

**COLORADO COUNTY
COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENTS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
SEPTEMBER 2026**

Columbus Community Hospital (CCH) is committed to improving the health and quality of life of residents of Colorado County and the surrounding communities it serves. The 2026 Colorado County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) identified several significant health and community needs, including mental health and behavioral health, substance use, chronic disease, maternal and child health, access to affordable healthcare, transportation, food insecurity, housing, public safety, and youth health.

The CHNA was developed through review of community health data and information sessions and focus groups involving hospital executives, nursing staff, community leaders, school representatives, healthcare representatives, and local businesses.

This Implementation Strategy establishes the actions Columbus Community Hospital intends to take to address the significant needs identified in the 2026 CHNA. The strategy is intended to:

- Identify programs and services CCH can directly provide or support;
- Document CCH's annual efforts to address identified community health needs; and
- Provide a framework for evaluating and updating the strategy.

CCH recognizes that many of the identified needs are interconnected and cannot be addressed by the hospital alone. Successful implementation will require collaboration with schools, healthcare providers, governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, churches, law enforcement, social service organizations, and other community partners.

I. MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Mental health was identified as a significant concern in Colorado County. Community stakeholders reported increasing mental health issues, particularly among students, including increased behavioral alerts and crisis interventions.

CCH Implementation & Strategies:

- CCH works with local mental health providers such as TEXANA, to identify gaps in behavioral health services in the emergency room.
- CCH also refers patients to Gratia Plena, who has an office on campus for patients requiring mental health services.
- CCH participated in the 2026 Wellness Council Health Fair held at the Colorado County Court House Square. CCH Physicians were available for the public questions.

II. SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Community stakeholders identified substance abuse and public safety as significant concerns. Specific concerns included increased methamphetamine use and opioid and Xanax misuse among youth. The assessment also identified areas associated with repeated criminal activity, drug trafficking, and violence.

CCH Implementation & Strategies:

- Dr. Troy Millican, CCH Emergency Room Director, administered a prescription for the drug “Naloxone” to the Columbus High School. This will enable the school nurse or any school employee who has completed district-approved training in opioid overdose recognition and naloxone administration.
- CCH has provided educational materials regarding opioid, methamphetamine, prescription medication, and other substance misuse.

III. CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Heart disease and cancer are the leading causes of death identified in Colorado County. Other significant conditions include stroke, Alzheimer's disease, chronic lower respiratory disease, diabetes, and hypertension. The assessment estimates diabetes prevalence at approximately 14.7%, heart disease prevalence at 8.5%, and hypertension at approximately 23.9%.

CCH Implementation & Strategies:

- CCH sponsors an annual Diabetes Conference each November featuring physicians and a registered dietitian. The conference provides community members with education on diabetes prevention and management, including the effects of diabetes, healthy eating, lifestyle modifications, and strategies for controlling the disease and preventing complications.
- CCH provides free A1C and Cholesterol Tests for the community.
- CCH sponsors an annual Cardiology Conference in February to increase community awareness of cardiovascular health and the risks associated with heart disease. Physician speakers provide education on risk factors, prevention, early detection, and lifestyle changes that can help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and improve overall heart health.
- CCH built a Wellness Center with a Gym to encourage healthy lifestyle behaviors.
- CCH recruited Memorial Hermann Hospital to provide a Cardiologist five days a week which will be located on campus. The Cardiologist will also be able to see in-patients and be available for Emergency Room patients.
- CCH provides Free Prostate Screening for men over 40 years of age

IV. MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Maternal and child health is a significant concern in rural Texas. CCH is particularly important to the region because it is the only hospital within a 45-mile radius providing obstetric Labor and Delivery services. The CHNA also identified the importance of breastfeeding education and healthcare career development opportunities for local students.

CCH Implementation & Strategies:

- CCH continues to provide Labor and Delivery services within a 45-mile radius.
- CCH is expanding the OB Wing to provide three additional Post Partum Rooms for patients.
- CCH continues to provide prenatal and postpartum education to patients.
- Support breastfeeding education and resources.
- CCH provides prenatal and postpartum follow-up.
- CCH closely monitors pregnant patients with pregestational diabetes throughout their pregnancy to help manage blood glucose levels, identify potential complications early, and promote healthy outcomes for both the mother and baby.
- CCH provides education for expectant mothers regarding available local services.
- CCH collaborates with schools and colleges to encourage careers in nursing, medicine, and allied health professions.
- CCH continues to maintain clinical training partnerships with Wharton County Junior College and Victoria College, providing students with opportunities to gain hands-on clinical experience in a rural hospital setting. These partnerships help strengthen the local healthcare workforce and support the development of future healthcare professionals.
- CCH's Obstetrics Department delivers approximately 40–45 babies each month, providing expectant mothers and their families maternity care close to home. These services help reduce the need for families to travel outside the community for childbirth and related obstetric care.

V. ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE

Access to affordable healthcare was identified as a major concern. High insurance costs, Medicare premiums and deductibles, medication coverage issues, and out-of-pocket expenses can cause residents to delay care or use emergency services. CCH also experiences substantial uncompensated care and increased emergency department utilization. Approximately 12.6% of Colorado County residents were uninsured in 2024. The county also has a primary care physician ratio of approximately 1,875 residents per primary care physician.

CCH Implementation & Strategies:

- CCH provides financial assistance/charity care program for eligible patients.

- CCH sponsors a program in November on the ABC's of Medicare giving the community more information on Health Plans to fit their needs.
- Provide education regarding Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Medicaid, CHIP, and other available coverage resources.
- CCH sponsors the 340 B Program which provides prescription assistance and discount-resource referrals where appropriate. CCH purchases certain outpatient medications at 340B prices and can use the resulting savings to support patient care.
- CCH recruited a Family/OB Physician that will begin practice at the Columbus Medical Clinic September 2027.
- CCH also recruited physicians with advanced practices such as: Neurology, Cardiology, Urology and Dermatology in the Columbus Medical Visiting Clinic.
- CCH is renovating the Med/Surg patient wings to provide a more modern, comfortable, and safe environment for patients. The renovations will improve patient care areas, enhance the overall patient experience.

VI. OBESITY, NUTRITION, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND FOOD ACCESS

The CHNA identified obesity, physical inactivity, food access, and food insecurity as important community concerns. Adult obesity was estimated at approximately 35%, while physical inactivity was approximately 28%. Childhood obesity was specifically identified by community stakeholders as a serious concern.

CCH Implementation & Strategies:

- CCH Wellness Center continues to educate the community on physical activity and wellness.
- CCH employed a Dietician to provide nutrition and healthy lifestyle education. This includes school-age children and pregnant patients.

VII. HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE AND PROVIDER ACCESS

Colorado County faces healthcare workforce shortages. The entire county has been designated as a Primary Care HPSA, Dental HPSA, and Mental Health HPSA.

CCH Implementation & Strategies;

- CCH continues to recruit physicians and advanced practice providers
- CCH currently has visiting specialists and specialty clinics in the Columbus Medical Clinic.
- CCH Physicians provide telehealth opportunities where appropriate.
- CCH physicians work with medical students from Sam Houston State University, providing opportunities for students to gain clinical experience and exposure to healthcare delivery in a rural hospital setting.
- CCH participates in local healthcare career education programs in High Schools and Universities to encourage students to consider healthcare careers.

VIII. TRANSPORTATION AND CONTINUITY OF CARE

Transportation barriers affect healthcare access and continuity of care, particularly after hospital discharge. EMS also faces logistical challenges because of the large geographic service area.

CCH Implementation & Strategies:

- CCH Case Managers identify patients with transportation barriers during discharge planning when appropriate and schedules transportation when needed.

IX. HOUSING

Colorado County faces challenges related to affordable housing availability, which impacts workforce recruitment, economic development and population stability.

CCH Implementation & Strategies:

- Housing is being addressed by the Columbus City Council.