

# Case Study

## Hospital and fitness center join forces for a healthy community

### Abstract

A 2012 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) identified priority health needs in Columbus, Neb., and surrounding areas. A 2015 CHNA confirmed these findings. Ranking high on the list were increased incidences of obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

In response, Columbus Community Hospital and Columbus FamilyYMCA joined forces to offer a lifecare integration solution for the community's overall health and wellness. This included rehabilitative and wellness services offered by the hospital, as well as health and fitness services offered by the YMCA. Together, the two organizations brought the Columbus Wellness Center to life.

Today, local residents are using the new facility at rates far exceeding expectations. Inspired by healthy living choices, more than 7,500 individuals – equivalent to one-third of the Columbus population – are using the facility. In addition, the hospital's outpatient rehabilitation visits grew nearly 70 percent in the first year and a half, while the YMCA exceeded its three-year membership growth goal within the first six months of the Center's opening.

### Opportunity

The 2012 CHNA identified rising incidences of obesity, diabetes and heart disease at increasingly younger ages. The hospital board of directors and leadership, along with key community stakeholders, developed a comprehensive plan to address these issues. One component of the plan was a new facility combining general health and fitness activities with medically based wellness and rehabilitation capabilities. Hospital and YMCA leaders earnestly pursued an opportunity to engage community members in lifecare – a comprehensive health and wellness experience. The hospital purchased land and built a new facility. The YMCA subsequently entered into a 10-year lease agreement with the hospital for the fitness portion of the building. In fall 2015, the Columbus Wellness Center – a \$22 million, 85,000 square-foot facility – opened its doors to the community.

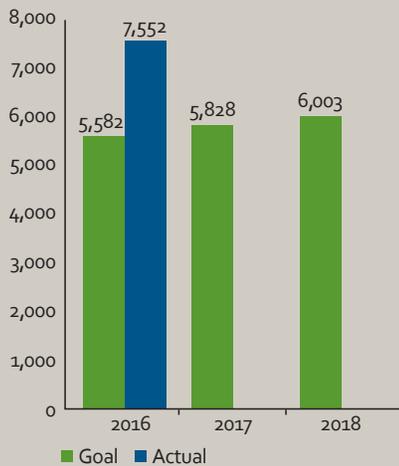
## Partnership Approach

After hospital and YMCA boards approved the legal agreement between the two entities, organizational leaders met monthly to oversee the formative stages of the Columbus Wellness Center. The Joint Wellness Committee, consisting of three hospital representatives and one YMCA representative, continues to meet quarterly to oversee ongoing strategic and operational needs.

## Key Steps

- 2012 – CHNA identifies obesity, diabetes and heart disease as community health needs.
- 2013 – Columbus Community Hospital initiates conceptual discussions with Columbus Family YMCA.
- March 2014 – Joint Wellness Committee begins meeting monthly to oversee strategic and operational needs, and to determine how best to utilize the Center for the community's health and wellness needs.
- March 2014 – The hospital and YMCA enter into a formal property agreement, with the YMCA as a lessee and the hospital retaining ownership of the facility.
- March 2014 – External communication kicks off with a media release inviting the public to the ground breaking ceremony.
- April 2014 – Columbus Wellness Center officially breaks ground.
- November 2015 – Columbus Wellness Center opens to the public. Approximately 3,500 community members attend the open house.
- Ongoing – Joint Wellness Committee provides strategic and operational oversight via quarterly meetings.

Year 1 YMCA Membership Growth



YMCA memberships exceeded three-year goal within six months of the Columbus Wellness Center opening.\*

Hospital Rehabilitation Services Growth



Hospital outpatient rehabilitation visits exceeded three-year goal within 1.5 years of the Columbus Wellness Center opening.\*

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“The Columbus Wellness Center allows us to address our community’s health and wellness needs in ways we previously could not. This is a game-changer for the overall health of our community.”

– Mike Hansen, president and CEO, Columbus Community Hospital

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## Results

A shared location for hospital rehabilitative services and YMCA programs puts consumers' health at the center, allowing patients to go beyond receiving treatment when they are not healthy to actively pursuing healthier and more active lives.

Rehabilitation patients work with YMCA personal trainers during the transition from therapy to a continued fitness and exercise regimen. Initiation fees are waived for those continuing as YMCA members. Physical therapists are available to all members for fitness advice, and they offer weekly, community-based exercise classes for populations with specific health needs. The hospital and YMCA continually collaborate on classes, programs, and educational seminars to promote interest and participation. The facility also offers aquatic therapy, which includes three pools with varying water temperatures and depths. The Columbus

\* Source: Columbus Community Hospital

Wellness Center is the only local facility offering this range of rehabilitative services, and one of only a few offering such services for the pediatric population.

The facility's multipurpose meeting room includes a kitchen for healthy cooking demonstrations offered by the hospital's certified dietitians, diabetes educators and healthy lifestyle coaches. It also serves as a gathering space for support groups. Additional programs emphasize stress management, as well as mental, spiritual and financial wellness.

Within six months of the Center's opening, YMCA individual memberships grew to 7,552, exceeding the three-year goal of 6,003. Hospital rehabilitative services grew nearly 70 percent in the first year and a half, compared to a 15 percent goal over three years.

Future results will address quality outcomes related to health needs as identified in the CHNAs.

## Lessons Learned

**Growth:** Unprecedented demand for outpatient rehabilitation and YMCA fitness services is requiring earlier-than-expected facility expansion discussions.

**Collaboration:** The hospital and YMCA historically have been mindful not to infringe on each other's services. In their new role as community partners, they are committed to continued collaboration to ensure ongoing favorable experiences.

**Therapy Model:** The Center chose to use a less integrated therapy model than some of the example facilities the committee explored. Although fully integrated models that allow therapy to occur in fitness areas deliver higher healthy lifestyle rates, non-clinical organizations like the YMCA have difficulty meeting associated government payer requirements. The hospital and YMCA strive to ensure the Center delivers innovative programs and services that engage people in healthy lifestyles at rates similar to more integrated therapy models.

More than 7,500 people use the YMCA—equal to about a third of the population of Columbus.

Source: Columbus Telegram, Oct. 30, 2016

## Community Partners

Columbus Community Hospital, a member of Heartland Health Alliance, is a 47-bed, community-owned, nonprofit hospital located in Columbus, Neb., serving a population of approximately 40,000.

The Columbus Family YMCA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

## About Bryan Health

Bryan Health is a Nebraska-governed, nonprofit health system that cares for patients, educates tomorrow's health care providers, motivates our community with fitness and health programs, and collaborates to continually improve how we serve others.

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