



## Community Health Needs Assessment

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2016 PROGRESS REPORT

## **Community Health Priority Need #1:**

### **Need for community-based primary care physicians willing to accept patients with disabilities requiring rehabilitation services.**

Many persons who have brain and spinal injuries have difficulty finding primary care physicians who are willing to accept new and/or returning patients after they have sustained this type of injury. This is usually due to local primary care physicians' inexperience in treating patients with brain and spinal injuries, lack of knowledge of appropriate standards of care and treatment protocols for common secondary complications experienced by these patients, a lack of physical facilities to adequately examine patients, patient behavioral issues related to their injury, and concerns over adequate reimbursement for services provided.

**2016 UPDATE:** Gaylord's policy directs Gaylord Care Managers to set up an appointment with the patients' primary care providers prior to being discharged from the Hospital. There are 11 Care Managers overseeing the patient's post discharge care. The intent of the policy is to ensure continuity of care and certify any existing home health care needs as well as to educate the community physician regarding any ongoing needs of their patients and to provide assistance and education about available resources to meet the specific needs of this population.

- *Increase awareness and understanding of medical issues of patients with brain and spinal injury*

Comprehensive education manuals have been created for Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke and Pulmonary. The manuals are given to all patients, approximately 250 per year. Additionally, SCI patients are given the Christopher Reeve Foundation manual and are directed to the SCI Toolkit from the Model SCI system that is located on Gaylord's website. Below are hyperlinks to the manuals and statistics from Gaylord.org showing the number of times the manuals have been downloaded from the community:

- [SCI Education Manual](#) – 30
- [Pulmonary Education Manual](#) – 49
- [Stroke Education Manual](#) - 34
- [SCI Toolkit](#) – 66

Gaylord also educates the community through its [ThinkFirst program](#). ThinkFirst is a national youth injury prevention program. Gaylord offers free educational programming to Connecticut's K-12 schools and community centers. The goal is to educate our youth on the impact of risky behaviors such as drinking / texting and driving, not wearing a bike helmet, or drug use. The goal is to reduce their chance of accidental death and permanent disability to themselves or others. Each year over 20 schools and 800 students are reached by our efforts.

- *Provide access to standards of care and treatment protocols for common secondary medical complications resulting from brain and spinal cord injury.*

Dr. David Rosenblum, Medical Director, Rehabilitation, helped develop a standard of care tool for Spinal Cord Injury patients called the New England Spinal Cord Injury Toolkit. This project was done as part of Gaylord's membership in the Model SCI system – one of 14 in the country. The SCI Toolkit can be

accessed [here](#). The toolkit is made available to all outpatients in therapy and medical services. Additionally, the Connecticut Chapter of United Spinal has the link to the toolkit on Gaylord.org and it was promoted in their national newsletter.

- *Provide CME opportunities for physicians and midlevel providers to educate about care options, examination techniques*

Gaylord's medical staff has given lectures at area hospitals, including summaries of recent research, and treatment protocols.

- *Develop a physician resource package designed to assist primary care physicians*

New England Spinal Cord Injury Toolkit was developed as part of Gaylord's Model system work and has been distributed. It is available on Gaylord's website and the model system website. Resource and topic sheets are completed.

- *Provide consultations whenever appropriate*

SCI and TBI consultations are conducted at YNHH by David Rosenblum, MD and at Gaylord Hospital/Wallingford campus by the department of Psychiatry medical staff.

## **Community Health Priority Need #2:**

### **Working with area home care agencies, identify the need for specialized home health services to meet the unique needs of persons with brain and spinal cord injuries.**

Many persons with brain and spinal cord injuries need specialized services once discharged, designed to address the unique cognitive, medical and rehabilitation needs associated with these types of injuries. For example, a person with a brain injury may need multiple short cognitive rehabilitation interventions each day lasting for relatively short periods of time in order to maximize improvement in functional independence measures. For individuals with spinal cord injuries, they may require education about the signs and symptoms of UTI, dysrelexia, require periodic skin inspection, and DME education.

**2016 Update:** Bimonthly, the care management department at Gaylord meets with community providers (specifically home health agencies). This an opportunity to identify any gaps in services as well as to educate the provider group about services to meet the needs of specific patient populations. During 2015-2016, presentations were given on brain injury and Spinal Cord Injury rehabilitation. The provider community has also been introduced to the Resource Manuals that are available on the Gaylord website.

Additionally, Gaylord sponsored an Acquired Brain Injury course for Home Care providers.

- *Collaborate with existing home health organizations providing services to discuss the need for and potential for developing specialized home health education of best practices to meet the unique home health needs of persons with brain and spinal cord injuries.*

Outpatient marketing staff meets with Home Care agencies and Skilled Nursing Facilities to educate them on the services and programs at Gaylord and determine needs of their constituency.

- *Present education to existing home health organizations to increase the knowledge base of home healthcare staff and maximize the quality of care and continuity our patients receive within the healthcare system.*

Educational programming is presented to increase the knowledge of home care staff about the unique needs of Gaylord's patient population. Meetings are held with individual home care providers as well as during routine onsite home health provider meetings.

- *Meet with insurance case management professionals to discuss reimbursement for specialized home health services to address the unique needs of persons with brain and spinal cord injuries who may not be ready for intensive post-acute rehabilitation services.*

Gaylord's care management staff meets with home care provider agencies to increase the knowledge of home care staff about the unique needs of Gaylord's patient population and reimbursement requirements.

### **Community Health Priority Need #3:**

#### **Need for community-based programs to provide care-giver education, training and support.**

Gaylord's mission is to assist its patients achieve the highest level of functional independence and return to living in their home. While many patients are able to achieve functional independence, there is a substantial need for community-based programs to provide care-giver education, training and support.

**2016 Update:** Gaylord provides education and support to the care givers during and after inpatient discharge. The care managers and social workers also provide support groups onsite for some disease specific programs. These support groups and programs cover a wide range of issues from hands on care giving to caregiver burn-out, to community resources available to financial counseling.

Gaylord's website was redesigned during 2015-2016 to include more patient and caregiver resources. These are available by program on the website such as:

- Example of [Brain Injury Resources](#)
- Resources listed on the [Medical Library page](#)

Additionally, during 2015-2016, Gaylord published an article on the benefits of Aquatic Therapy which can be viewed [here](#). Gaylord staff has participated in community health fairs and given. Gaylord specialists also presented poster presentations on Ekso and CVA.

- *Provide families with training and education to address ongoing and recurring needs of persons with pulmonary diseases through existing care-giver programs.*

Gaylord provides families with training and education in many settings, including from inpatient and outpatient. Families and patients receive educational materials and onsite education and counseling. Gaylord has designed a comprehensive Pulmonary Handbook that is available to all patients and families and is accessible online through the Gaylord website.

- *Ventilator education and training for ventilator dependent patients, who are going home on a ventilator, and family members and care givers.*

Ventilator education is a joint process between the home ventilator provider and the Gaylord respiratory therapy staff. Patients and their families receive a thorough education on the equipment and the family/care giver spends 24 hours in hospital taking care of their loved one on ventilator to show they are comfortable and have a true understanding of care involved.

- *Education and training on tracheostomy care and suctioning to patients and care givers.*

Education and training starts upon admission by respiratory therapists and RNs and all training is documented in the patient's record.

- *Assessment of patients while inpatient to determine benefit for out-patient pulmonary rehab after discharge, including out-patient pulmonary consult prior to discharge.*

Patient assessment begins immediately during the patient's stay at Gaylord. Once the patient is deemed ready for discharge, the hospitalist or pulmonologist will send a recommendation for pulmonary rehab when appropriate. All appropriate patients will receive a Rehab visit from the Pulmonary Rehabilitation staff while still in the Hospital. The program goals and process is explained to the patient at that time.

- *Facilitate opportunities for networking, communication, and peer support among people with brain and spinal cord injuries and pulmonary diseases, family members and care-givers.*

Gaylord routinely brings spinal cord injured patients and their families together so that patients who have been weaned can provide support and encouragement to those trying to wean from the ventilator. Last year the Patient Experience department created a Peer Mentoring program that brings past patients back to talk to current patients.

- *Ventilator support group led by pulmonologists and clinical psychology*

Ventilator Support Group meets each Thursday when we and is conducted in a group setting or individually.

#### **Community Health Priority Need #4:**

#### **Need for post-discharge support systems for individuals with brain and spinal cord injuries and pulmonary diseases following hospitalization.**

Through its comprehensive discharge process, Gaylord Hospital provides post-discharge client and family planning guidance and education about resources and options available to help

individuals with a catastrophic injury or illness better address the psychosocial, educational, career and medical issues that may arise during the first year after their injury or illness.

**2016 Update:** Gaylord provides to all patients and their care givers information pertinent to their medical and psychosocial needs. We collaborate with community providers and agencies to assist patients following hospitalization. During 2015-2016, Gaylord:

- Re-envisioned the portable health profile. This is a document that captures the patients' medicines and helps them when they go to their own general practitioner or specialist or are even hospitalized again. The tool was created in three forms: business card size record to go in one's wallet or purse; a CD or printout in a two pocket folder.
- Created and implemented a Stroke Tune-up Clinic. This is a checkup with clinical staff (MD, PT, OT and ST) who can measure function and recommend programming to prevent functional decline.
- Created an Acquired Brain Injury family support group. This group is held on the unit with family members and meets weekly. It is a multi-modal program to help family learn to about brain injury and the challenges and needs their loved one will have.

- *Ensure that preventable complications and secondary prevention issues are addressed, including all modifiable risk factors.*

This is part of each patient's discharge plan. Patients and families are educated on preventable complications and risk factors.

- *Ensure individuals with pulmonary disease receive ongoing support and education through monthly Better Breathers Club.*

Better Breathers Club including family education and support is conducted monthly at Gaylord Hospital.