

Case Study

Mary Washington Healthcare

“As a result of the Healthy Communities Institute (HCI) data driven and strategic approach, we had confidence in the assessment and implementation strategy. HCI provided expert public health knowledge and superior facilitation skills, resulting in a phenomenal process and report.”

– Philip Brown
Director of Strategic Planning, Mary Washington Healthcare

At-A-Glance

Market Segment:

Health System

Service Area:

Rappahannock Region, Virginia

Population:

866,594

Customer Since:

2010

Solution:

Healthy Communities
Institute Engagement Platform
and consulting services

Most Visited Indicator:

Adult who are Obese; Access to
Exercise Opportunities

Most Used Features:

Healthy Communities Institute
Dashboard; SocioNeeds Index;
Funding Library

Results:

- Consulting and platform used to complete community-wide HCNA and Implementation Strategy
- Launched elementary school “no sugar in the classroom” initiative, piloted at Hugh Mercer Elementary and a MWHC employee wellness program reaching nearly 4000
- MWHC Foundations awarded \$1.9 million in community grants in 2015 to 30 grantees; more than 75% of recipients used HCI to document need and identify best practices



Improving Community Assessments and Data Access

“For more than 115 years, **Mary Washington Healthcare (MWHC)** has prioritized meeting community needs,” said Philip Brown, Director of Strategic Planning, MWHC, and so, when completing a Healthy Community Needs Assessment (HCNA) became a requirement in 2012, the organization sought to go above and beyond regulatory compliance. MWHC collaborated with public and private partners to form a steering committee, which included local health departments, universities, medical centers, nonprofits and a large insurance company. When the first assessment cycle was complete, Brown reviewed opportunities for improvement. “While we identified our top ten needs, I questioned whether we could look more comprehensively at the data. I felt like there were still some gaps. For our next CHNA, I wanted to bring in more public health expertise.”

Around the same time, MWHC’s Community Benefit Manager, Jamia Crockett, needed to look comprehensively at obesity and community health data. In her role at the hospital, Crockett liaises with local partners, including Fredericksburg School Health Advisory Board. At one board meeting, elementary school nurses shared findings that more children were beginning school with higher BMIs. This resonated with Crockett. “These findings, combined with the broader challenge community groups faced in aligning their separate efforts, emphasized the importance of collaboration. We needed to unify our programs and improve the system. I kept thinking ‘Where is the community data? How can we ensure all partners are using the same metrics and working collaboratively?’ There has got to be a one-stop-shop.”

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Choosing an Integrated Solution

To prepare for MWHC's next HCNA, Brown looked for consultants who would bring public health expertise to the process. The professional services team at Community Health Solutions (HCI), came well vetted due to their "analytic and comprehensive" processes. Plus, HCI's intuitive, community health engagement platform provided continuous access to data and evidence-based programs useful in the HCNA and beyond.

Crockett saw the potential. "It was the perfect solution: expert consulting services alongside an easy-to-use platform that provided a single source for all our data."

According to Brown, "HCI not only has the best available data, but also the flexibility to customize, tools for advanced data analysis, and ability to track and visualize progress on initiatives." For Crockett, the decision was made when a colleague used the platform to demo research findings at a Citizen's Advisory Council meeting. "When all the attendees were able to access the exact data they were looking for without any challenges, I knew HCI was the right choice."

Impacting Community Health

HCI consulting team's completion of MWHC's 2016 HCNA cemented Brown's support. "Going through the Prioritization and Root Cause Analysis Workshops helped us select priorities and initiatives that were manageable. As a result of HCI's approach, we stayed focused on data and achievability. Our steering committee and director commented that HCI provided expert public health knowledge and superior facilitation, resulting in a phenomenal process and report."

Wellness Initiatives

With obesity identified as a priority, MWHC launched a campaign to educate and encourage elementary school teachers and parents to reduce sugar, incorporate healthy fruit and vegetable snacks, and increase physical activity in the classroom. Hugh Mercer Elementary School piloted the "no sugar in the classroom" wellness initiative.

In addition to the community-wide expectations, MWHC aims to lead by example. In 2016 it established an employee wellness initiative to increase physical activity and promote better nutrition among its nearly 4000 employees. Today, a new farmer's market is making it easier for employees to access healthier food to prepare nutritious meals for themselves and their families.

Foundation Awards \$1.9 Million in Grants

In addition to direct service to the community, MWHC's Foundations award grants to local nonprofits. "Because the HCI platform data is verifiable and the interventions are evidence-based, we encourage community groups applying for grants to utilize the Platform's promising practices and align their grant submissions with priority areas. Since instituting these recommendations, we have seen grant applications improve," said Crockett.

In 2015, the foundations awarded 30 grants, totaling \$1.9 million, to various community agencies. Over 75% of those grant recipients used HCI to support their projects.

Visit Mary Washington Healthcare:

www.marywashingtonhealthcare.com/chir

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