



Whitewater Bromley Community Health Centre Satellite

A part of Lanark Health and Community Services

Executive Summary Situational Assessment 2006-2011



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Executive Summary

The following is an executive summary of the larger situational assessment report which provides a more comprehensive summary of the responses from the community health survey and community partner survey. A full report is available by contacting our centre at 613-582-3685 or by e-mailing <Imyly@nrtco.net>.

In this report we use the term "situational assessment" instead of "needs assessment." This is intentional. The term "situational assessment" is used as a way to avoid the common pitfall of only looking at problems and difficulties. Instead it encourages considering the strengths and skills of individuals and within communities.

Whitewater Bromley Community Health Centre Satellite (WBCHCS or "the Health Centre"), a part of Lanark Health and Community Services received start-up funding from the Ministry of Health and Long term Care in the fall of 2004. The satellite has been operational since the spring of 2005 providing a range of primary health care services and community programs. The Health Centre embarked on a situational assessment in the spring of 2006. The purpose of this assessment was to define the profile and needs of our community and to ensure that community input was incorporated into the development of the strategic directions for our Health Centre.

The situational assessment was comprised of the following:

1. Individual Surveys
2. Key Informant Interviews
3. Review of Census Data and Relevant Community Reports
4. Focus Groups

Meetings were held with local councils to engage their support in the process and articles were placed in the local newspaper to inform the community. Local businesses generously donated prizes as an incentive for people to complete the mail-in survey.

In June 2006, just over 3,800 written surveys were distributed to area households and 583 survey responses were received, close to a 20% response rate, which is considered very good for this type of survey. Forty six (46) community partner agencies were surveyed by phone.

A Profile of the Community Respondents

- Most of the respondents were from Cobden (33%) and Beachburg (22 %).
- The majority (78%) of the respondents were female.
- Seventy (70%) of the respondents were between the ages of 25 and 64 years of age and 25 % were 65 years or older.

- Over a quarter of the respondents (27%) have a college diploma, 24% are high school graduates, 13% have a University degree and 10% have some high school.
- Over half of the respondents (52 %) have lived in the area for more than 20 years and the next largest group of respondents (15%) have lived here 1 to 5 years.
- Nine percent (9%) rated their health as “excellent” (20% is the Canadian average); however the majority (74%) said they thought their health was “good” or “very good”.
- One third of those who responded said they do moderate activity daily – a lot of people walk and garden. Almost the same percentage of respondents (37%) were satisfied with their current level of physical activity as dissatisfied (36%), suggesting that about 1/3 of respondents would like to be more physically active.
- More than half (57%) of respondents reported that they need to manage their stress better.
- Twenty-four percent (24%) of respondents report that there are smokers in their home. A Renfrew County & District Health Unit report states that 27% of the residents of Renfrew County are smokers.
- Almost 50% of families have dinner together more than 5 times per week. Research tells us that families who eat together eat healthier.
- Seventy percent (70%) of respondents have computers in their home and 55% know how to use them.
- Most people read the newspaper to obtain information about community events (84%) and many rely on family and friends for news (73%).
- About one third (34%) of respondents said they found it difficult to get rides when they need to go somewhere. Community partners identified transportation as their third top priority of community needs (see page 4).
- About 2/3 of respondents (61%) attend community events and over 1/3 (34%) volunteer at least once a month or more often. Not surprisingly, almost 70% reported that they feel a sense of belonging in the community. Interestingly, 61% of the respondents said they thought their community was not friendly to newcomers.

Respondent’s Knowledge and Use of WBCHCS

The majority of respondents have heard of WBCHCS but only 56% know about its services and less than 50% have visited the Health Centre. Similarly, community partner representatives recognized the name of the Health Centre (84%), however, almost one third (28%) did not know about the services provided.

Though most partner representatives were able to accurately describe WBCHCS as a Health Centre, many were uncertain and confused about the Health Centre's specific functions.

Even though less than half of the respondents use the Health Centre, only one third already have a family doctor. This would suggest there are individuals without family doctors living in our community. Half of the respondents expressed an interest in using our Urgent Care Walk-In service.

The Health Centre produces a monthly newsletter called Health Happenings, which is sent as an insert in the local newspaper, the Cobden Sun. Just over half (51%) report that they have not seen it, but of the 48% who have, almost one third (29%) always read it. However, almost half (47%) did not respond when asked about how often they read it.

What Respondents Want Us to Do

Priority Number	Community Health Survey	Community Partner Survey
1	Community Health Programs	Clinical and Medical Services
2	Clinical and Medical Services	Walk-In Clinic/Emergency Services
3	Nutrition Services/Programs	Community Health Programs
4	Physical Activity Programs	Youth Programs

The top priorities for what respondents want us to do are medical services, including walk-in and emergency care and a variety of community health programs with nutrition services, physical activity programs and youth programs identified as priorities. Also identified as important were walking programs, smoking cessation, seniors programs, weight management or weight loss and specialized health professional services like chiropractic and mental health services.

We asked people when they would like to come for medical services and community programs and about half said they would prefer to come for medical services between 9 and 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday (not Tuesday) and the other half preferred evening hours (5-8 p.m.). Most said it depends on their work schedule and particular circumstances. Very few people responded when asked when they would like to participate in community programs. This low response could be due to the fact that people are more familiar with what medical services are and less familiar with community programs.

When asked what would improve the quality of their medical care in general, 60% said they would like shorter wait times and 40% said they would like services closer to their home. Thirteen percent (13%) said they needed help with transportation to attend appointments or programs.

What Health Services Does This Community Need?

Priority Number	Community Health Survey	Community Partner Survey
1	Walk-in Clinic	Support groups for people with Chronic Diseases
2	First Aid and CPR	Nutrition Counselling
3	Medical Care	Transportation Services
4	Nutrition Counselling	Walk-In Medical Clinic

WBCHCS currently provides an urgent care walk-in service three afternoons per week in the Cobden site, therefore, currently addressing the top need in the community health survey.

Medical care, the third community priority, is currently provided by WBCHCS in both the Beachburg and Cobden sites with the Cobden practice still accepting new clients.

Support for people with chronic diseases was identified as a high priority from our community partners. Chronic Disease Prevention and Management has also been identified by our Local Champlain Health Integration Network (LHIN) as a local priority. The Health Centre is currently planning strategies to better manage chronic diseases for our client base and we will need to look at how we can respond to this identified need for support groups.

Nutrition counselling was also identified by both the community and partner agencies as a need. Interestingly 58% of survey respondents stated their diets were somewhat healthy and 38% said their diets were very healthy. It was confusing however, that when asked "Do you need to choose healthier foods more often?" nearly 80% of survey respondents said no. In order to address this need, the Health Centre may need to request additional funding or to look for other available community resources.

Other services identified as needed were, eye care, chiropractic care, healthy cooking and eating programs, sports activities, physiotherapy, smoking cessation and counseling including addictions and anger management, children's programs to increase physical activity, budgeting and money management, water safety, child abuse support, support for Alzheimers, alcoholics anonymous, shopping on a budget, workplace health and safety (particularly farmers and lumber workers), roadside clean-up, and affordable childcare.

Input from Community Partners

Available programming space was identified as an issue in this community. Many of our community partners have both limited programming space and available equipment to run programs and services; many agencies use local churches and rent equipment from other groups.

Partner agencies/groups also rely a great deal on volunteer time and receive personal and local service club donations to run their programs.

There are many community partnerships and a high degree of collaboration among organizations in order to provide services to this community. The vast majority (92%) of community partners reported that they participate in community events and over half are involved in coordinating community activities.

Conclusions

It was affirming that both the individual and community partner surveys identified some common needs for the community in response to the questions: What should we be doing? and What health services do we need? Understandably, medical care and access to urgent care were top priorities as this is the case in many rural communities. The need for first aid and CPR as a top priority also speaks to the large geographical distances required to access healthcare in a rural area.

Community health programs were identified as a high priority by many respondents. Youth programming, physical activity/walking programs, healthy eating, support for chronic diseases, seniors programming and mental health services were specifically mentioned as top priorities.

Partnerships' building is clearly a strategy that is working well in this community. WBCHCS will need to develop partnerships as a means to network, respond to community needs and to expand and enrich programs and services.

It is evident that more work needs to be done on marketing our services and addressing how we communicate the Health Centre's information. We know that people are starting to hear about our Centre, but they are not clear about the services we provide.

It was surprising to hear that this community is not welcoming to newcomers and this tells us that we need to be attentive to being a welcoming place in this community.

This situational assessment provided us with a community profile and a lot of information about what the community sees as priorities for improved health for themselves and/or for their community. WBCHCS looks forward to taking the next step in our planning process which will be to develop strategic directions that will address some of these identified community needs. WBCHCS is committed to assisting people within the community we serve to achieve the best possible health and well-being.