Our vision is to enhance the health of our patients and other customers, partner with physicians and health organizations to treat disease and injury, provide early intervention and preventive care to create a healthier community and to increase community involvement through philanthropy and education.

Our mission is to deliver innovative services of superior quality to our community at the best value: to offer a full range of preventive, diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitative services in a holistic manner. We strive continually for improvement in everything we do.

Our Corporate Values guide our success:

- The customer is first and foremost
- Respect for the individual
- The pursuit of excellence
- The promotion of positive change
- Service to the community

The 2012-2013 Gwinnett Medical Center-Duluth Community Health Needs Assessment and this assessment summary are on the website of Gwinnett Medical Center at gwinnettm edicalcenter.org. A copy can also be obtained by contacting the hospital administration offices.
Gwinnett Hospital System (GHS) traces its roots in Gwinnett County to the opening of Joan Glancy Hospital in Duluth more than 65 years ago. Joan Glancy was the first hospital to open in the county. While we’ve grown a lot over the years, we remain as committed as ever to serving the needs of the community.

To better understand those needs, Gwinnett Medical Center–Duluth (GMC–Duluth), working in partnership with local health organizations, conducts periodic Community Health Needs Assessments. The goal is to identify opportunities to continue to improve our community’s health. In addition to publicly reported data, we gather input from Gwinnett County residents using focus groups, town hall meetings, interviews, and surveys. In collecting this information, we make every effort to ensure the information we gather represents the rich diversity of the individuals and families who live in our community.

Based on the results of our recent needs assessment, the biggest opportunities lie in the following areas:

- Managing health conditions and chronic disease treatments
- Improving access to care
- Preventing chronic diseases and increasing wellness

The next step is to develop and put in place strategies to address these needs. That fits in nicely with our overall mission, which is to meet the healthcare needs of the community by providing quality health services.

As a not-for-profit organization, GMC–Duluth invests its margin back into facilities, equipment, physician and staff training to continually improve patient care. I’m proud of our ongoing commitment to the community. On the Duluth campuses that includes a world class rehabilitation center, a surgical weight management program, and robotic surgery.

Underneath our logo, you’ll see a tagline. It reads: transforming healthcare. Those aren’t just nice sounding words. They are words we live by at GMC–Duluth.

Lea Bay
President
Gwinnett Medical Center–Duluth
Description of Community Served by the Hospital

Gwinnett Hospital System, Inc., also known as Gwinnett Medical Center, is a not-for-profit and tax-exempt organization which operates exclusively to serve the community. Our mission is to meet the healthcare needs of the community by providing quality health services. For more than 65 years, we have been committed to serving the greater Gwinnett County area, and especially the under-served, uninsured and indigent populations.

Gwinnett Medical Center is a state licensed, 553 bed healthcare system with two acute-care hospitals: Gwinnett Medical Center-Lawrenceville and Gwinnett Medical Center-Duluth. The two facilities are 10 miles apart and both serve residents of Gwinnett County. Each facility is focused on providing healthcare services for their local community as well as meeting the health needs of residents across Gwinnett County.

The Gwinnett Medical Center-Duluth community health needs assessment focuses on the residents of Gwinnett County because approximately 78 percent of Gwinnett Medical Center-Duluth’s patients originate from Gwinnett County.

Gwinnett County is considered urban and is located in the northeast suburbs of the metropolitan Atlanta area. The county has the second largest population in the state and is the 65th most populated county in the nation. Tremendous growth over the past 50 years has brought a young, racially and ethnically diverse population to the county from across the nation and around the world. The Gwinnett County Public School System includes 133 schools and other educational facilities and serves 162,000 students. The average percentage of students graduating from high school is higher than the state average. The median household income is
$65,136. Ten percent of residents live below the poverty level; 26.1 percent of single-parent families (with a male or female householder and no spouse) who have children under the age of 18 have incomes below the poverty level.

Who was Involved in the Assessment

Gwinnett Medical Center-Duluth participated in data and community health need assessment teams that included participants from many levels of the organizations to conduct the needs assessment. The participants brought their expertise and knowledge of how our organization provides healthcare services to the assessment process. The ultimate goal of the assessment is that with community support we will identify opportunities to improve our community’s health.

Community involvement and input is an important component of our needs assessment process. Gwinnett Medical Center has conducted Gwinnett Community Health Status Reports with the Gwinnett County Health Department since 1999. The Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to addressing the health and human service needs of everyone in Gwinnett County. It does so through collaborative community planning, applied research, community education, membership diversity, consensus building, advocacy and innovation. Our organization has been an active partner of the Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services for more than 20 years.

In September 2011, the initial plan to conduct the next five year strategic plan was approved by the Gwinnett Coalition’s Executive Board of Directors. The Board also agreed to collaborate with Gwinnett Medical Center and the Gwinnett County Health Department to gather community data to be shared by all three organizations for community assessment processes. These three entities committed to providing financial and in-kind support for the assessment process. The assessment also included participation of county departments, school district and community service agencies providing health and related services. To ensure input from persons with broad knowledge of the community, the partnership conducted focus groups, community service agency town hall meetings and community key leader interviews. Summary community referral data from the Gwinnett Coalition’s Helpline were included in the analysis. In addition, the Gwinnett County 2010 Youth Survey results were included in the community input data set.

Eight community focus groups were conducted over a two month period between November 2011 and January 2012. One hundred community representatives of different ages, races and interests participated. Members of medically under-served; low-income and minority populations; as well as populations with chronic disease needs participated in the focus groups. The focus groups were organized through the Gwinnett Coalition’s Research and Accountability Committee’s member organizations and conducted in various community locations according to the specific needs of the group. Topics of discussion included: quality of life; community relations and engagement; economic and financial stability; education; safety; youth; and health and wellness.
The Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services, in cooperation with Gwinnett Medical Centers and the Gwinnett County Health Department, conducted town hall meetings on Tuesday, January 24, 2012 at the Norcross Community Center, located at 10 College Street, Norcross, Ga. Two sessions were held to maximize attendance. Approximately 88 individuals from various Gwinnett County agencies participated. Each session, morning and afternoon, consisted of a three-hour period where attendees engaged in one of six break-out groups defined by the Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services strategic plan areas (Health and Well Being, Community Engagement, Education, Safety, Economic and Financial Stability, and Basic Needs) and developed a list of community needs. From this list, the top five needs were chosen (without ranking order) and submitted for a large group prioritization session. The large group prioritization sessions consisted of a three-tiered voting system to rank each need within each specific strategic plan area and to garner an overall rating of all community needs for Gwinnett County.

The town hall meetings were promoted through email blasts to approximately 1,500 Gwinnett County agencies and individuals, a Gwinnett Daily Post newspaper announcement, on the Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services website at gwinnettcoalition.com, and on various social media sites including the Gwinnett Coalition’s Facebook and Twitter pages.

Individual key informant interviews were conducted by a representative from the Gwinnett County Health Department. Key informants are community leaders with unique knowledge and influence in the community. The participants were chosen using the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) guidelines. The face-to-face interviews were conducted by a single interviewer over a three month period between February and April 2012. Discussion topics included quality of life, community strengths, health issues, medical services, achievable priorities, and possible community actions for the next five years.

The Gwinnett County Coalition for Health and Human Services provides a community Helpline with information and referrals for residents for a variety of needs. Call data for 2011 was included in this analysis.

The 2010 Gwinnett County Youth Survey was conducted by the Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services with Gwinnett County Public School students in grades 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. The total number of students participating was 28,773 (11,747 middle school age youth and 17,026 high school age youth) at 41 schools.
How the Assessment was Conducted

In August 2011, Gwinnett Medical Center adopted a comprehensive process to conduct the Gwinnett County community health needs assessment for each of its facilities (Gwinnett Medical Center-Lawrenceville and Gwinnett Medical Center-Duluth) using guidance from the Assessing & Addressing Community Health Needs Discussion Draft: March 2011 Catholic Health Association of the United States in collaboration with VHA Inc. and Healthy Communities Institute.

Gwinnett Medical Center-Duluth serves Gwinnett County residents, offering services in many areas including: emergency department; medical-surgical units; and an intensive care unit. Outpatient services include a surgical center as well as multiple diagnostics. Gwinnett Medical Center-Duluth offers some specialty care services that are not duplicated on the Lawrenceville campus; for example, the Duluth campus features the Glancy Rehabilitation Center which offers rehabilitation services for individuals who have had a stroke, illness or injury.

Community input data from the focus groups; community service agency town hall meetings; community leader interviews; Gwinnett Coalition Helpline referral data; and the youth surveys were considered in the assessment process. Staff from the hospital, public health department, school district and Gwinnett Coalition collated and analyzed the public health data.

The hospital adopted a systematic process that included engaging our community in the assessment of community health needs. The hospital’s data team began with a review of historical data from the 2006-2007 Gwinnett Community Health Status Report. Current demographics, morbidity and mortality statistics from the Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS), a toolset that allows access to the Georgia Division of Public Health’s standardized health data repository were also used. OASIS dashboards use National Center for Health Services (NCHS) rankable causes and compare Gwinnett County rates to Georgia rates. Additional demographics were obtained from the U. S. Census Bureau’s Quick Facts, American FactFinder and the American Community Survey for the assessment. The hospital and community partners obtained a license from Healthy Communities Institute for their web-based information system to present the most recently available health and quality of life indicators for Gwinnett County residents. In addition to vital statistics data, Gwinnett County indicators include data sources from the most recent County Health Rankings and Healthy People 2020 objectives.

The Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP), a community driven strategic planning process, was adopted by the Gwinnett Coalition with support from the Health Department.

The Gwinnett Medical Center-Duluth’s Community Health Needs Assessment Team reviewed all the data sources available including community input during facilitated team meetings in February and March 2012 and established identified community health need groups.

Team members individually reviewed the identified needs by considering the potential for impact and then ease of implementation, specifically as the needs are related to the services provided at GMC-Duluth.
The top priority areas were identified to meet community needs:

Manage Health Conditions and Chronic Disease Treatments

- Provide emergency department services for acute conditions and injuries
- Provide services to treat and manage chronic diseases and acute conditions
- Provide services to promote independence for persons with disabling conditions
- Provide comprehensive services to those suffering from the disease of obesity

Improve Access to Care

- Provide diagnostic services for the community
- Collaborate with community physicians to improve access to care
- Assist the international community in accessibility of healthcare services
- Collaborate with community organizations for access to treatment of behavioral health and mental disorders
- Collaborate with community organizations for access to services for persons with disabilities

Prevent Chronic Diseases and Increase Wellness

- Collaborate with community organizations to increase physical activities and healthy eating
- Collaborate with community organizations to raise healthy kids
- Collaborate with community organizations to promote healthy aging
- Collaborate with community organizations to stop the spread of communicable diseases
- Collaborate with community organizations to prevent and detect chronic disease
- Collaborate with community organizations to promote the health of the international population
Health Needs Identified

Gwinnett County is one of the highest ranked counties in overall health in Georgia, according to the County Health Rankings. Thirty-one percent of the population (255,226 residents) is under 20 years of age and 11 percent (80,041 residents) is 60 years of age or older. The county regularly met or exceeded most national benchmarks by Healthy People, and the trends have remained stable. With more than 800,000 residents in Gwinnett County, relatively small changes in health metrics can translate into significant changes in the number of people needing healthcare services.

Emergency care is a particular need among Gwinnett County residents: accidents are the second leading cause of premature death. A large number of youth participate in sports through school activities and the parks and recreation department. The mean travel time to work for Gwinnett County residents is 32.5 minutes, which is much higher than U.S. counties averages. However, the age-adjusted death rate to motor vehicle collisions is better than average for Georgia counties.

Acute conditions, chronic diseases and rehabilitation care for the disabling consequences of those conditions are key healthcare needs in our community. Heart disease was the second leading cause of hospital discharges (after pregnancy), and the sixth leading cause for emergency room visits over the period from 2005-2009. Strokes and diabetes complications can be disabling, and following acute treatment survivors need specialist support and rehabilitation. The third top cause of hospitalization was accidents. This again illustrates the number of potentially disabling incidents which create a need for support that improves quality of life.

More than 25 percent of the adults in Gwinnett are obese. Obesity is a risk factor for many health conditions including heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and joint conditions. Individuals who are morbidly obese are at even higher risk for these conditions.

For the 10 years leading up to 2010 there was a significant upward trend in hospitalizations for diabetes. Diabetes itself was the ninth leading cause of death in Gwinnett County for the years 2004-2008. Diabetes disproportionately affects minority populations and the elderly. Obesity is a risk factor for diabetes. However, compared with other Georgia counties, the age-adjusted death rate due to diabetes is fairly low, and on a downward trend.

Improving dietary habits and increasing physical activity to promote health and prevent diseases is a community priority. For example, the low-income, preschool obesity percentage is high in comparison to many U.S. counties.
Rapid and extensive population growth in Gwinnett County brought individuals from across the nation and around the world to the community. Over 160 different languages are reported to be spoken in the homes of Gwinnett County Public Schools students. Twenty-nine percent of residents speak a language other than English at home. In addition, of those residents who speak a language other than English, 50 percent reported they did not speak English "very well." Duluth itself has a particularly diverse population, including a large Asian community: 22.3 percent of Duluth residents are Asian, compared with 10.6 percent in Gwinnett County overall, and 3.2 percent in the state of Georgia. This cultural diversity creates ongoing challenges in meeting community health needs.

Unmet behavioral and mental health needs continue to be a significant problem, particularly with those individuals that are homeless or unemployed.

Participants in the focus groups, town hall meetings, and key informant interviews identified problematic themes in the areas of transportation and traffic, making access to healthcare and quality of life difficult. In addition, participants identified the significant challenges of communicating with the large and diverse Gwinnett County population.

Community Assets Identified

The assessment identified many community assets, which include services provided by Gwinnett Medical Center but also by a for-profit hospital, the public health department and several community clinics, and behavioral and mental health services. We have strong and supportive school systems and many public parks and libraries in the county. Our faith-based communities support our residents by providing the opportunity to share health improvement and spiritual growth for the whole person.

Summaries: Assessments and Priorities

The Duluth Community Benefit Assessment Team committed to focus on the affirmed priorities. In summary, the three priority areas for identified health needs were:

- Manage Health Conditions and Chronic Disease Treatments
- Improve Access to Care
- Prevent Chronic Diseases and Increase Wellness
Next Steps

Gwinnett Medical Center-Duluth will create teams to develop and implement strategies to address the prioritized needs. The teams will include representatives from the needs assessment team, hospital administration and the Board of Directors. In addition, they will use information from our community benefit plan and the Gwinnett Hospital System’s strategic plan to formulate plans to support meeting our community’s health needs. Collaborating with community service organizations will be an important part of the planning and implementation process.

Providing health and quality of life indicators to community organizations through the web-based information system from Healthy Communities Institute will offer continuity of available data about our community and promote partnerships.

Gwinnett Medical Center-Duluth is committed to conducting another comprehensive needs assessment in three years.

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