



# **Community Service Plan 2011 Update**

September 15, 2011

In 2008, the NYS Department of Health required organizations (hospitals, public health, local government organizations, municipalities, etc.) to develop a collaborative community service plan (CSP). Elizabethtown Community Hospital contributed to that process as a member of a regional group that was formed to address the Department of Health requirement; Adirondack Rural Health Network (AHRN).

AHRN is comprised of hospitals, public health offices, educational organizations, mental health, EMS, nursing homes and other community-based organizations from a six county region in NY (Essex, Fulton, Hamilton, Saratoga, Warren & Washington counties). The group shared data that was studied, analyzed and ultimately formulated into the 2009 regional Health Assessment & Community Service Plan. This plan was designed around a document released by NYS Health Commissioner Daines in 2008 entitled: Prevention Agenda: Toward the Healthiest State.

The state's prevention agenda items are:

- Access to quality health care
- Chronic disease
- Community preparedness
- Healthy environment
- Healthy mothers, babies, and children
- Infectious disease
- Mental health & substance abuse
- Physical activity & nutrition
- Tobacco use
- Unintentional injury

AHRN met in 2009 to determine the specific prevention agenda on which to focus - from both a collaborative and individual organizational perspective. (The group was strongly encouraged to collaborate on endeavors that responded to the prevention agenda items; and when developing subsequent community service plans.) The group chose:

- Access to quality health care
- Chronic disease
- Physical activity & nutrition

Over the next few years (2009 – 2012) organizations that submit community service plans are required to address both individual and collaborative efforts, in regard to the state's prevention agenda priorities. In 2011, the NYS Department of Health required that the various community service plan updates be submitted online. The CSP update for Elizabethtown Community Hospital follows. The numbered items indicate the questions asked on the online submission form, followed by the organization's response to those questions.

Please don't hesitate to contact Mr. Boula if you have any questions about the content of the report.

Sincerely,

Jane Hooper

1. Please give us your contact information

- CSP Liaison: Jane Hooper
- Email: jhooper@ech.org
- Phone Number: 518-873-3003

2. Which hospital system CSP are you submitting?

Elizabethtown Community Hospital

3. In which county is the hospital located?

Essex County

4. What is your mission statement?

Elizabethtown Community Hospital's mission statement has remained the same for 2011: To promote wellness in the communities we serve by providing quality health care with skill, compassion and dignity.

5. Describe the hospital service area – indicate changes

Elizabethtown Community Hospital's primary service area has remained unchanged for 2011 planning purposes. It is composed of twenty-two ZIP codes in northeastern Essex County. The hospital is located 45-60 minutes away from any other hospital, through a mountainous region and mostly along a series of secondary roads.

Essex County is home to 39,000 year-round residents; and the region boasts a robust seasonal population, swelling significantly throughout the summer and winter months.

6. Are community groups still involved in assessing community health needs?

Yes

7. What are the Prevention Agenda Priorities on which ECH is focused?

Physical activity & nutrition  
Access to quality health care

## 8. How do these priorities compare to the previous CSP?

Changed

## 9. What priorities were added or deleted?

Priorities added: Chronic disease

## 10. What are the goals for the selected priority areas?

Access to Quality Health Care: To improve access to quality health care for Essex County residents and visitors.

Chronic Diseases: To improve diabetes care, heart-related conditions and improve cancer mortality rates for the residents of Essex County.

Physical Activity and Nutrition: To positively impact physical activity and nutrition in the region

## 11. What measures are we using to track progress in the selected priorities?

In conjunction with our community partners, Elizabethtown Community Hospital is mindful of the NYS Prevention Agenda Priority Areas Indicators; and especially those to which the hospital's efforts can specifically contribute within its primary service area. These are:

### Access to Quality Health Care

- Increase % of adults with health care coverage
- Improve % of adults with regular health care provider
- Improve early state cancer diagnosis (breast, cervical, colorectal)

### Chronic Diseases

- Reduce diabetes short-term complication hospitalization rate
- Reduce coronary heart disease hospitalizations
- Help reduce congestive heart failure hospitalization rate
- Reduce cerebrovascular disease mortality rate
- Reduce cancer mortality rate (breast, cervical, colorectal)

### Physical Activity and Nutrition

- Reduce % of obese children by grade level
- Reduce % of adults who are obese
- Increase % of adults engaged in some type of leisure time physical activity

Additionally, the hospital tracks the number of patients that use services related to the prevention agenda priorities; along with those enrolled in its education programs, taking part in health fairs, children who visit the hospital's pediatrician, etc.

#### Access to Quality Health Care

- Number of adults that visit the health centers for primary care services
- Number of adults who visit the hospital's oncology and gastroenterology clinics
- Number of adults who visit the hospital's gynecology clinics
- Those taking part in the Hunters' Health Screening each year
- Number of patients who visit the hospital's pediatrician for primary care services
- The hospital continually works to attract physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners to support its commitment to primary care services.

#### Chronic Diseases

- Number of adults taking part in / graduating from the diabetes self management education program
- Number of adults taking part in / graduating from the cardiac rehab program
- Adults enrolling in the phase 3 part of the cardiac rehab program (maintenance)
- Healthy Heart Day attendees
- Number of adults receiving chemotherapy treatment at ECH
- Number of adults using the hospital's telemedicine capabilities for cerebrovascular events

#### Physical Activity and Nutrition

- Number of adults taking part in the hospital's medical weight loss program
- Children who visit the hospital's pediatrician (nutrition is discussed)

12. Please provide an update on the Plan for Action. Provide a summary of the implementation status of your three-year plan, including successes & barriers in the implementation process. How have plans been altered?

#### **Access to Quality Health Care**

In 2009, the hospital undertook and completed many initiatives that helped provide access to quality healthcare for residents of the local region including: recruitment of a pediatrician (one of only two in the entire county); recruitment of a family practitioner specializing in women's issues and supplemental training in nutrition; establishment of a chemotherapy program; establishment of a mobile MRI program, and establishment of an infusion clinic. Throughout 2010 and into 2011, these initiatives continue and are supplemented with the following:

#### **Telemedicine**

The hospital's telemedicine program was developed to allow chemotherapy treatment at ECH through a regional, collaborative effort. This program links the patient and nurse practitioner at ECH with an oncologist many miles away. The NP and MD are able to collaborate and confer regarding

the patient's care. The patient can discuss treatment options and any concerns that he or she may have with the oncologist. ECH ultimately plans to expand its telemedicine program to include additional specialties (ENT, dermatology, cardiac rehabilitation); and links with additional facilities throughout the Northeast.

ECH also has an established telemedicine link with Fletcher Allen Health Center for ER trauma / cerebrovascular emergency situations.

### **Purchase of Smith House Health Center**

The hospital is pursuing an asset purchase agreement with Smith House Health Center in Willsboro, NY. Smith House is an FQHC that provides primary care services within the communities of Willsboro and Essex, NY; roughly 20 miles from the main hospital facility, and well within its current service area. The two organizations have had a congenial relationship over the years. ECH offers services such as laboratory testing and radiology services to Smith House patients. Patients residing in Willsboro and Essex that require emergency care would find that care at ECH. Pursuit of this purchase agreement is a natural evolution of the relationship that ECH already has in the Willsboro / Essex area. The certificate of need in regard to the purchase of Smith House is anticipated to be finalized by December 2011.

### **P/T Gynecologist**

In May 2011, the hospital hired a gynecologist to offer a specialty clinic at ECH on a part-time basis. GYN services have traditionally been lacking in the Essex County region; recruitment of this physician fills a significant void.

### **Fidelis representatives at hospital's health fairs**

The hospital offers two health fairs each year, one in the spring and another in the fall. Fidelis representatives take part in the health fairs, offering information about various health insurance plans to participants that may be un-insured, or under-insured.

### **Specialists**

ECH continues its commitment to offering access to healthcare, close to home through its series of specialty clinics. Each month, over 14 specialty physicians offer clinics at ECH; providing convenience and significant cost savings to local community members who would otherwise have to make the 80-mile round trip to see their specialist. Some of the specialties that take part include: gastroenterology, OBGYN, cardiology, nephrology, gynecology and oncology.

### **Medical Home**

ECH and its hospital partners work to foster collaboration through a newly-developed Medical Home Pilot project. The project is expected to improve access to services, improve the quality of care, and lower costs over the long-term, while emphasizing the role of primary care.

Primary care providers that take part in the program receive increased reimbursement in exchange for expanded responsibility for coordinating care, providing preventive care and managing chronic diseases. The increased reimbursement is ultimately expected to be offset by decreased costs from fewer hospital admissions, less frequent specialist referrals, lower prescription costs, and better health, overall.

### **Electronic Medical Record**

Elizabethtown Community Hospital is implementing electronic medical record (EMR) technology throughout the main hospital facility and its community-based health centers. EMR systems enable nurses and physicians to be more efficient, foster sharing of information across the continuum of care, will increase patient safety and lead to better patient outcomes.

In 2010, EMR was implemented in the hospital's three community-based health centers; the hospital's main facility followed throughout the early part of 2011. EMR has been installed in the inpatient unit, health centers, pharmacy, laboratory and physical therapy departments. Computerized physician order entry (COPE) was also implemented.

Bedside medication verification utilizing bar-coding technology was implemented to improve patient safety as was electronic medication prescription services in our primary care settings. In the summer of 2011 Elizabethtown Community Hospital has prepared to meet the CMS EMR "meaningful use" requirements; it is currently in the "testing" phase of the project.

ECH is also working with the health information exchange (HIXNY) to share patient information between our respective EMR's.

### **Family Medicine Practice Development**

In response to a rapidly declining practice environment for family medicine physicians in private practice, Elizabethtown Community Hospital has developed a model that is offered to physicians. The model allows family medicine physicians to get out from under the pressures of increasing practice overhead by employing the physicians at ECH and allowing them the opportunity to build their practice. This model will help retain existing family medicine physicians in the community, while serving as an attractive incentive to those wishing to relocate to the community. A robust primary care recruitment effort continues at ECH – in a very challenging overall market – the demand for primary care physicians far exceeds the supply, especially in the rural marketplace in which ECH operates.

### **Website changes**

In 2011, the ECH website is undergoing a significant redesign and content update. A quality section has been developed that allows ECH to offer information about its Joint Commission survey results, various quality initiatives undertaken and information from a number of quality reporting agencies. In addition, the hospital is able to report its own data that is collected from its initiatives. The website changes are currently underway and will be in place during the fall of 2011.

## **Physical Activity & Nutrition**

In 2009, Elizabethtown Community Hospital committed to work with other members of the Adirondack Rural Health Network (ARHN) to participate in a collaborative effort to address the region's issues concerning physical activity and nutrition. Elizabethtown Community Hospital is an active member of ARHN's Community Health Planning Committee.

The committee sponsored a regional conference, offered grant opportunities and shares resources throughout the year.

The committee presented a day-long conference featuring keynote speaker Mark Fenton, nationally renowned expert on healthy communities. The conference also featured breakout workshops on community collaborations for healthy kids, school programs to prevent obesity, building health communities, children and family food choices, improving community access to fresh produce, and advocacy for policy and environmental change. The conference was attended by 152 diverse stakeholders to share knowledge and resources, learn obesity prevention strategies, promising practices and resources, and build partnerships across disciplines to address the priority area of physical activity and nutrition

In April 2011, the committee issued mini-grant opportunities to fund efforts to increase opportunities for physical activity and access to nutritious foods in the ARHN region. The mini-grants of up to \$5,000 per county were offered through a competitive grant application process to help foster physical activity and good nutrition.

The hospital has also established its own initiatives to help its employees and its community members live a more active lifestyle, eat better and take ownership of their health status.

Elizabethtown Community Hospital's physical therapy / cardiac rehabilitation center is open to employees so that they may exercise during their breaks, before or after work. The center employs a full-time exercise specialist who can offer advice and help create an exercise program for participants. Currently, 23 staff members take advantage of the physical therapy center for exercise / weight loss purposes.

The hospital's auxiliary has purchased bike racks that have been installed at the ECH facility. These bike racks support those employees choosing to ride their bikes to work each day. Staff members have created informal groups that spend their leisure time hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and running together. The hospital staff also takes part in the annual American Heart Association Heart Walk.



Flu shots are available annually for all employees at no cost; their immediate families can receive vaccines at cost. Annual health assessments are completed on all employees.

Through its cardiac rehabilitation program, the hospital hosts a series of community education events. As a regional health care provider, ECH is fully aware that the first step in living a healthy lifestyle is through prevention. Elizabethtown Community Hospital hosts speakers that offer information about eating healthy, reducing stress and living a healthy lifestyle. These free informational sessions are available to cardiac rehab participants, local community members and staff. A total of 35 community members attended these educational events.

### **Center for Medical Weight Loss**

The hospital has established a program through the Center for Medical Weight Loss. The program, overseen by the hospital's medical staff director, provides a manner by which patients who are overweight can lose extra pounds, develop healthy eating patterns and increase physical activity.

Physician oversight and support is a key element; patients appreciate the physician's involvement and feel "accountable" for progress. The program has a number of participants who have lost a tremendous amount to weight since the program's inception in the spring of 2010. The program encourages physical activity and during the weekly physician / participant meeting physical activity is discussed, recommended, encouraged and documented. Saturday hours are also offered.

### **Education**

The hospital is committed to the importance of helping to educate the next generation of health care providers. In recent years, the hospital and its staff have hosted a number of nursing, pharmacy, radiology and physician assistant students during a series of clinical rotations taking place at the hospital.

Students from North Country Community College and Albany College of Pharmacy take part in nursing, radiologic technologist and pharmacy rotations at ECH. Additionally, the New Visions program, offering college-bound high school seniors the ability to take part in rotations throughout the hospital, was implemented for the 2010-2011 school year.

### **Chronic Diseases**

#### **Diabetes education**

The hospital has developed a diabetes self management education program, accredited by the American Association of Diabetes Educators. The program provides education to help patients and their families learn how to successfully self-manage diabetes and its related conditions. The program offers a great deal of information in regard to nutrition. Patients learn how carbohydrate counting, eating healthy fats, controlling sodium intake, and achieving a healthy weight all contribute to successful diabetes control. At Elizabethtown Community Hospital, diabetes self-management education is offered by a team of healthcare professionals including a certified diabetes educator, registered nurse, pharmacist, registered dietitian and exercise specialist. The program offers extended

hours on Tuesday evenings, to better accommodate participants' schedules. Since the program began in March 2011, there have been 54 participants.

ECH is the host site for the local diabetes support group and its annual diabetes health fair. In 2010, the health fair attracted 35 participants.

### **Cardiac Rehabilitation**

The need for cardiac services was deemed critical at ECH. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Essex County and also accounts for a significant rate of hospitalizations. The addition of this service will allow Elizabethtown Community Hospital to meet the needs of an aging population.

The high concentration of cardiac patients in the area supports the need for this program. Patients in a cardiac rehabilitation program typically require three to five days of therapy each week. Before the program began at ECH, patients were required to travel 45 minutes one-way to take part in a program. The inconvenience of traveling adds unhealthy stress and causes many people to discontinue their rehabilitation. This, combined with a lack of health education and other lifestyle variables, can decrease the likelihood of a full recovery and cause recurring health problems. 28 participants have taken part in the cardiac rehab program since February 2011.

### 13. Explain impact or changes that have been realized to date as a result of your collaborative plan.

**Note:** Response to this question refers to only those activities pertaining to collaborative efforts. Elizabethtown Community Hospital is always working to improve the health of the residents of its community through a number of programs, projects, educational sessions, and services. Hospital-specific initiatives are not all discussed in response to this question since they may not rise to the Department of Health's definition of "collaborative" projects.

### **Physical Activity and Nutrition**

Adirondack Regional Health Network members (including ECH) worked together during three planning meetings to engage in priority setting activities to identify common areas of interest and determine possible areas for regional planning and intervention. An initial survey helped focus the group's interests, and continued planning identified the following priority interventions that could be initiated to address the region's priorities through policy and environmental change:

- Complete Streets
- Community Gardens
- School & Community Joint Use Policies
- Provider Involvement in Obesity Prevention

The group presented a daylong conference featuring keynote speaker, Mark Fenton, nationally renowned healthy communities expert. The conference brought together 152 diverse stakeholders to share knowledge and resources, learn obesity prevention strategies, promising practices and resources and build partnerships across disciplines to address the priority area of physical activity

and nutrition. In April 2011, ARHN issued mini-grant opportunities to fund efforts to increase opportunities for physical activity and access to nutritional foods in the ARHN region. The mini-grants of up to \$5,000 per county were offered to regional partners to collaborate within their communities to create environments that foster physical activity and good nutrition.

Working to institute complete streets policies has let committee members to develop new partnerships with local town board, departments of transportation, department of public works, and highway supervisors. Through these new collaborations, strides are being made to increase physical activity while fostering strong communities. Complete Streets are vital to a livable community, as they foster social engagement, in conjunction with healthier, more active lifestyles. As a key “anchor” organization in Elizabethtown, the hospital is in complete support of this initiative and will assist whenever appropriate.

### **Access to Quality Health Care**

ECH and its hospital partners work to foster collaboration through a newly-developed Medical Home Pilot project. The project is expected to improve access to services, improve the quality of care, and lower costs over the long-term, while emphasizing the role of primary care. Providers that take part in the program receive increased reimbursement in exchange for expanded responsibility for coordinating care, providing preventive care and managing chronic diseases. The increased reimbursement is ultimately expected to be offset by decreased costs from fewer hospital admissions, less frequent specialist referrals, lower prescription costs, and better health, overall.

ECH is the host site for the local diabetes support group and its annual diabetes health fair, organized and managed by Cornell Cooperative Extension. The diabetes support group and health fair complements the diabetes self-management education program, taking place at the hospital.

The hospital entered into a unique partnership with the Hudson Headwaters Health Network to bring a pediatrician to the region. The Essex County region has traditionally lacked pediatric services. The Hudson Headwaters Health Network shares the services of the pediatrician with Elizabethtown Community Hospital. This allows the pediatrician to serve two neighboring communities.

ECH continues its commitment to offering access to healthcare, close to home through its series of specialty clinics. Each month, over 14 specialty physicians from CVPH (Plattsburgh) and AMC (Saranac Lake) offer clinics at ECH. These clinics offer both convenience and significant cost savings to local community members who would otherwise have to make the 80-mile round trip to see their specialist. Some of the specialties that take part include: gastroenterology, OBGYN, cardiology, nephrology, gynecology and oncology.

### **Chronic Diseases**

The hospital has developed a diabetes self management education program, accredited by the American Association of Diabetes Educators. The program provides education to help patients and their families learn how to successfully self-manage diabetes and its related conditions. The program

offers a great deal of information in regard to nutrition. Patients learn how carbohydrate counting, eating healthy fats, controlling sodium intake, and achieving a healthy weight all contribute to successful diabetes control. At Elizabethtown Community Hospital, diabetes self-management education is offered by a team of healthcare professionals including a certified diabetes educator, registered nurse, pharmacist, registered dietitian and exercise specialist. The program offers extended hours on Tuesday evenings, to better accommodate participants' schedules. Since the program began in March 2011, there have been 54 participants.

The need for cardiac services was deemed critical at ECH. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Essex County and also accounts for a significant rate of hospitalizations. The addition of this service will allow Elizabethtown Community Hospital to meet the needs of an aging population.

The high concentration of cardiac patients in the area supports the need for this program. Patients in a cardiac rehabilitation program typically require three to five days of therapy each week. Before the program began at ECH, patients were required to travel 45 minutes one-way to take part in a program. The inconvenience of traveling adds unhealthy stress and causes many people to discontinue their rehabilitation. This, combined with a lack of health education and other lifestyle variables, can decrease the likelihood of a full recovery and cause recurring health problems. 28 participants have taken part in the cardiac rehab program since February 2011.

#### 14. Since completing your CSP in 2010, have you conducted any new surveys

Yes

An in-person consumer survey was conducted by ARHN (of which ECH is a member organization) to assess the core service needs and key concerns of residents aged 60 and over in each of two pilot Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) sites in Northern New York. The survey assessed both the individual concerns of the survey respondents as well as the extent to which respondents viewed their communities as "aging friendly." Online link: <http://www.arhn.org/healthy-aging.php>.

The hospital conducts patient satisfaction surveys on a continual basis in order to monitor the community's support for the hospital's programs, services, processes and quality of care, all from the patient point-of-view. The hospital uses this information to make changes as appropriate.

#### 15. Please list other non-prevention agenda priorities or issues on which the hospital is working

##### **Electronic Medical Record**

Elizabethtown Community Hospital is implementing electronic medical record (EMR) technology throughout the main hospital facility and its community-based health centers. EMR systems enable nurses and physicians to be more efficient, foster sharing of information across the continuum of care, will increase patient safety and lead to better patient outcomes.

In 2010, EMR was implemented in the hospital's three community-based health centers; the hospital's main facility followed throughout the early part of 2011. EMR has been installed in the inpatient unit, health centers, pharmacy, laboratory and physical therapy departments. Computerized physician order entry (COPE) was also implemented.

Bedside medication verification utilizing bar-coding technology was implemented to improve patient safety as was electronic medication prescription services in our primary care settings. In the summer of 2011 Elizabethtown Community Hospital has prepared to meet the CMS EMR "meaningful use" requirements; it is currently in the "testing" phase of the project.

ECH is also working with the health information exchange (HIXNY) to share patient information between our respective EMR's.

### **Additional collaboration with regional partners**

The hospital is working with Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital (CVPH) in Plattsburgh in regard to contributions that it can make to regional health issues that ultimately impact both facilities.

The hospitals identified many initiatives that the two hospitals are undertaking – both independently and collaboratively. The initiatives, to which ECH contribute, fall within four main themes / regional health goals:

- Improve regional access to health care, health education and wellness
- Coordination and management of care across the continuum
- Foster system / process integration among affiliates to increase system-wide performance and improve patient/community outcomes; and
- Develop systems, strategies and processes to effectively optimize human capital, community and business development opportunities.

It should be noted that in some instances, specific tactical initiatives within these themes/goals also support the NYS Prevention Agenda initiatives.

### **Ongoing community outreach**

Each year Hospital Administrator Rod Boula attends town board meetings throughout Essex County in an effort to update town leaders and community members about the hospital, its plans for the future; and to address any questions. The administrator also meets with EMS, fire departments and other civic organizations (Kiwanis, Rotary) within the hospital service area to encourage open communication and foster good working relationships.

#### **16. Is ECH's CSP posted on the website?**

Yes

#### **17. What is the URL of the hospital website (where the CSP is located)**

[www.ech.org](http://www.ech.org)

## 18 What are the other ways it is disseminated to the public

The ECH CSP is available to the public through a variety of ways.

It is available on the Adirondack Regional Health Network website. Additionally, the three-year, collaborative plan that was compiled in 2009 was distributed even further. The AHRN “Building a Healthy Community” report has been distributed by various means – printed copies and via website views/downloads.

The November 2011 edition of Elizabethtown Community Hospital’s community newsletter will be focused on quality efforts at ECH, including information about the 2011 community service plan. This newsletter is mailed to 10,000 households throughout Essex County. Additionally, copies are given out to newcomers to the community, new hospital employees, physician offices and other community locations. The newsletter is also available on the hospital’s website.

The Community Service Plan for Elizabethtown Community Hospital is posted on the hospital website [www.ech.org](http://www.ech.org) each year. In addition, paper copies are distributed to the ECH board of directors. In 2010, the report will be mentioned in a Facebook /Twitter post and will be available from the hospital’s community relations office.

## 19. Describe successes and challenges regarding the provision of financial aid in accordance with public health law 2807(k)(9-a) and changes envisioned for this year.

The challenges of providing patient financial assistance are significant, but not unique to Elizabethtown Community Hospital. The growing number of people without health insurance paired with the growing cost of providing care creates a significant financial burden on hospitals charged with providing care to those cannot pay.

Elizabethtown Community Hospital is proud of its not-for-profit mission to provide quality health care with skill, compassion, and dignity to all who need it. Through the Helping Hands Program the hospital provides financial assistance to eligible patients. Information about the Helping Hands financial assistance program is available in an easy-to-read brochure format that is posted on the hospital website, made available throughout the hospital and its health centers, and handed out at health fairs and food shelves.

The “Helping Hands” financial aid program at ECH allows the hospital to care for people who are uninsured or under-insured by giving them a way to make payments or receive discounted services, based on income levels. The program provides financial assistance in excess of that which is required

by law. ECH finance office is dedicated to screening the uninsured and guiding them through enrollment options, patient assistance options and payment options.

In 2010, ECH processed 82 Helping Hands applications, representing 124 people (individuals and families). Health care expenses foregone in 2010 totaled \$75,000.

The main challenges that ECH faces with its Helping Hands Program are: paperwork provided by the patient, qualifying patients for Medicaid, and the variation in our qualifications scale.

- It is often difficult to get full cooperation from patients who are applying to the program. Incomplete applications and tardiness in submitting paperwork can make it challenging to qualify patients for the program in a timely manner.
- The income eligibility criteria, as defined by the hospital, ranges from 100%, 75%, 50%, and 15% assistance on a bill and must be stringent in following the guidelines. Patients can become upset when they are only \$100 over the criteria to receive a 50% reduction in their bill and must then only get a 15% reduction. This is a steep difference in assistance.

ECH has set its 2011 guidelines well above the national poverty guidelines allowing ECH to assist a large number of uninsured.

The Helping Hands Program at ECH covers not only patients in the hospital setting, but is also extended to patients of our three satellite health centers located throughout our coverage area. This broadens the range of patients we can assist and it is our hope that they will use this assistance for preventive care measures. Regardless of which facility the patient uses, only one application needs to be filed, making the process much simpler for applicants.

Each year, the hospital hosts two events that offer free health screenings to local residents.

- Hunters' Health Screening (September) is a free, annual event sponsored by the hospital. Participants receive a basic physical / health screening (EKG, blood work, blood pressure, lab testing, physician review and reporting) at no cost. Event is arranged, coordinated and promoted by ECH public relations staff. In 2010, there were approximately 20 participants.
- Healthy Heart Day (February) is another free health screening event; and is co-sponsored by the hospital auxiliary each year. Participants receive heart health education, health screenings, lab testing, physician review and reporting. Participants can speak to experts during the event. In 2010, there were 55 participants.

## 20. Additional comments

In 2009, Elizabethtown Community Hospital prepared a Community Service Plan to support the New York State Commissioner of Health's statewide mission to improve the health of all New Yorkers and to participate in a new public health initiative. This initiative sought to integrate traditional medical services with public health interventions that stimulate positive behavioral changes to improve health status. Facilitated by the Adirondack Rural Health Network (ARHN) Elizabethtown Community Hospital continues to participate in a collaborative approach to community health assessment and planning and to document those efforts in this Community Service Plan Update. Elizabethtown Community Hospital works together with other ARHN members who represent our

community partners, including local health departments to address the Commissioner's public health priorities identified in the Prevention Agenda toward the Healthiest State. By participating in this public health effort, Elizabethtown Community Hospital supports the overall goals of the New York State Health Department which are to focus on primary/secondary disease prevention, promote access to quality health care services and eliminate health care disparities where they exist.

By collaborating with community health partners, all ARHN members are better able to meet the needs of the community by focusing resources on health care needs that are common to the region. Further, new partnerships have emerged from this project, public health departments have partnered with hospitals, both have partnered with not-for-profit groups who share similar goals, and local governments have joined initiatives along with group from churches and schools, and concerned community members. Partners have brought the information to their communities and developed partnerships with groups and individuals with shared interests.

In addition to new partnerships at the development and grassroots level, Franklin County has joined the ARHN to collaborate on current health initiatives and on the next Building a Healthy Community, Health Assessment and Community Service Plan, to be published in 2013.

As the facilitating agency, ARHN provides a forum where the various community partners come together to effectively collaborate and to provide resources for the development of each county's Community Health Assessment and each hospital's Community Service Plan.