Strategy**: Hospital to market heavily via multiple channels of the Rutherford Regional Health weight loss clinic.
- **Strategy**: Host RRHS employee and community Vitality walks and step challenges to encourage and reward active living to the more than 450 employees and their families. This will create excitement and increase exposure in the community overall.
- **Strategy**: Hospital will utilize the cardiac rehab to educate on healthy eating and exercise routine. Hospital will also implement a heart failure clinic and peripheral arterial disease program which will also address healthy eating and exercise habits.
- **Strategy**: Hospital will educate the public via multiple avenues (i.e., community outreach, social media, and phone hold messaging) advocating for healthy eating and exercise routines.

## 2. Prevalence of Diabetes

- **Strategy**: Hospital to increase access to primary care.
- **Strategy**: Hospital to market heavily via multiple channels of the Rutherford Regional Health weight loss clinic.
- **Strategy**: Hospital will educate the public via multiple avenues (i.e., community outreach, social media, and phone hold messaging) related to diabetes and the impact of a healthy lifestyle.
- **Strategy**: Hospital will participate in community outreach events educating and connecting the community to resources related to the prevention and/or treatment of diabetes.

## 3. Prevalence of Heart Disease

- **Strategy**: Hospital to increase access to cardiology and primary care.
- **Strategy**: Hospital will participate in community outreach events educating and connecting the community to resources related to the prevention and/or treatment of heart disease.

- **Strategy:** Hospital will utilize the cardiac rehab to educate on healthy eating and exercise routine. Hospital will also implement a heart failure clinic and peripheral arterial disease program which will also address healthy eating and exercise habits.
- **Strategy:** Hospital will educate the public via multiple avenues (i.e., community outreach, social media, and phone hold messaging) related to heart disease and the impact of a healthy lifestyle.

#### 4. Food Insecurity

- **Strategy:** Hospital will continue to participate in the community garden project named Ruffton Roots. We will extend the current zero-dollar lease from 1 year to 3 years to provide greater yield of crops. The food pantry is available and RRHS employees contribute to this to provide healthy food options for those in need.
  - **Strategy:** Hospital will support in drives to provide food and personal items to a local shelter.
  - **Strategy:** Hospital will provide meals at reduced rates to Rutherford Life Services.
  - **Strategy:** Hospital will hold fundraising events at the hospital with the proceeds collected donated to local shelters.
1. The anticipated impact of these actions is to raise awareness of available resources and increase participation in classes, educational programs, events that promote active living, and to identify opportunities to provide greater resources to the community.
  2. The programs and resources the hospital plans to commit to address the health needs include allocating RRHS clinical professionals at local events that promote healthy living; marketing support for collateral materials to be posted throughout RRHS facilities that connect community members with resources available to them; community relations and PRI support for increased communication with employers and job sites that could benefit from RRHS programs and professionals; and executive level support of initiatives identified by the Rutherford County Community Health Council.
  3. RRHS anticipates working closely on these prioritized health needs with the Rutherford County Community Health Council; the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell Health Department; RHI Legacy Foundation; Rutherford County municipalities; and local organizers and activists

seeking to assist with the creation, maintenance and/or promotion of events and resources that promote healthy living.

Community input was received into the 2022 implementation plan during monthly meetings from the Community Health Council as well as brainstorming sessions throughout the community. Additionally, there will be a link on the RRHS's website to the CHNA and implementation plan.

While the formal implementation plan as not adopted until April 2024, RRHS made progress in addressing the community health issues identified in the Rutherford County CHNA as described in the updates below.

**Update on the 2022 RRHS Community Health Implementation Plan Goals:**

**1) Obesity**

a. Access to Primary Care

**Welcome**

**Michael Couser, DO**  
Family Medicine  
Primary Care Provider

**Rutherford Family Care**  
444 NC-108  
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

**Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine**  
Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine  
Greensburg, PA

**Family Medicine Residency**  
Washington Health System  
Washington, PA

**Bachelor of Science Biochemistry**  
Saint Vincent College  
Latrobe, PA

**Specializes in:**

- General health
- Well visits
- Immunizations
- Men's & women's preventative health
- Family medicine
- Sick visits
- Diabetes & chronic illness
- Osteopathic medicine

**Welcoming new patients**  
Schedule an appointment by calling  
**828.287.7846**

Online Scheduling Available

**RUTHERFORD REGIONAL**  
Physician Practices

\*Primary Care Clinic appointments increased by 17% from 2022-2023

b. Access to RRHS Weight Clinic

i. Weight loss clinic appointments increased by 165% from 2022 to 2023

c. Encourage staff to participate in activities to promote healthy living



d. Education and marketing via multiple avenues

Rutherford Regional Health System  
Published by Sprinklr Prod2 • March 12 at 11:00AM

Embrace a healthier you this National Nutrition Month! Eating healthier doesn't have to be complicated. We're here to support you! Start with these simple steps to help you on your journey to better nutrition.

## Healthy Eating Tips

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build balanced meals with lean proteins and whole grains.</li> <li>• Fill your plate with colorful fruits and vegetables.</li> <li>• Ask for advice from a nutritionist or dietician.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get thirsty. Stay hydrated!</li> <li>• Skip meals. Eat balanced meals throughout the day.</li> <li>• Supersize your meals. Practice portion control.</li> </ul>

## 2) Prevalence of Diabetes

### a. Access to Primary Care



\*Primary Care Clinic visits increased by 17% from 2022 to 2023

### b. Access to RRHS Weight Clinic

i. Weight loss clinic visits increased by 165% from 2022 to 2023

### c. Education and marketing via multiple avenues



### 3) Prevalence of Heart Disease

#### a. Access to Primary Care and Cardiology

**Rutherford Regional Health System**  
Published by Tiffany Fields · February 24, 2023

Sandra Fowler, of #RutherfordtonNC, will celebrate her 57th birthday this March free from chest pains. Fowler wasn't sure she would see any day without these pains, or see that birthday at all, until she received a newly-available #cardiac intervention procedure at her hometown #hospital – a PCI procedure.

PCI, or percutaneous #coronary intervention, is a procedure used to open up a blocked or narrowed artery, helping alleviate chest pains and reduce the risk of a #HeartAtt... See more

\*Cardiology Clinic visits increased by 31% from 2022 to 2023

#### b. Heart Failure Clinic and Peripheral Arterial Disease Program Implementation.

- i. Implemented Heart Failure Clinic in March 2023 and Peripheral Arterial Disease Program in November 2023.

#### c. Education and marketing via multiple avenues

**Rutherford Regional Health System**  
Published by Tony Shepherd · February 28

A critical component to recovery after a major cardiac event, is entering and completing Cardiac Rehab. Our experienced and highly skilled staff will guide you through this difficult time and provide the road back to recovery.

Take it from our very own, Dr. Jason Glover, Rutherford Regional Health System Foot and Ankle Specialist, who experienced a heart attack at 47 years old. His morning started off like most, caring for others in his clinic when he started having symptoms suggestive of a heart attack. He acted quickly to receive care. This February Dr. Glover rang the bell in celebration of his journey and the completion of cardiac rehab!

#americanheartassociation #hearthealth #HeartMonth

**February 2024 Dr. Glover rang the Cardiac Rehab graduation bell!**

"I never thought I would have a heart attack at 47. I knew I had to make tough decisions about improving my lifestyle and health if I wanted to be around for my family. The crew at Cardiac Rehab helped me get back on track to being healthy. There was no need to go anywhere else to get the help I needed. Once enrolled, I realized the Cardiac Rehab program at RRHHS is almost a one-on-one development plan tailored to meet my needs. I found it was easy to get into a biweekly routine and a very low stress process. The team there genuinely cares about your health and helping you find a healthy routine. Eating right and exercise is NEVER fun, but this program is a must!"

-Jason Glover, DO DPM  
Rutherford Regional Foot and Ankle Specialist



**4) Food Insecurity**

- a. Extension of zero-dollar lease from 1 to 3 years for the community garden
  - i. Executed extended lease in March 2024
- b. Food and personal item drive donated to local shelters.
  - i. Drive held annually in 2022 and 2023, with plans to hold Q4 2024.
- c. Fundraising to provide proceeds to community partners to assist with food insecurities.

