

## **Giving Back to Our Community**

Mid-Columbia Medical Center (MCMC) is a mission-driven organization whose purpose is to provide exceptional and affordable healthcare services and experiences to those we are privileged to serve through person-centered care.

The Columbia Gorge is mostly rural and an agriculture-rich region where cherries, wheat, apples, and grapes are harvested. Counties from Oregon and Washington are located along the Columbia River. On the Oregon side, counties include Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler. Washington counties include Skamania and Klickitat. From these seven counties, 92.2% of people identify as white, 2.5% identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.2% identify as Asian, 0.7% identify solely as Black or African American, and 0.4% identify as Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander. 2.9% identify as two or more races. 18.9% identify as Hispanic or Latino/a, and 74.9% describe themselves as white alone, not Hispanic or Latino. While MCMC serves all seven counties' residents, it is located in Wasco county which in 2022 had a population of 26,274. The population's race/ethnicity is composed of 74% White, 18.7% Hispanic or Latino, 2.9% American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.1% Black or African American, 0.9% Asian, 2.8% two or more races. The medium household income is \$54,729, 13.3% persons live in poverty, and 11.4% are uninsured. The large amount of agriculture in the region also results in a regular influx of migrant or seasonal farmworkers throughout the year.

The Board and senior executive leadership are actively involved in prioritization of community initiatives. A full-time DEI Supervisor oversees implementation of programs and acts as the primary liaison in community collaborations. Discussion and recommendation of community benefit focus areas centers around five key components: alignment with the organization's strategic plan, likelihood or feasibility of having a measurable impact on the issue, alignment with core organizational competencies, efficient allocation of resources, and alignment with partners who have resources allocated toward the issue.

The Mid-Columbia Medical Center Community Benefit Committee (CBC), formed in 2019, is an advisory committee focused on leading community benefit initiatives both inside and outside the walls of the hospital. These activities include improving care and access for vulnerable populations, promoting community health, and engaging in research and education as driven by the Columbia Gorge Health Council's Community Health Assessment. MCMC's CBC consists of representation from medical staff, nursing leadership, marketing and outreach, financial staff, outpatient clinics, and other key staff who contribute to and influence the overall community benefit of the hospital. The CBC is responsible for ensuring that MCMC strategic plans effectively address the specific health needs of our community as identified through the CHA; extending and strengthening MCMC's programs' community benefit services; and championing community collaborations with government, nonprofit, or other healthcare related organizations.

## **Needs Assessment**

Community benefit priorities and allocations are guided by a community assessment process which utilizes quantitative and qualitative data obtained from internal sources as well as assessment data from key community partners. Mid-Columbia Medical Center participated as a member of the Columbia Gorge Health Council (CGHC) in a collaborative needs assessment in 2019 and an updated needs assessment with the Gorge Collaborative in 2022. The Gorge Collaborative was a collaboration between

seven not-for-profit organizations in the area striving to improve health outcomes in the broader community. Details on the methodology, participants and regional results are addressed in the Columbia Gorge Regional Community Health Needs Assessment report.

The top identified drivers for the 2022 assessment include homelessness and housing instability, behavioral health, economic insecurity, access to health care services, food insecurity, and chronic conditions. In 2023 MCMC will develop a Community Health Improvement Plan with specific action items to be implemented in 2023-2025 to address these drivers.

In 2022 MCMC's Community Health Improvement Plan was focused on three priorities: access to equitable health care services, social determinants of health, and patient empowering education.

### **Access to Equitable Health Care Services**

In 2022 MCMC worked to improve access to care by hiring 25 new providers, especially focused on primary care providers for which there had been a shortage in past years with patients unable to schedule appointments with providers for regular care. During 2022 MCMC was able to bring in enough primary care providers to panel all patients dropped by previous providers that had left the area and open up the schedule to new patients to start scheduling care.

In addition to providing care in the traditional hospital and clinic settings, MCMC coordinates a program called Serving Oregon and its Migrants by Offering Solutions (SOMOS) which provides targeted health screenings and care to the migrant farmworkers and their families during the peak times they are in the area by bringing this care to several of the large farms/orchards in the area where the workers are present. In addition to health care and screenings, SOMOS also seeks to provide food and other essentials to these families to improve their social determinants of health.

### **Social Determinants of Health**

MCMC chose to focus its efforts in this area around access to transportation, affordable housing, and food insecurity. Primarily MCMC partnered with other local organizations around these issues, connecting patients with needs in one or more areas with the appropriate community resources to assist. This included "prescribing" fresh produce vouchers to patients with food insecurity as part of a local Veggie Rx program, distributing gas cards and transportation vouchers to patients with challenges getting transportation to medical appointments, and utilizing social workers and case managers to connect patients with community services to assist with various aspects of these social determinants of health.

### **Patient Empowering Education**

MCMC offers a comprehensive wellness program for people committed to making lasting lifestyle changes. PREVENT is a one-year program taught by a trained lifestyle coach for people diagnosed with pre-diabetes or heart disease or are overweight. MCMC also offers free Mommy Wellness classes, an interdisciplinary program for pregnant and new mothers with children up to two years of age. Its purpose is to provide education and exercise designed to promote healthy lifestyle habits for mother and child. Persistent Pain Education Program is an eight-week class which provides education on pain neuroscience, adaptive coping strategies, nutrition, mindfulness, proper medication, and sleep hygiene to people who are dealing with chronic pain issues. A Parkinson's Support Group focuses on raising awareness for patients and caregivers to advocate for maintaining independence. Assisted Living

Balance Class offered to local seniors promotes balance and provides fall risk screening and consultations.

**Other Meaningful Contributions in the year 2022:**

- Car seat evaluations and free bike helmets and fittings were available year-round through MCMC's Emergency Department
- MCMC provided mentoring programs designed to help train existing and future care providers such as pharmacy technicians, EMS technicians, medical assistants, health information management students, childcare providers, radiological technicians, nurses, and rural health providers
- Physicians and nurses provide access to free or reduced cost primary care; MCMC also provided school nursing services at the elementary age level for local schools
- Provided support for and hosted blood drives for the American Red Cross
- Encouraged staff to volunteer to make a difference through service to members of the community
- Provided athletic training services to local schools to assist student athletes with injury prevention and recovery.

The hospital also participates as a member of the Columbia Gorge Health Council (CGHC) and Clinical Advisory Panel (CAP) in providing oversight and governance of the coordinated care organization formed by PacificSource Community Solutions (PacificSource.) CGHC is a nonprofit corporation comprised of the Medical Center, Wasco and Hood River Counties, Central Oregon Independent Practice Association, Inc., One Community Health, PacificSource, Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital and at-large members of the community.