Community Health Needs Assessment
2019 Implementation Plan

National Jewish Health
Breathing Science is Life.
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Letter from the President and CEO

November 2019

It may be difficult to imagine now, but in 1899 tuberculosis was an epidemic. That year, National Jewish Health opened its doors to indigent tuberculosis patients who had spent their last dimes coming to Denver hoping that the city’s abundant sunshine and dry air would bring them relief. For the first 70 years of our existence, National Jewish Health did not charge for the care of patients with tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases. Our motto, still visible above the entrance to the B’nai B’rith building: “None may enter who can pay. None can pay who enter.”

That spirit of community engagement and support continues today at National Jewish Health. We treat patients from around Colorado and the nation who suffer the most challenging cases of respiratory and related diseases. We continue the commitment to treat all patients on a first-come, first-served basis, with no limits on the number of Medicaid and underserved patients we see. Each year, we educate and care for up to 90 children with chronic diseases at our free, K-8 school, the Morgridge Academy, on our main Denver campus. We conduct basic, translational and clinical research that brings new treatments to patients around the world. We have dozens of classes and support groups to educate our patients, as well as community members, about the diagnosis and management of respiratory and related diseases.

In 2018 and early 2019, we conducted an extensive assessment to determine how we could better meet the health needs of our community. We reviewed a wide range of published data, conducted focus groups with community members, consulted with community health providers and queried experts within our own walls to learn about our community’s health needs and how we can best meet those needs. In June 2019, we published the results of this work, our 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment. We identified three primary areas of focus for our efforts to improve community health: Pediatric Asthma, Education and Access to Specialty Care.

Our 2019 Community Health Implementation Plan, outlined in the following pages, describes how we plan to meet those needs and continue our 120-year tradition of serving our community. We hope you will review those plans, offer additional feedback and guidance, and join us in this effort if you can.

Sincerely,

Michael Salem, MD
President and CEO
National Jewish Health
About National Jewish Health

National Jewish Health is an academic, specialty care hospital, providing research, education and patient care. National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive and coordinated care.

National Jewish Health provides community benefit through its patient care, community outreach, patient and physician education and research. Medicaid patients are served on a first-come, first-served basis, with no quotas or limits.

With more than 20 practice locations across Colorado, National Jewish Health serves patients throughout the state. As a tertiary care, specialty center, patients are referred to National Jewish Health from around the nation, many with conditions so difficult and baffling they could not be successfully treated anywhere else. National Jewish Health also has a joint operating agreement with Saint Joseph Hospital, a part of the SCL Health system in Denver, a relationship that enables doctors from National Jewish Health to provide continuity of care for their patients when they require hospitalization. The relationship also taps the expertise of the pulmonologists and critical care specialists from National Jewish Health to serve all inpatients at Saint Joseph Hospital and other hospitals in the front range of Denver. We also collaborate with other hospitals, both locally and nationally, to focus on ways to elevate care and further research.

National Jewish Health faculty and staff conduct extensive basic, translational and clinical research that informs local and national communities on a wide variety of respiratory, immune and related diseases, laying the groundwork for discovery and improvement of care. National Jewish Health receives approximately $50 million in grant revenues annually, primarily from the federal government, especially the National Institutes of Health. It invests another $20 million of its own funds each year in research.

Educating patients and health care professionals is a central element of the National Jewish Health mission. From educating patients about how to better take care of themselves, to faculty-led trainings for medical students, residents and postgraduate fellows, education is a primary focus. Additionally, National Jewish Health has a fully developed Professional Education Department that organizes seminars, webinars and hands-on workshops around the country to help health care professionals learn about respiratory-related illnesses and to ultimately lead to better care of patients.
Community Health Needs Assessment

During 2018 and the first half of 2019, National Jewish Health conducted a Community Health Needs Assessment as required by the Internal Revenue Service.

- **Community.** We defined the community geographically as comprising five counties (Denver, Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas and Jefferson) in which 70 percent of our patients live. As the only hospital in the nation focused on respiratory and related disease, we further defined our community as patients living in those counties who have or are at risk for respiratory disease.

- **Assessing Health Needs.** In order to assess the health needs of the community, we examined a wide variety of published health data, with a special eye on the social determinants of health. We also conducted two community focus groups, surveyed several community health providers and gathered input from National Jewish Health experts on community health.

- **Identified Health Needs.** Following input and analysis from various published and human resources, we identified health needs in two categories: respiratory health and social and behavioral health. The identified community health needs are:
  - **Respiratory Health**
    - Asthma
    - COPD
    - Sleep Apnea
  - **Social and Behavioral Health**
    - Tobacco Use
    - Air Pollution
    - Education
    - Access to Specialty Care
Selected Areas of Focus

Based on a combination of community needs and National Jewish Health capabilities, the following areas will be the primary focus of the National Jewish Health Community Health Needs Implementation Strategy to address community health needs.

**Pediatric Asthma**
Rates of asthma, and especially rates of emergency room visits and hospitalizations among children living in the National Jewish Health community, along with universal mention of asthma among pediatric community health providers, suggests this is a large unmet community health need. National Jewish Health has the expertise, knowledge, capacity and tools to improve diagnosis and treatment of children with asthma.

**Education**
Both providers and patients could benefit significantly from better understanding respiratory health and ways to protect it, from educating physicians about handling difficult respiratory cases to educating patients about managing their disease and reducing exposure to respiratory irritants.

**Access to Specialty Care**
The popularity of our Comprehensive Respiratory Care Clinic and high rates of emergency care and hospitalizations for asthma and COPD indicate that uncontrolled respiratory disease plagues our community and that respiratory patients and their physicians need better access to the knowledge and expertise of National Jewish Health.

**Health Needs Not Addressed**
All of the identified significant health needs are important to National Jewish Health. However, the institution must focus its leadership, time and resources on the selected needs in order to make a difference in the community’s health. The selected needs were ones to which National Jewish Health brings extraordinary expertise and capabilities not widely available in the community. Limitations of funding, staff and expertise at the hospital were considered barriers to effectively addressing the unselected needs. Unselected needs were also ones that could be addressed by other organizations.
Implementation Strategy

Goal: Serve more children with asthma.

Objectives

- **Extended Hours.** We are extending the availability of our physicians to include evenings and Saturdays so that more children with asthma can more easily receive care.

- **Expanded department with more faculty and staff.** We will hire additional pediatric pulmonologists and other health care professionals who will be able to care for more children.

- **Partners.** We have an agreement with Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children (RMHC), a part of the HealthOne system, to use our services to provide pediatric pulmonary care for RMHC patients, leveraging our specialty expertise to reach more children.

- **Additional locations.** We recently opened a pediatric pulmonary clinic in Loveland, Colorado; expanded our pediatric presence in our Highlands Ranch clinic; and anticipate opening other targeted locations in the Denver metro area and beyond, so that pediatric asthma patients can more easily see our physicians.

Measurement

- Track numbers of patient and geographic expansion within target areas.

Goal: Provide better care for children with asthma.

Objectives

- **Clinical trials of new medications.** National Jewish Health consistently conducts clinical trials of experimental medications for pediatric asthma patients, many of which lead to approvals for new medications to better treat pediatric asthma. This practice will continue in the coming years.

- **Basic and translational research into mechanisms of asthma.** Dozens of researchers at National Jewish Health conduct basic research on asthma, allergies and pulmonary injury and repair, all of which provide basic knowledge that leads to better care, new medications and preventive measures for asthma.

  As an example of one ongoing research project, Magdalena Gorska, MD, PhD, is pursuing a line of research that links diesel exhaust inhaled by pregnant women to asthma in their children. Knowledge gained from that work could lead to new measures to prevent asthma in children.

Measurement

- Track research studies and published findings. Document grants and research.
Education

Goal: Educate patients and their families on how to manage asthma and other respiratory diseases.

Objectives:

- **Morgridge Academy.** National Jewish Health operates a free, K-8 school for up to 90 chronically ill children on the organization’s main campus in Denver. The school teaches predominantly low-income and minority students how to manage their diseases, then creates a learning environment that allows children to fully participate in academic studies and catch up on lost ground due to absences caused by asthma and other chronic diseases. It is the only school of its kind on a medical campus in the nation. The Colorado Department of Education provides about one-third of the costs, and National Jewish Health funds the remaining two-thirds. We will work to expand the school to serve more children with respiratory and other chronic diseases.

- **Health content.** National Jewish Health provides a robust library of health content, authored exclusively by experts at National Jewish Health, both in print and online. The educational material produced ranges from more than 200 MedFacts, TestFacts and Understanding booklets to dozens of instructional videos on topics such as inhaler technique and “What is COPD?” We will continue to expand our consumer-facing health content, with special focus on increasing our library of educational videos.

- **Patient education classes and support groups.** National Jewish Health continues a focus on education and support of patients with chronic illnesses and will strive to expand access to patient education classes and support groups.

Measurement

- Document number of patients reached.

Goal: Educate health care professionals

Objectives

- **Physicians training.** National Jewish Health provides an active training programs for medical students, interns, residents and postgraduate fellows in allergy, immunology, environmental and occupational health sciences, pulmonology, pediatrics and more. At any given time, about 70 residents and fellows are receiving training at National Jewish Health for future careers in
Continuing medical education. The Office of Professional Education regularly develops multi-city series of educational seminars at which our expert physicians educate health professionals on current topics concerning the diseases we treat, ranging from the safety and efficacy of inhaled corticosteroids in asthma, emerging medications in asthma and current best practices in care of patients with interstitial lung disease. The Office will also expand online continuing medical education courses on asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, obesity, lung cancer and other areas of expertise.

Conference presentations. National Jewish Health faculty educate their peers about the care of patients at dozens of conferences throughout the year.

Measurement

- Assess how many reached and programs held within these areas.
Access to Specialty Care

Goal: Expand capacity to see patients

Objectives

- **Center for Outpatient Health.** Demand for National Jewish Health care has expanded tremendously in recent years as have patient visits, to the point that our physical plant and our staff can accommodate no additional patients. We are planning construction of a five-story, 104,350-square foot Center for Outpatient Health, which will greatly increase our capacity for patient care.

- **Faculty and staff growth.** We anticipate continued growth in our faculty and staff so that we have the human resources to see more specialty care patients.

- **More locations.** We will work with Saint Joseph Hospital, a part of the SCLHealth system, and Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children, a part of the HealthOne system, to deliver National Jewish Health expertise at more locations across Colorado.

Measurement

- We will assess success by completion of the Center for Outpatient Health and by increase in numbers of patients who access our care.

Goal: Make it easier for outside health care providers to work with us and refer patients

Objectives

- **Operational and technology improvements.** We are planning several operational and technology improvements that will make it easier for outside health care providers to consult and refer to National Jewish Health physicians. These include:
  
  - Changing our electronic health records to the Epic system, which is in many ways an industry standard system, will allow a more efficient and superior exchange of health information about patients.
  
  - We have prioritized purchase of a new audiovisual system, which will facilitate more effective delivery of education sessions and support sharing information internally and with collaborating external institutions.
Measurement

- Successful completion of the building project
- Planning and initial installation of Epic platform.

Goal: Additional Specialty Services

Objectives

- **New and expanded programs.** We are developing a program for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis patients, and expanding both our pulmonary hypertension and scleroderma programs. The recent recognition by the Scleroderma Foundation as a designated treatment center will raise visibility of our program and bring in more patients with this disease.

Measurement

- We will measure patient participation and success in the programs.
Additional National Jewish Health Services Provided to the Community

In addition to the Goals and Objectives outlined above, we have numerous other programs we will continue to provide to meet the community’s health needs. These include:

**Free lung testing.** In 2018, National Jewish Health staff participated in 92 free community outreach events in and around Colorado, at which educational materials and free lung testing were offered. Lung testing can help detect lung disease that needs medical attention. Each year, National Jewish Health reaches out to its local communities with this free service.

**Tobacco cessation.** National Jewish Health currently operates the tobacco-cessation QuitLines for 16 states, including Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan and Colorado. The National Jewish Health “Health Initiatives” department, which manages these QuitLines, also works to develop tobacco-cessation protocols for especially impacted populations. In the past year, programs to help teens quit vaping and targeted programs for groups such as American Indians and the LGBTQ community have been introduced.

**Addressing the vaping epidemic.** We have researched and developed a free QuitLine tailored specifically for teens, especially those who want to quit e-cigarettes. We have ongoing research into the biological and behavioral aspects of e-cigarette use. Findings reported so far highlight negative impacts of e-cigarette vapor on the immune system and that e-cigarette use among tobacco smokers does not promote reduction of tobacco use for most smokers.

**Clinical and Translational Research Center.** Funded by the National Institutes of Health, the center provides an infrastructure for community-based research in collaboration with the University of Colorado.

**Lung Line.** A free information service for health care consumers provided by National Jewish Health, Lung Line is staffed by registered nurses who have years of clinical experience. These nurses provide educational information on lung, allergic and immune diseases to health care consumers who call, email or contact National Jewish Health through our website or other websites. Since Lung Line began answering calls in 1983, the staff have provided answers to more than 1 million callers.

**The Miners Clinic of Colorado.** This program provides nationally recognized medical screening, diagnosis, treatment, pulmonary rehabilitation, education and counseling and prevention services through free screening programs held at various locations around the state.

**The Black Lung Clinic.** This clinic offers appointments year-round at National Jewish Health in Denver. It also holds annual outreach clinics in partnership with local hospitals in Craig, Montrose and Pueblo, Colorado, as well as Page, Arizona.

**The Radiation Exposure Screening and Education Program (RESEP) Clinics.** This program helps thousands of workers who were involved in the mining, milling and transport of uranium used to produce atomic weapons for the United States. It provides screening for diseases related to radiation exposure, referrals for patients needing further diagnostic or treatment procedures and help with documenting claims under RECA.