



Benefis Health System Community Health Improvement Plan 2017-2019

A Letter from the CEO of Benefis Health System

Fellow Cascade County Residents,

Benefis Health System (BHS) is pleased to release our plan to support the 2017-2019 Cascade County Community Health Improvement Plan.

Members of the BHS team have been working closely with the Cascade County Community Improvement Coalition steering committee to conduct a new Community Health Needs Assessment and develop the 2017-2019 Cascade County Community Health Improvement Plan.

As the largest private employer in Cascade County and the primary provider of many essential health services in our region, we know we play a vital role in improving community health and take this responsibility to heart.

We are looking forward to continuing our work with our many community partners and the Cascade County Community Improvement Coalition steering committee over the next three years to continue to improve the health of our community.

Sincerely,

John Goodnow
CEO
Benefis Health System

Table of Contents

Introduction and Background	Page 4
About Benefis Health System	Page 5
Summary of BHS Health Improvement Efforts 2014-2016	Page 8
BHS Health Improvement Plan, 2017-2019	Page 21
<i>Priority Area One: Improve Cascade County Residents' Ability to Access Appropriate Health Care</i>	Page 22
<i>Priority Area Two: Reduce Substance Misuse, Including Alcohol, Tobacco and Legal/Illegal Drugs</i>	Page 26
<i>Priority Area Three: Increase the Percentage of Cascade County Residents at a Healthy Weight</i>	Page 28
<i>Priority Area Four: Decrease the Number of Child Abuse and Neglect Cases in Cascade County</i>	Page 30
Conclusion	Page 31

Introduction and Background

Each year organizations in our community work together to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The results of that assessment and other publicly reported data sources are then used to formulate a Cascade County Community Health Improvement Plan. Our community's first Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was released in 2011. Another iteration was released in 2013.

As the primary provider of many essential health services in our community, Benefis Health System formulates a coordinating plan for how we will help our community achieve the goals set forth in each CHIP version.

This document contains a summary of the activities Benefis Health System completed in support of the goals outlined in the 2014-2016 Cascade County Community Health Improvement Plan, which was released in 2013.

In addition to summarizing changes over the last three years, this report outlines our plans to support community health improvement over the next three years.

In 2016, Benefis Health System, Cascade County Health Department and United Way of Cascade County, in conjunction with a variety of community partner organizations, compiled the 2016 Cascade County CHNA Report. From that needs assessment, four priority areas were identified as needs within Cascade County. The first three priority areas were the same areas identified in 2013. One additional area—Child Abuse and Neglect—was added as a focus. These needs were outlined in the 2017-2019 Cascade County Community Health Improvement Plan.

The four areas of focus to improve community health from 2017-2019 are:

- Access to Health Care
- Substance Misuse
- Healthy Weight
- Child Abuse and Neglect

About Benefis Health System

At Benefis Health System, we recognize that the pursuit of better health requires a focus that goes beyond the walls of our hospital, physician offices, and specialty services. That is why we partner and collaborate with our the City-County Health Department, Community Health Care Center, and United Way of Cascade County to understand local health care needs and create a healthier Cascade County in which to live, work and play.



This commitment to good health of our friends and neighbors has been the driving force behind our evolution and transformation as a comprehensive, health system. Benefis Health System came about when two Christian-based hospitals became one. Our founders' believed in providing good care to all in need, and trusted that this would be accomplished.

The Benefis name was derived using Latin root words: "Bene-" meaning good, and "fis-" for faith and trust. It's these same root words that make up such terms as 'beneficial' and 'confidence'. Benefis, in its various forms, has been a trusted provider of care for 125 years. And our name speaks to our commitment: good care one can put faith in.

Guided by a mission to “**provide excellent care for all, healing body, mind, and spirit,**” Benefis is recognized for clinical excellence by leading health ratings organizations and has also been named one of the “150 Great Places to Work in Healthcare” for four consecutive years by *Becker's Hospital Review*.

Conducting a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years has been core to Benefis Health System's community health strategy since 2011. Through collaboration with community partners and the process and steps outlined in the Cascade County Community Health Improvement Plan, diverse information from

community members is acquired pertaining to health, lifestyle behaviors, socioeconomic and policy issues, finances, access to health services, and other health related topics. Benefis staff members have and continue to be actively engaged in the Cascade County CHNA process, including survey development, data analysis, result dissemination, and ongoing community CHIP committee meetings. The CHNA planning, data collection and analysis process, and priority identification process are all done collaboratively as part of the Cascade County Community Health Improvement Coalition.

The 2017-2019 CHIP included at the end of this document summarizes this collaborative approach. Benefis leaders and Board members support the identified priorities by communicating within their respective areas and supporting activities that impact priority areas. The Benefis Community Health Improvement Plan serves to identify the specific goals and objectives that apply to Benefis Health System and identifies the actions and resources Benefis plans to commit.

Benefis Health System is committed to the Community Health Improvement Priority Areas and goals. There are Benefis Health System employees that are members and/or leaders of each of the four Community Health Improvement Priority Area Committees. Specific services and programs that will contribute to the priority area goals are:

- Benefis Hospital on the East and West campuses.
- The Grandview at Benefis Senior Campus, offering skilled nursing, assisted living and memory care assisted living. There is also an extended care/skilled nursing center on the Benefis East Campus for a total of 217 senior care/extended care beds.
- The Benefis Sletten Cancer Institute, a freestanding 54,000-square-foot facility offering comprehensive cancer care.
- Benefis Spectrum Medical, which provides durable medical equipment, hospice care, home health, BMG provider outreach, and “post-acute” care services across the region and state.
- Benefis Peace Hospice of Montana, which provides home hospice care as well as residential hospice care at the 20-bed facility, is operated by Benefis Spectrum Medical.
- Benefis Medical Group, an employed provider group comprised of approximately 250 physicians and advance practice clinicians.
- Benefis’ many outpatient clinics that provide primary care and numerous other specialties to our community.
- The Northcentral Montana Healthcare Alliance (NMHA), first established by Benefis in 2003 (now Northcentral Montana Hospital Alliance since May 1, 2016)

provides support for the critically needed services and programs of frontier healthcare providers, including Critical Access Hospitals. Benefis also operates the REACH Montana Telehealth Network (RMTN), which provides telehealth services across the region and state, such as retinopathy screening to protect the vision of premature babies and cardiology appointments for heart patients in small rural communities throughout the region.

- The Benefis Health System Foundation, which raises more than \$1.5 million each year to help improve and enhance healthcare services in Northcentral Montana. The Benefis Foundation operates two Gift of Life Housing facilities, which provide free accommodations for rural patients undergoing cancer care and for rural families with babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.
- Benefis Native American Programs, established in 2006 to optimally serve Native American patients and their families in a culturally sensitive manner. The program includes a Native American Welcoming Center, Native American patient rounding and smudging. The Benefis Native American Board has representation from tribal leaders of the four Reservations in Northcentral Montana – Blackfeet, Fort Belknap, Rocky Boy's and Fort Peck – as well as the Little Shell Tribe, Indian Health Service hospitals and clinics and tribal colleges.

Benefis Health System

**Summary of Community Health
Improvement Efforts**

2014-2016

Summary of BHS Community Health Improvement Efforts 2014-2016

In 2013, Benefis Health System outlined the following items as key components of its plan to support the 2014-2016 Cascade County Community Health Improvement Plan:

Benefis Health System will continue to work closely with the North Central Montana Healthy Communities Collaborative in the all three health priority areas, specifically:

Health Care Services Access:

- *Recruitment and retention of primary care and specialty providers to meet the needs of North Central Montana*
- *Provision of comprehensive outpatient and inpatient services*
- *Provision of home health services and medical equipment to patients at home*
- *Provision of care for patients and families with mental health and/or substance abuse problems*
- *Access to emergency and urgent care services*

Substance Abuse:

- *Working closely with the Center for Mental Health providing inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation*

Healthy Weight:

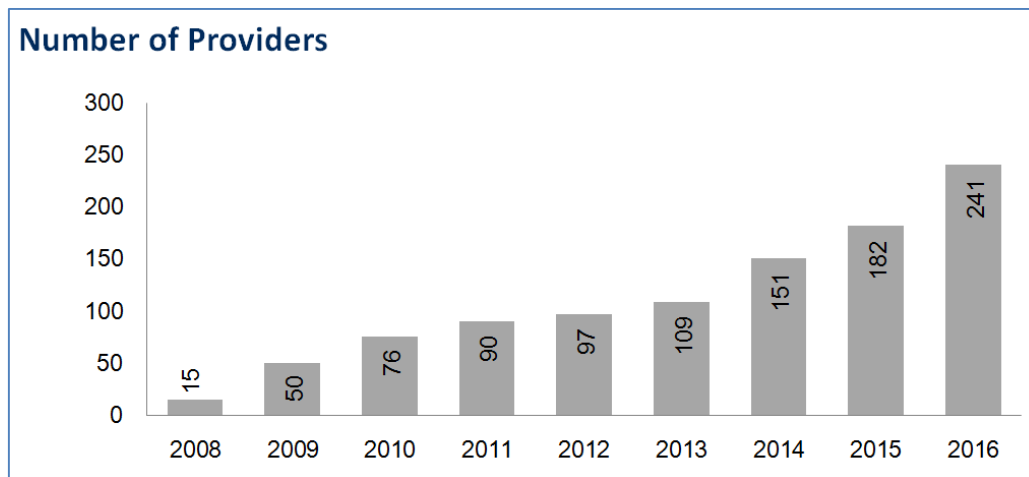
- *Continue the Benefis employee wellness program to promote healthy weight and lifestyle*
- *Provide Benefis Weight Management Program services for the community*

Following is a summary of steps Benefis Health System has taken to support these three priority areas over the last several years.

Health Care Services Access:

#1--Recruitment and retention of primary care and specialty providers to meet the needs of North Central Montana

Recruitment: The number of medical providers employed by Benefis Medical Group has continued to grow rapidly over the last several years. Benefis more than doubled the number of providers it employed from the beginning of 2014 to end of 2016.



The increased number of providers enables Benefis to serve more patients in our community in a timely manner and has also enabled us to provide new services close to home. Providers recruited to Benefis Medical Group over the last three years contribute to increased access in both primary care areas such as Family Medicine, Pediatrics, and Internal Medicine, as well as important specialties such as Pulmonology, Cancer, Heart & Vascular, Emergency Medicine, Urgent Care, Pain Management, and Psychiatry/Psychology, among others.

Retention: In order to retain the providers brought to the community, Benefis has implemented a number of programs, including:

- City-wide call schedules, where possible, to reduce the frequency of evening and weekend call
- Increased use of telehealth technologies to provide additional coverage and support
- 403(b) employer retirement match
- A monthly Provider News publication and regular social and education meetings to keep the group informed of changes and opportunities as we expand

#2--Provision of comprehensive outpatient and inpatient services

Our success in recruiting and retaining new providers is essential to our ability to maintain and increase the outpatient and inpatient services to the community. From 2014-2016, Benefis was able to make many significant improvements to comprehensive outpatient and inpatient services our community has access to through our organization.

Outpatient Services: Benefis Health System is invested in making ongoing improvements to services it's able to offer to our community and the way in which people access them. Below are a few highlights of the improvements made to our outpatient services.

Same-Day Care. Benefis continually monitors patient needs and their ability to access care through Benefis. Over the last three years, Benefis began offering same-day appointments and walk-in care at several locations, including Benefis Walk-In Care and Benefis Walk-In Express. Same-day appointments are also available at Same-Day Orthopedics and our Pediatric practice.

Resource Navigators. A number of resources have been created within the outpatient area to help patients who are having difficulty obtaining appointments or navigating their way through the increasingly complex medical system. These resources include our new Patient Navigator, who is a resource for anyone who is seeking an initial appointment to establish care with our primary care services. We now also have several Nurse Navigators located in multiple specialty practices including Pain Management, Oncology, Heart and Vascular, and Orthopedics who assist patients with care coordination. We also offer our patients access to view their medical records and communicate with their provider office through the use of our online patient portal.

In addition to implementing navigators, we have implemented Health Benefits Advisors within the outpatient setting to serve as a resource for patients with financial concerns. The Health Benefit Advisors are equipped to provide information on our payment policies, charity care policies, and options for payment plans.

Chronic Care Management Program. In March 2016, adult primary care implemented a Chronic Care Management program to help those patients who have been diagnosed with two or more chronic conditions. Since the start of the program 285 patients have been enrolled and are receiving extra support to help manage their conditions outside of their regular scheduled provider visits, through the joint effort of our Chronic Care Management Coordinators and the patient's provider.

Sports Physicals. Benefis collaborates annually with area high schools to offer sports physicals to middle school and high school students. In 2016 alone, 650 sports

physicals were completed. The fees collected for these physicals are retained by the high schools as a fundraiser.

Pediatric Specialty Clinics. To increase access for our pediatric patients and their families, we established space for outreach pediatric specialty clinics. The providers of these services are not permanently located at Benefis, but they are now regularly scheduled to provide care at Benefis on certain days to provide these much needed services to our patients close to home, thus eliminating the need for travel. These specialties include pediatric gastroenterology, cardiology, cleft/craniofacial, genetics, hematology, developmental and behavioral, and endocrinology.

Cancer Care. For the 2014-2016 Community Health Improvement Implementation plan, Benefis Sletten Cancer Institute focused on skin cancer prevention, encouraging healthy weight and nutrition, and patient navigation. During this time frame many outreach events provided an opportunity to educate on proper sun screen and sunblock use, nutrition, and healthy eating. Additionally, Benefis Sletten Cancer Institute developed a navigation process to address barriers found for the high-risk population of head and neck cancer. In 2016 alone, there were 12 radical neck dissections. A multidisciplinary team identified a navigation process for these patients, to include a pathway and collaboration with the care coordination team.

Inpatient Services:

Employed Key Provider Groups. To improve the care patients have access to in the inpatient, hospital setting, Benefis brought a number of provider groups under direct employment by Benefis Medical Group over the last three years. These groups include the Emergency Medicine providers, Anesthesiology, and the Hospitalists, those who specialize in providing care to patients during their stay in the hospital. These changes were made to improve the alignment across the health system to ensure consistency and quality of care for our patients.

Improved Heart Attack Care. During this time, our teams also made significant improvements in our door-to-balloon times, a measure used to track the time from when a patient experiencing a heart attack arrives at the emergency department to the onset of lifesaving care. We are proud to have reduced this key metric to well below the national standard, as this improvement in our processes and collaboration among many teams and systems is critical to providing the best possible outcomes for patients experiencing heart attack. While working on our own processes, Benefis also participated in many media interviews and other communication opportunities to educate our community on the importance of calling 911, even if you live in town, if you think you are experiencing a heart attack or stroke.

Improved Care Coordination. Part of providing comprehensive care is ensuring a smooth transition from the inpatient setting to follow up care in the outpatient setting. Over the last several years, Benefis has invested in improving its care coordination process and communication with patients' primary care providers to ensure patients are set up for success upon discharge.

Inpatient Palliative Care Program. Benefis Spectrum Medical recently implemented an inpatient palliative care program known as HOPE to ensure patients are given all the appropriate treatment choices available for their specific health conditions.

Comprehensive, Quality Care. Benefis is also pleased to have improved a number of key quality metrics used to track the performance of hospitals nationally and earned an overall star rating of 4 out of 5 stars in 2016, an award based on performance data from 2013 through mid-2015. Our overall star rating places us in the top 22 percent of all hospitals in the nation.

Additionally, Benefis earned recognition for its performance in numerous areas of care from 2014-2016 from HealthGrades, the leading online resource for comprehensive information about physicians and hospitals. Benefis' recognition included:

- Five-Star Recipient for Treatment of Heart Failure (2016-2017)
- Healthgrades Pulmonary Care Excellence Award™ (2013-2017)
- Top 5% in the Nation for Overall Pulmonary (2015-2017)
- Five-Star Recipient for Treatment of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (2013-2017)
- Five-Star Recipient for Treatment of Pneumonia (2011-2017)
- Five-Star Recipient for Carotid Surgery (2015-2017)
- Five-Star Recipient for Treatment of Sepsis (2007-2017)
- Five-Star Recipient for Treatment of Respiratory Failure (2007-2017)

These third-party honors demonstrate the quality of care available to our community when needed. Ensuring our community has access to high-quality care is essential to our commitment to providing access to comprehensive care in our community, and we are proud of the dedication and achievements of our employees.

#3--Provision of home health services and medical equipment to patients at home

Benefis Spectrum Medical, a subsidiary of Benefis Health System, provides services, including home health, over a wide swath of Montana. Ensuring each of the communities we serve has access to home health and durable medical equipment is Benefis Spectrum Medical's primary focus as a business.

Since 2014, Benefis Spectrum increased the number and variety of retail healthcare products available in its store to include wellness items, in addition to those items traditionally found in retail durable medical equipment stores. Our retail sales have grown 91% from 2014 to 2016, indicating that more members of our community have the equipment they need to be well and safe in their homes.

The Home Health division of Benefis Spectrum Medical has also grown, with a 44% increase in average daily census from 2014 to 2016.

Benefis Spectrum Medical provides education on home safety (lifeline, durable medical equipment, and occupational therapy home assessments). These educational activities are conducted in the home, through health fairs, and by request for assisted living facilities. Through our foot clinics, we also educate our diabetic patients on proper care of their feet.

#4--Provision of care for patients and families with mental health and/or substance abuse problems

Mental Health: In 2016, Benefis completed a variety of updates to the facilities that house its behavioral health programs, with the goal of better accommodating patients and better aligning practice patterns with the most current industry standards. First, outpatient psychiatric services were relocated from their previous space on the inpatient behavioral health floor to an independent suite on a different floor, allowing for a dramatic increase in the number of patients seen and for the ability for patients who transition from inpatient to outpatient care to feel a progression in their care when they begin seeking treatment in a new location.

After the relocation of outpatient behavioral health services, upgrades were made to the inpatient unit, better securing the unit as a whole and the individual rooms to accommodate more severe patients in need of crisis stabilization. This change expanded the unit to 19 secure beds.

Finally, Benefis has placed a renewed emphasis on the recruitment of mental health professionals and has begun to utilize psychiatric telemedicine services with hopes to better serve regional facilities in need of consultative behavioral health services.

In addition to those steps taken over the last three years, Benefis also added mental health/addiction counselors to the Emergency Department (ED) to provide coverage 12 hours per day, 7 days a week. The Emergency Department is a key entry point to the health system for those experiencing crisis. These additional resources provide more support to our

Emergency Department employees as they seek to help those experiencing mental health and/or addiction issues.

Substance Abuse: Because mental health and addiction issues are so closely related, those efforts aimed at improving inpatient and outpatient mental health services also serve to support those struggling with substance abuse. See page 18 of this report for more on Benefis' efforts to address substance abuse issues in our community.

#5--Access to emergency and urgent care services

Benefis Walk-In Care, which provides urgent care services, relocated to the Benefis East campus in 2011 and has continued to see more and more patients each year since the move. Annual volumes at Benefis Walk-In Care now rival the volumes seen annually in the Emergency Department, demonstrating awareness of the service and an increased understanding among the community of where to go for which type of care. In addition to continuing to expand hours and providers available at the East Campus Walk-In Care, Benefis also opened a new Walk-In Express location on the Northwest side of Great Falls in January 2016 to expand access to care in the community.

An Emergency Department expansion and remodel has also been a part of Benefis' master facility plans for many years. The current emergency department was built to accommodate roughly 24,000 patients per year. In 2015 and 2016, the Benefis Emergency Department saw more than 35,000 patients. In 2016, detailed planning for the Emergency Department Remodel and Expansion began. Some preliminary construction projects required to be completed before the Emergency Department could expand into new space began towards the end of 2016. The new ED construction will begin in April 2017 and is estimated to be completed in fall 2018.

The following are additional key initiatives Benefis Health System supported between 2014-2016 to improve access to healthcare:

Medicaid Expansion. Benefis supported the expansion of Medicaid in the state of Montana through the Montana HELP Act, which passed in the 2015 state Legislature. This expanded coverage to residents with incomes at or below 138 percent of the federal poverty level, about \$16,000 per year for an individual and \$33,000 for a family of four. Since going into effect on January 1, 2016, more than 71,000 Montanans have gained coverage through Medicaid Expansion, giving them access to more financial assistance to cover their healthcare needs.

Enrollment Assistance & Health Insurance Literacy. The Northcentral Affordable Care Act Assister Coalition is led by Tina Bundtrock, an Enrollment Assister with Benefis Health System. Cascade County now has 11 permanent certified application counselors and 4 navigators, all part of the coalition.

The coalition was started at the beginning of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)/Marketplace open enrollment. In the last four open enrollments, they have held hundreds of open enrollment events to assist people in understanding the marketplace and insurance options available to them, including through Medicaid expansion. These efforts have had an impact—Cascade County has one of the highest insured counties in the State.

Benefis assisters do not just work during open enrollment, they work throughout the year helping with Medicaid enrollments, special enrollment periods (SEPs), appeals, assisting with coverage problems or retirement needs, providing reports to the insurance commissioner's office, and providing community education on topics such as how to utilize their insurance, finding a provider, and help understanding insurance benefits.

Support through the Benefis Health System Foundation. Since 1998, the Benefis Health System Foundation has been improving and enhancing healthcare services for people throughout Northcentral Montana. With the help of our dedicated Board members and caring donors, we make lives better through various programs, projects and funds that serve Benefis Health System patients and community members in many ways.

With our community's help, Benefis Health System will continue to provide state-of-the-art healthcare services for our regional medical center and ensure that all Benefis patients receive the best possible care, regardless of their financial means. Philanthropy helps make Benefis services exceptional. Described below are some of our services that relate directly to a healthy community.

For many years Benefis Health System Foundation has offered a Healthcare Scholarship Program designed to assist with Benefis Health System's recruitment and retention efforts for the purpose of ensuring that compassionate, quality care is extended to all of our patients. Benefis Health System Foundation awarded more than \$162,000 in scholarships in the years 2014 through 2016. The Healthcare Scholarship Program offers a Medical Education Scholarship to eligible students who wish to obtain and/or advance their healthcare education or certification and are willing to sign a Work Commitment Agreement with Benefis.

The Angel Fund is a Benefis Health System Foundation program designed to help Montana families who have babies or children with catastrophic illnesses. Benefis Health System Foundation donors provided \$155,500 to help 230 families travel to obtain care for their children in the years 2014 through 2016. The fund assists these people with a variety of expenses, including travel and lodging costs when treatment for their child requires the family to travel away from home.

Benefis Gift of Life Housing Centers provide free housing to individuals who live outside of Great Falls and are receiving treatment at Benefis Health System for cancer or another illness or who have a child in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Also, a family member can stay at Gift of Life Housing when a loved one is receiving inpatient care at Benefis. In 2014-2016, 832 people had a safe and welcoming place to stay, thanks to many generous donors who support the Gift of Life Housing each year.

Community Education/Events. Benefis Health System committed significant resources to increasing the health literacy of our community with the goal of impacting patient's ability to access timely and appropriate care. These programs have included outreach programs done in collaboration with the Spirit of Women program, as well as educational programs that highlight service lines throughout the organization. We have also sponsored and participated in a number of health screenings, which allow participants access to key biometric results as well as supporting information that helps community members better manage their health. In 2016, Benefis hosted or participated in 69 events that touched a total of almost 26,000 participants.

Substance Abuse:

Abuse of prescription drugs, particularly opioids, has become a growing problem locally and nationally. In effort to combat this epidemic, Benefis created a Primary Care Pain Clinic that uses an innovative, multidisciplinary approach integrating Primary Care, Pain Management, Psychiatry, Genetics, and more to ensure patients experiencing chronic pain are prescribed treatments appropriate for their individual needs. This group of clinicians has also led the implementation of revised CDC guidelines for opioid prescribing to reduce overdependence and the development of opioid addiction.

Benefis also worked to educate the community on the issues surrounding substance abuse and addiction by participating in numerous articles published by the *Great Falls Tribune* in 2016 as a part of the series “Big Addictions Under the Big Sky.” Benefis also participated in the *Great Falls Tribune’s* “Big Addictions Under the Big Sky: Community Forum on Drug Abuse” to help bring awareness to the issue in the community.

Healthy Weight:

Continue the Benefis employee wellness program to promote healthy weight and lifestyle

- Employee Fitness Centers
 - Remodels, shower facilities, new equipment
- Biometrics
- Annual Wellness Events
- Peak Discount for Benefis Employees

As the largest private employer in Cascade County, Benefis was honored to receive the Silver 2014 Worksite Wellness Award from the Montana Worksite Health Promotion Coalition. Benefis maintains a Wellness Committee comprised of a cross-section of employees that helps oversee the employee wellness programs at Benefis. The committee provides helpful tips to employees and also orchestrates numerous wellness challenges including the 8 for 8 Water Challenge, the Fruit & Veggie Challenge, and a Maintain-No-Gain Campaign around the holidays.

Benefis Health System continues to provide a free, annual biometric health screening for all employees. Participation continued to increase each year from 2014-2016. At a standard value of \$550, this screening covers comprehensive lab tests that are essential to every employee’s ability to monitor and manage their overall health and

wellbeing. Employees who are enrolled in our health plan receive a generous employer contribution of up to \$1,250 to their health savings account for participating in the annual biometric screening. In 2016, Benefis contributed nearly one million dollars to employees' health savings accounts.

Benefis also offers employee fitness centers on the East and West Campuses for only a \$5 monthly membership fee. These facilities have received remodels, new equipment and other improvements in the last several years, and employee membership has continued to grow. In 2016, employee gym membership reached 1,000 employees.

Benefis also offers onsite fitness classes, such as Results for Adults and Yoga, as a convenience to employees. In 2016, more than 240 employees took advantage of these convenient opportunities.

Benefis also offers a free Employee Assistance program, which gives employees access to emotional, financial and legal assistance to help ease the stresses of everyday life.

Provide Benefis Weight Management Program services for the community

Benefis Health System offers a number of programs that assist patients in management of lifestyle choices that promote patients achieving and maintaining a healthy weight through fitness and proper nutrition.

Healthy Lifestyles is an outpatient program open to the public for those patients who are identified as diabetic or pre-diabetic. In 2016, this program provided support for 85 participants. The Healthy Lifestyle Program is a 12-month course and costs just \$125 to participate. The fee covers the cost of all course materials and up to three lab tests. Scholarships also are available based on need. The goal of the Healthy Lifestyle Program is to help participants reduce the risk of diabetes by losing weight and then keeping it off by learning healthy eating habits and committing to regular exercise. This program meets more regularly in the beginning when participants need greater support and then slowly tapers off as they build the skills to maintain their progress on their own.

Additional diabetic services include a monthly diabetic support group, as well as a Diabetes Management Clinic. The Diabetes Management Clinic offers an educational, three-part series, which includes three, six-hour classes a month and helps on average 90 people a year.

As part of our continuous quality programs and reporting, all outpatient providers monitor patients' Body Mass Index (BMI) and provide resources for patients regarding physical activity and diet. Our Internal Medicine practice also has a medically supervised weight management program.

Benefis Health System also owns 51% of the Peak Health & Wellness Center in Great Falls, which supports maintaining a healthy weight through its fitness facilities and classes.

Benefis Health System

Community Health Improvement

Priority Area One: Improve Cascade County Residents' Ability to Access Appropriate Health Care

Goal 1: Improve Access to Medical & Urgent Care Services for Cascade County Residents

Goal 2: Improve Access to Dental Services for Cascade County Residents

Goal 3: Improve Behavioral Health Care for Cascade County Residents

Goal 1: Improve Access to Medical & Urgent Care Services for Cascade County Residents

As the largest provider of medical services to Cascade County, Benefis plays a key role in improving access to medical and urgent care services for Cascade County residents. As such, we will outline our plans to improve access by each of the five objectives outlined under this goal in the 2017-2017 Cascade County CHIP.

Objective 1.1: Increase the proportion of persons with health insurance under the age of 65 to 85% by 2020

Benefis Health System will continue to support the implementation of the Montana HELP Act, which expanded Medicaid coverage eligibility to an estimated 70,000 Montanans in 2016.

Benefis will also continue to invest resources in educating the communities we serve on how to enroll for health insurance and access health insurance benefits. As the number of insured residents in our state increases, many find themselves with health insurance for the first time. Understanding how to use your insurance benefits properly is essential to accessing healthcare in the most affordable way possible.

Benefis will also continue to provide Health Benefit Advisors and enrollment assistance to patients utilizing both inpatient and outpatient services at Benefis Health System in order to help people understand their insurance and financial assistance options.

Objective 1.2: Increase CHNA respondents who report having a usual primary care provider to 95% by 2020

Benefis Health System will continue to educate the community on the importance of having a regular, primary care provider managing ones health. Benefis regularly utilizes community events to get people scheduled to see a new primary care provider on the spot and will continue this practice.

As use of Benefis Walk-In Care and Benefis Walk-In Express increases, there is also opportunity to implement education programs and strategies to get more quick care patients established with a primary care provider.

Objective 1.3: Promote Clinical Preventative Services Utilization

As described in previous sections, Benefis will continue to educate the community regarding preventative health services through direct conversations with patients, numerous events, and other community education channels available to Benefis Health System. Benefis will seek to partner with other community organizations to maximize the reach and effectiveness in reaching key groups within the community.

One specific preventative area we will focus on addressing in the coming years is preventative screenings for colon cancer. As identified in the 2016 Cascade County CHNA report, use of blood stool tests for Colon Cancer screening is significantly lower in Cascade County than across Montana. Montana ranks second to last among the 50 states for colorectal cancer screening guidelines in eligible adults. Colon cancer mortality is significantly reduced when screening detects cancer at early stages. National campaigns are underway to increase colon cancer screening rates to 80% of all eligible adults by 2018. The Benefis Sletten Cancer Institute team will seek to increase the number of adults 50+ who are up to date on colorectal cancer screening in 2017 and beyond.

Objective 1.4: Reduce the percentage of CHNA respondents who report delay in obtaining medical care to 25% by 2020.

In 2016, 30.7% of CHNA respondents indicated they did not get or delayed getting necessary services at some point in the last three years, listing cost as the primary barrier to accessing healthcare. Benefis will continue to look for new ways to offer excellent quality care to the communities we serve at lower than expected costs. We will also continue to offer a generous charity care program to qualifying patients to alleviate excessive financial hardship. The Benefis Health System Foundation will also continue its fundraising efforts to be able to provide support to those in need long into the future.

As cancer is the number one cause of death in Montana and can be an incredibly financially draining disease, our Benefis Sletten Cancer Institute team will be working to ensure a consistent process for screening all patients for financial assistance eligibility upon diagnosis to remove this barrier to care.

As noted in the 2016 CHNA report, the second most reported reason individuals reported delaying care was not having health insurance. As previously noted in this report, Benefis will help address cost as a barrier to care by continuing to advocate for affordable health insurance options in our state and community. In addition, educating

consumers on how their health insurance plan works can help address some of the concerns around cost, as going to in-network providers versus out-of-network providers can result in significant differences in cost of care. We will also continue to provide help in determining eligibility for various health insurance options and assisting individuals with enrollment in those plans.

2016 CHNA respondents also noted long wait times for an appointment as reasons for delaying obtaining medical care. Benefis will continue its efforts to recruit more physicians to expand capacity in key areas of need for our community.

Benefis conducted a revised Physician Needs Assessment in 2016 as a part of its strategic planning processes. The survey identified areas of current and projected need in our region, which will help Benefis to prioritize its recruitment efforts. The assessment identified a need of 23.5 additional providers in our primary care areas, as well as more than 9.6 neuroscience and behavioral health providers, among numerous other specialist needs. Since the needs assessment was completed in summer 2016, Benefis Medical Group has already recruited five additional primary care providers; one internal medicine physician, two family medicine providers, and two pediatric physicians.

Benefis will also continue to provide Patient Navigators to help patients find the best solution for their need within our expansive system and to participate in community education initiatives to increase understanding of how to efficiently access our healthcare system.

Furthermore, Benefis' remodel and expansion of the Benefis Emergency Department will help to increase capacity and efficiency in the department, which will result in reduced wait times and improved flow of patients throughout the system. Construction on the new Emergency Department is slated to start in April 2017, with an estimated completion in fall 2018. The newly remodeled ED will also provide spaces specifically designed for improved care of patients who have experienced sexual assault and those experiencing mental health crises.

Objective 1.5: Ensure that all have access to appropriate medical services

Benefis will continue to manage its resources responsibly to ensure the organization is here to serve the community for many years to come and will continue to explore and invest in bringing new services and technologies to provide access to appropriate medical services close to home.

Goal 2: Improve Access to Dental Services for Cascade County Residents

Benefis does not provide Dental Services as a part of its care continuum but will continue to support the CHIP Access to Healthcare Dental sub-committee's efforts to meet the needs of Cascade County as possible.

Goal 3: Improve Behavioral Health Care for Cascade County Residents

Results of the 2016 CHNA indicated the fourth and fifth top concerns among respondents were related to mental health, specifically depression and anxiety, as well as access to mental healthcare. Critical barriers exist for mental health services including, limited resources, stigma, and cultural misunderstandings. Efforts will focus on eliminating these barriers.

Benefis will continue to be a leader in the effort to improve access to mental health services. Implementation activities, over the next three years will focus on improving behavioral healthcare resources available to the community and community education. Additionally, Benefis is dedicated to continuing to provide mental health and addiction counseling resources to patients in crisis that present to the Emergency Department.

Benefis will also support activities done in partnership with local social service agencies, hospitals, law enforcement, and those with a vested interest in mental health.

In 2017, Benefis will implement a new pilot program that includes more comprehensive use of a mental health screening tool for early intervention for patients with chronic diseases and weak compliance with their medical treatment. This pilot program is made possible by a grant Benefis received.

Research indicates a relationship between depression or other mental health or addiction conditions and chronic disease patients who fail to comply with treatment protocols. The goal of the new pilot program is early intervention and treatment for those citizens who may need intervention to improve their quality of life related to their chronic disease. The plan is to expand the use of this screening program in primary care over the next two years. To facilitate success with the screening program, Benefis will also work to improve provider awareness of the community behavioral health care resources available and how to help patients access them.

Priority Area Two: Reduce Substance Misuse, Including Alcohol, Tobacco and Legal/Illegal Drugs

Goal 1: Reduce the Number of Youth and Adults Misusing Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Substances

Goal 2: Reduce the Percentage of Cascade County Adults (Ages 18-24) that Misuse Substances

Benefis providers will continue to regularly screen their patients for tobacco use at their wellness visits and counsel the patient on tobacco cessation interventions if the patient is identified as a smoker. Our pediatric department will also continue to screen and counsel adolescents on awareness and prevention of drug, alcohol, and other substance abuse.

As found by the most recent Community Health Needs Assessment, there was a significant increase in the percentage of Cascade County residents reporting they smoke cigarettes daily compared to 2012. Tobacco use is a known significant risk factor for multiple cancers. Because tobacco cessation can reduce cancer risk in current users, reducing the number of people who ever use tobacco can reduce the number of tobacco related cancers and deaths.

The Benefis Sletten Cancer Institute will focus its 2017 cancer prevention efforts to address reducing the number of adults using tobacco products and preventing youth use of tobacco products. The Oncology Committee Outreach coordinator will lead a subcommittee to determine the most effective means for addressing this objective during 2017.

Additionally, Benefis will continue to take a leadership role in educating our own employees and providers as well as the community regarding the escalating opioid abuse epidemic. These efforts are to include:

- Mandatory education for all providers who prescribe opioids
- Developing patient and provider education resources on appropriate prescribing

We will also dedicate resources to recruiting more providers and incorporated psychiatrists and licensed addiction counselors into our Pain Management Program to accommodate increasing patient needs in those areas.

Our Pain Management Center is actively involved with Substance Abuse Prevention Alliance of Cascade County. In the 2017 state Legislature, Benefis has also supported

two bills related to substance misuse, including advocating for wider availability of the life-saving drug, Narcan, and the Opioid Prescription Ceiling bill.

Our providers and staff have collaborated with multiple community and state agencies such as GFPD, USDEA, Substance Abuse Prevention Alliance, MTDCI, US Attorney's Office, Big Sky Managed Care, and Alliance for Youth and will continued to do so to help increase community awareness of the opioid addiction epidemic.

Benefis is also seeking grants to expand our efforts to combat these community issues. We recently submitted an application for a grant that seeks to identify opioid abuse in Native American women ages 10-17 and ages 65>. If we successfully obtain this grant, we will begin working with a team of people including representatives from the North West division of the DEA, Division of Criminal Investigation, and the Native American National Celebrity "Supaman" as part of our panelist team. The grant would focus on primary and secondary prevention of opioid abuse.

Priority Area Three: Increase the Percentage of Cascade County Residents at a Healthy Weight

Goal 1: Get Fit Great Falls (GFGF) Will Promote, Support, and Increase Active Lifestyles of Cascade County Residents

Goal 2: GFGF Will Promote, Support, and Increase the Number of People (Infants, Preschoolers, School-Age Children, Adults and Elderly) Eating Nutritious Foods

Goal 3: GFGF Will Remain Sustainable

The percentage of Cascade County residents that are obese is trending upward. It is a significant growing concern as obesity is linked to many health conditions including, but not limited to, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and cancer. Initiatives that promote positive health behaviors, such as proper nutrition and exercise, will empower individuals to attain and maintain healthy lifestyles. Benefis will continue to provide services that teach, encourage, and promote adequate and appropriate nutrition in the community to reduce obesity.

In support of the 2017-2019 CHIP, Benefis will continue to have a Benefis representative on the Get Fit Great Falls committee who will help champion improved physical activity and increase adequate and appropriate nutrition in the community, specifically increased consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Additionally, Benefis will lead and collaborate in various community events and initiatives that teach, encourage, and promote an active lifestyle as well as nutrition in the community to reduce obesity. These opportunities will include:

- Nutrition education events (heart, cancer, and diabetes education – healthy eating to help minimize risk factors of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, overweight and obesity, etc.).
- Annual Safety Rally event, in which bike helmets are provided to all participating children, after being fit to the child, to promote safe participation in an active lifestyle.
- In kind donation to support the Great Falls Public Schools ski bus so that all 4th graders are able to learn an appreciation for a winter sport to encourage lifelong participation.
- Financial support to other programs in the community as possible.

Employee wellness is of the utmost importance and Benefis will have ongoing efforts and initiatives to support the well-being of our employees. Annual biometrics will be

continued along with multiple wellness and fitness challenges. Each campus provides a fitness center and rejuvenation center.

Patient care interactions provide an opportunity to connect and truly be an advocate and resource for our patients. Continued activities to support healthy weight while providing patient care will include all provider practices monitoring BMI and providing resources for patients of whom there is a concern in regards to physical activity and diet. Our internal medicine practice has a medically supervised weight management program and Healthy Lifestyles classes (an outpatient program open to the public for those patients who are identified as diabetic or pre-diabetic) will continue. Additional diabetic services include a monthly diabetic support group, as well as a Diabetes Management Clinic.

As 51% owner of the Peak Health & Wellness Center in Great Falls, Benefis will also support our community's efforts to promote maintaining a healthy weight by adding a second Peak location in the new West Bank development scheduled to open fall 2017. This new location will increase the access to fitness facilities and classes on the Northwest side of Great Falls.

Priority Area Four: Decrease the Number of Child Abuse and Neglect Cases in Cascade County

Goal 1: Reduce the Rate of Child Abuse and Neglect in Cascade County

Goal 2: Ensure the Strategic Prevention Framework Drives Community-based Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Reduction

In light of the significant child abuse and neglect numbers and these being rated as the second most serious health concern by the CHNA respondents, Benefis is prepared to support community efforts to implement new prevention-focused strategies in order to reduce the impact of adverse childhood events on the health and wellbeing of our community.

Benefis will continue to include education aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect for new parents in child birth education classes and pre-admission appointments.

Benefis takes the safety and health of all of our patients very seriously and will continue to follow mandatory reporting guidelines for cases of suspected abuse and neglect.

A Benefis Pediatric Hospitalist also plans to serve as a champion on the CHIP Child Abuse and Neglect committee.

Conclusion

Benefis Health System is committed to supporting continuous health improvement in our community. We will work closely with the Cascade County Community Health Improvement coalition steering committee in all four health priority areas as outlined above.

We look forward to collaborating with our many community partners to truly make a difference in the lives of our community over the next three years and beyond.