



NORTH GENERAL HOSPITAL
Growing With Our Community, Caring For Your Health

COMMUNITY SERVICE PLAN

2008-2009

Mission Statement

The North General Hospital mission statement was revised in January 2009 and approved at the February 2009 meeting of the Hospital's Board of Trustees. The revised mission statement refocuses the organization on the provision of primary and secondary health care services and articulates North General's commitment to patient safety.

North General Hospital is committed to the provision of safe, high quality primary and secondary care services; the creation of an integrated health care delivery system; and the promotion of health and health related education. In addition, the Hospital is committed to the economic development of the Harlem communities we serve.

North General Hospital

North General Hospital ("North General", "the Hospital") is a 190-bed community hospital that provides inpatient medical and surgical care, intensive care, and psychiatry and substance abuse detoxification services. The Emergency Department is a 911 and 939 receiving site. The Hospital is a New York State designated Stroke Center. North General sponsors residency training programs in Internal Medicine, Psychiatry and Podiatry.

In 2008, the hospital had 8,478 inpatient discharges. In addition, across 2008, North General provided 35,517 Emergency Department visits, and performed 1,712 ambulatory surgeries, including endoscopies.

Service Area Demographics

The North General Hospital primary service area includes six contiguous (6) zip codes in northern Manhattan: 10026, 10027, 10029, 10030, 10035 and 10037. The primary service area is coincident to the United Hospital Fund Neighborhoods of East Harlem and Central Harlem.

The Hospital's secondary service area includes northern Manhattan zip codes 10031, 10032 and 10039; and zip codes 10451, 10452, 10454 and 10456 in the Bronx. North General Hospital defines its primary service area as the zip codes to which 65% of its inpatients are discharged.

The Hospital utilizes patient origin to define and understand the needs of the communities it serves. Residents of the communities served by North General Hospital continue to face numerous barriers to care. Included among these are immigration status, language, income, education and lack of insurance.

- **Population** - According to the 2000 census, there are 117,743 residents of East Harlem and 151,113 residents of Central Harlem, roughly 3% of New York City's total population of 7.5 million. It is widely believed that these statistics undercount the actual population due to the influx of immigrants from Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Central American countries and West Africa, who may be undocumented.
- **Race** - One in three residents of East Harlem is of African-American race/ethnicity; close to 7 of every 10 residents of Central Harlem is of African-American descent. Over one half of

the population, (55%), of East Harlem is of Hispanic origin, double the percentage citywide (27%) and in Central Harlem (20%).

- **Age** – The primary service area is home to a higher proportion of residents under 14 (23%) than in the city as a whole (19%) in the 2000 census. In East Harlem one out of four residents is a woman of childbearing age (15-44). The percent of population over 65 is comparable to the New York City average (11.4% as compared to 11.2%).
- **Language** - Residents who speak little or no English make up 20% of the population, almost double the Manhattan average of eleven percent (11%) and the citywide average of twelve percent (12%).
- **Poverty** - East and Central Harlem are two of the poorest communities in New York City characterized by higher rates of poverty and unemployment, lower education levels and a higher number of single parent households than the average for Manhattan or New York City. Thirty-six percent (36%) of East Harlem households have incomes below \$10,000; the unemployment rate is sixteen percent (16%), twice that of New York City. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of children enrolled in East Harlem public schools are eligible for free lunches. Median household income (2000) was \$14,600 in East Harlem and \$16,000 in Central Harlem, less than the average in Manhattan (\$36,800) and citywide (\$31,700). The percentage of children in poverty was fifty-four percent (54%) as compared to thirty-six percent (36%) in Manhattan and thirty percent (30%) in New York City.

Service Area Health Status

As noted in previous Community Service Plans filed by this institution, the health status of the population residing in the North General Hospital service area is among the worse in the State. According to data presented by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in its *Community Health Profiles, 2006*, residents of East and Central Harlem suffer disproportionately from the burden of illness and mortality.

East Harlem and Central Harlem represent two of the forty-two neighborhoods profiled by the city. When compared to other neighborhoods, East and Central Harlem residents experience the following:

- East Harlem residents experience more barriers to health care access than those in New York City overall. Three in ten are without a regular doctor and more than twenty percent (20%) of residents visit the emergency department for routine health care.
- East Harlem has the second highest HIV-related death rate in the city.
- Almost two thirds of East Harlem residents are overweight or obese, and African-American and Hispanic residents are more likely to be obese than other residents.
- More than one in four adults in Central Harlem currently smokes - more than forty percent (40%) higher than the proportion in New York City overall.
- The HIV-related death rate in Central Harlem is more than double the rates in Manhattan and New York City overall.

**East Harlem and Central Harlem Health Indicators
As Compared to New York City**

	East Harlem	Central Harlem
Overall Death Rate	50% Higher	40% Higher
Cancer Death Rate	30% Higher	40% Higher
HIV Related Death Rate	More than 3 Times	More than 2 Times
Heart Disease Hospitalizations	45% Higher	15% Higher
Alcohol Related Hospitalizations	2 Times	1.5 Times
Asthma Related Hospitalizations	4 Times	2 Times
Birth Rate to Teen Mothers	90% Higher	40% Higher
Number of Obese Adults	55% Higher	33% Higher

In 2008, the New York State Department of Health made available Prevention Quality Indicators (PQI). PQIs are rates of hospital admission for conditions which good ambulatory care can potentially prevent, or for which early intervention can prevent complications or more severe disease. A review of PQI data for the North General service area illustrates significantly high rates in comparison to statewide averages.

Public Participation

North General Hospital has served the Harlem community for more than 30 years. During this time, the Hospital has developed partnerships with a wide array of local health care providers, community and faith-based organizations, and the local health department. In addition, members of North General’s leadership team serve on local and state health committees at which health planning activities are undertaken and collaboratives developed. These relationships have been useful not only to elicit input from the various constituents about health needs and concerns, but also to communicate information to constituents about health resources available at the Hospital and its affiliates.

North General Hospital and the Mount Sinai Hospital formed the Alliance for Health Improvement, LLC (the “Alliance”) in 2004. The Alliance aims to integrate public health principles of community needs assessment and preventive services into the delivery of care for chronic diseases through the use of proven-effective, sustainable programs that are incorporated into the clinical operations of the Diagnostic and Treatment Centers of the two hospitals. The Alliance integrates the successes and experiences that each institution has gained and puts forth a united effort to improve health outcomes.

To date, the Alliance has implemented three health improvement programs: Heart failure Education and Rehabilitation Training (HEART) is a nurse management program for patients with congestive heart failure. The program is based on the results of a randomized, controlled trial that showed that this nurse management program decreased hospitalizations and improved functioning. The second health improvement program is the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program. This program teaches people with chronic disease how to better manage their illness through increased self-efficacy and improved communication skills. The third program is the Pediatric Asthma Program. This program employs an asthma counselor to educate, identify and remove asthma triggers from patients’ environments.

North General, in partnership with Union Settlement Association and Mount Sinai Hospital, convened community forums to identify East Harlem residents' perspectives on pressing health issues. Public notice of the events was provided by New York City Housing Authority Tenant's Associations; at Community Board 11 meetings; and at East Harlem Community Health Committee and Human Services Consortium meetings. These meetings formed the basis for proposals to the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control to study the efficacy of interventions to prevent diabetes. These proposals have been funded, and program development, employing a Community Based Participatory Research approach where community members have equal decision making input into program design, is ongoing.

North General Hospital is an active member of the East Harlem Community Health Committee. This is an important forum for community health providers to review individual and collective health planning objectives and develop plans for program implementation.

Assessment of Public Health Priorities

In February 2009, the Greater New York Hospital Association hosted a meeting for its member hospitals with the New York State Department of Health and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYCDOHMH) to review the public health priorities of the local and state health departments. This forum served to facilitate a dialogue with these agencies about public health needs, objectives and priorities.

- **New York State Department of Health**

The New York State Department of Health established the *Prevention Agenda Toward the Healthiest State* to encourage hospitals, local health departments of health and other community partners to work collaboratively to assess community health needs and to implement health interventions designed to address those identified needs. The *Prevention Agenda* includes a set of 10 priorities focused on disease prevention and reduction of health disparities. These priorities are as follows:

Take Care New York Priorities

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Access to Quality Health Care | 6. Healthy Environment |
| 2. Tobacco Use | 7. Chronic Disease |
| 3. Health Mothers/Health Babies | 8. Infectious Disease |
| 4. Physical Activities/Nutrition | 9. Community Preparedness |
| 5. Unintentional Injury | 10. Mental Health/Substance Abuse |

- **New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**

The NYCDOHMH presented the *Take Care New York priority* health areas outlined in the table below.

Take Care New York Priorities

1. Have a regular doctor
2. Be tobacco-free
3. Keep your heart healthy
4. Know your HIV status
5. Get help for depression
6. Live free of dependence on drugs and alcohol
7. Get checked for cancer
8. Get the immunizations that you need
9. Make you home safe and healthy
10. Have a healthy baby

Take Care New York priorities were established in the context of the following criteria:

- Impact all New Yorkers;
- Reduce premature morbidity and mortality;
- Proven to be amenable to intervention;
- Goals are reachable within a reasonable timeframe; and
- Best addressed through coordinated action by City agencies, public-private partnerships, health care providers, businesses and individuals.

Prevention Agenda

Each hospital in New York State has been asked to collaborate with area healthcare providers and the local health department on two of the 10 Prevention Agenda public health priorities. In collaboration with the Department of Health, area hospitals, and community groups, North General Hospital selected chronic disease and physical activity and nutrition as Prevention Agenda focus initiatives.

Over the next three years, the Hospital and its partners will develop collaborative programming around these initiatives. During the Community Service Plan three year cycle, North General will address these priorities by: a) raising public awareness of both issues; b) collaborating with community partners and area businesses to develop and provide training and education programs; c) working in partnership with the Mount Sinai School of Medicine to integrate these priorities into their curriculums; and lastly d) impacting public policy through research and grant opportunities. Interventions will be designed based on a review of best practice evidence based guidelines. North General expects several other community based organizations (CBOs) to participate within the three year cycle. North General will continue to ask for the active participation of local CBOs so that a diverse reflection of the community is represented in the NYS Prevention Agenda Programming.

Other Community Benefit Programs

Numerous community-based programs in place at North General Hospital complement the priorities of the Prevention Agenda. North General fully anticipates that the coalition building that is inherent in the planning for Prevention Agenda priorities may well afford opportunities to expand the reach of the other community programs that are in place within the hospital.

North General provides a broad array of community benefit programs, such as:

- Improving Access to Healthcare Services
- Screenings and Health Fairs
- Community Education and Outreach
- Emergency Health Services

Improving Access to Healthcare Services

- Financial Assistance Program – Uninsured patients with household incomes under **500%** of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are eligible for reduced fees. All medically necessary services are covered under the reduced fee program for patients of the hospital service area. Registration and Health Care Interviewer provide community residents with information and enrollment assistance for government health coverage, including Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus, Medicaid and Medicare. For those not eligible, information is provided about the North General sliding scale program.
- Language Services – North General is committed to supporting the language needs of all patients during their visit to the Hospital. In order to meet patients’ medical needs and service expectations, North General provides 24/7 access to over 150 languages using telephonic interpreters. Services for the deaf and hearing impaired are also available.

Screenings and Health Fairs

Each year, hundreds of community residents receive free health screenings through programs offered by North General Hospital. Screenings are held in conjunction with national campaigns (Heart Health, Blood Pressure, Prostate Cancer, HIV and Glaucoma) and throughout the year at community based events. Throughout the year, the Hospital hosts health fairs in collaboration with community partners, and provides free health screenings at these events. In addition we screen community residents at senior centers, churches and NYCHA developments. During 2008, more than 7000 free screenings were provided.

Community Outreach and Health Education

North General offers free community outreach and health education programs throughout the year.

Chronic Disease Self Management Program – a 2.5 hour evidence-based peer led self-efficacy 6 week workshop developed at Stanford University that has been found to help patients with long term illness have better quality of life, less hospitalizations and doctor’s visits, and better management of their disease. We provided 20 workshops in 2008 with 160 participants. Additionally, we trained 12 community residents to be peer leaders.

Diabetes Self Management Program – as above with a specific focus on diabetes management, how to prevent complications of diabetes, maintain good control, eat healthy and be physically active. We provided 33 workshops in 2008 with 300 participants and we trained 15 community residents to be peer leaders.

Take Care New York – North General is a partner with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in their Take Care New York campaign. “Passports to Health” are distributed at health fairs, public education lectures, etc., and are available in multiple languages and large-print for the visually impaired.

Save Half for Later – North General is a partner with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and other community organizations on this campaign to encourage portion control when eating out by saving half of the meal in a reusable plastic container that is provided to restaurants

for free. The goal is to promote the campaign and enlist 1 new restaurant every four months for the next 3 years.

Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Program – Through its School Based Health Center, North General provides nutrition education to PS 57 students and their parents in an effort to prevent Type 2 diabetes in this at-risk population. Center staff conducts classroom-based interactive workshops to students in grades K – 8; provides pedometers to upper class students; and offer hands-on “cookshops” for parents featuring healthy menus. In addition, the Hospital operates a Snack Wagon at the school that offers healthy snacks for sale or in exchange for unhealthy snacks.

New York City 911 System

The North General Hospital Department of Emergency Medicine operates two ambulances in the New York City system, providing emergency care to the residents of northern Manhattan. The equipment and staff are provided as a service to the city of New York by the Hospital.

Financial Assistance Program

North General Hospital provides discounts to qualifying individuals based on income. In addition, Hospital staff assists qualifying individuals with applications for free or low-cost insurance. All medically necessary services are covered under the financial assistance program. The program is communicated through multilingual signage through the facilities and staff outreach.