

## Health Care Reform Review Committee

Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014

### Testimony: Preventive Health at Sanford Health

Chairman Keiser and Committee members, I am Marnie Walth, Director of Strategic Planning and Public Policy at Sanford Health in Bismarck.

Sanford Health, an integrated not-for-profit health system headquartered in the Dakotas, offers locations in 126 communities in nine states. The system includes 39 hospitals, 140 clinic locations and 1,360 physicians.

As per Dr. Terry Dwelle's request, I'd like to share with you a brief summary of the work Sanford Health does to provide preventive health and wellness services to the communities we serve.

#### **Patient-centered medical home**

Patient-centered medical home (PCMH) places the patient at the center of care and creates a healthcare setting that is a collaborative partnership between the patient and their personal physician and care team. The PCMH model proposes to improve primary care by focusing on the patient-doctor relationship and to strengthen this dynamic by providing a more comprehensive approach to prevention and chronic disease management.

#### **Health coaches**

Health coaches are registered nurses who help hospital patients and their families navigate the transition to home care. This service seeks to reduce hospital readmissions as well preventable emergency department visits. For most patients, the coaching brings more independence and improves quality of life.

#### **Health education**

Each month, Sanford Bismarck offers education classes and support groups, ranging from breast feeding and infant massage for new parents to tobacco cessation to driver's safety for senior-aged adults and support groups for chronic illnesses such as diabetes. Sanford Health also hosts Doc Talk, a free monthly doctor-led presentation series that is open to the public. Doc Talk topics vary each year and consistently include prevention-based talks that tackle our community's top health threats: diabetes, heart disease and obesity. When lifestyle choices contribute to the topic, e.g. heart disease, applicable allied staff, e.g. registered dietitians, are there to educate participants regarding nutrition and healthy food choices.

#### **Health professionals' education**

Sanford Bismarck provides learning environments and financial support for programs such as the Sanford Health College of Nursing, the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Bismarck State College's laboratory tech program. Additionally, continuing education for Sanford providers and their colleagues throughout the state are offered onsite at various Sanford campuses.

#### **Corporate Wellness**

Housed in the Sanford Health Occupational Medicine division, a variety of worksite wellness programs—ranging from simple annual screening events to comprehensive programs that include onsite wellness initiatives, health coaching and tracking mechanisms—are offered to companies throughout Sanford's service area.

## **Research**

Sanford conducts research in cancer, heart, children's diseases and diabetes. Last week, Sanford Health announced its newest initiative: genomic research and treatment. It's the first program of its kind in the U.S. to fully integrate genetics and genomic medicine into primary care for adults. In the coming months, our physician leaders will begin translating patients' genetic makeup to prescribe certain medications with even greater precision. What's more, it's significant step towards predicting future health concerns and preventing disease with a personalized health care plan.

## **Partnership initiatives:**

Sanford Health partners with communities to bring health and healing to the people who live and work across our region. As a non-for-profit organization, ensuring that the benefits of healthcare reach the broad needs of communities is at the core of who we are. These partnerships are aimed at healthcare awareness, education, prevention, fundraising and research for the health care issues that matter most to the communities we serve. Examples include:

- Sanford's Fargo and Bismarck regions partnered with local city, county and university health leaders to complete Sanford's inaugural Community Needs Health Assessment (CHNA) reports. A CHNA provides a global view of health within a community and can serve as a catalyst to align expertise and resources to address unmet health needs. CHNA reporting is a requirement of the 2010 Affordable Care Act and part of the IRS 990 requirement for a not-for-profit health system.
- Sanford Bismarck partners with several Bismarck-Mandan organizations to coordinate care for families with special needs. The Great American Bike Race, for example, a fundraiser for children who have cerebral palsy or a related disability, has raised more than \$1.5 million to help families pay for care and equipment that health insurance does not cover. Often times the care and equipment purchased by GABR are those that maximize a child's mobility and independence, thus preventive in the sense that the child's reliance upon care providers is reduced.
- Sanford Health's Dakota Children's Advocacy Center, a program designed to improve the response to child abuse by providing a community-wide multidisciplinary team approach, also provides prevention education to regional communities throughout the year.
- Annual Run/Walk for Breast Cancer Awareness: This annual race and non-competitive walk began with the mission of increasing breast cancer awareness and has blossomed into comprehensive health fair offering wellness information on variety of topics including exercise, nutrition and stress relief. Last year's event included more than 1,000 participants and their families.