

Custer County

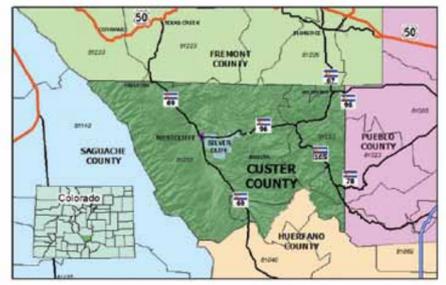


The Custer County Medical Center is a community clinic located in a frontier community in Custer County, Colorado. We serve about 6,000 full-time residents and another 1,500 seasonal residents. We are part of the West Custer County Hospital District which is a semi-governmental entity which also operates the county Emergency Medical Services.

The clinic's practice is 60% primary care and 40% urgent care. The practice serves all ages. We have one full-time family practice physician who has been here for 18 years and a new family practice nurse practitioner. Our medical center participates with Colorado State University's nurse practitioner program. Our nursing staff is primarily RNs with one LPN.

PARTICIPATION

- Forty one percent of all residents in our service area have incomes of < 200% Federal Poverty Level.
- Approximately 31.3 % of our target population is uninsured, compared to 22.4% of all service area residents, 18% of Coloradans, and 15.4% of U.S. residents.
- The next nearest source of any medical care is 57miles or 75 minutes away through mountainous terrain.
- We are designated as a Medically Underserved Area (MUA) as well as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). As a side note, our dentist does not take Medicaid or the Colorado Indigent Care program, both of which cover a sizable portion of our population.



PARTICIPATION

What motivated your practice site to participate in this initiative?

By virtue of its history, location, and culture, this clinic has practiced the major tenets of medical home for a long time. What we were missing was the context for taking it to the next level. By virtue of a more disciplined approach to looking at such things as access, continuity of care, and quality of care, we have made significant strides in improving our service to the community in each of these areas.

CHANGES

In 2008, we began with a Community Healthcare Needs Assessment conducted by The Joffitt Group out of Denver, Colorado. This included multiple interviews with community residents, as well as looking at the empirical data regarding our community and patient health care indicators. Based on this, we identified four strategic initiatives. They are as follows:

1. Expanded the scope of services for Custer County Medical Center.

- With the introduction of new lab equipment, we were able to provide 85% of our labs on-site versus the historical 15%.
- The introduction of digital x-ray allowed us to improve over-reads from 3 weeks to same-day STATs.

2. Increased community awareness, education and outreach.

- Implemented an EMR-based patient portal for increased patient access to personal health care records.
- Healthier Living classes for patient self-management of chronic illness.
- Introduced an overall marketing campaign called "Living Well Here at Home".
- In conjunction with Custer County Public Health Agency, provide free annual school and sports physicals along with immunization clinics.
- Instituted home visits by our family practice physician and our nursing staff.
- Improved community awareness through an annual community Blue Grass Festival with proceeds benefiting the medical clinic.

3. Expanded visiting specialist services.

- Introduced integrated behavioral/medical services allowing patients to receive behavioral health services at the medical clinic.
- Introduced part-time optometrist, gastroenterologist, and psychologist.
- Contracted with local dentist to expand dental services to our local community.
- Impending implementation of tele-medicine.

4. Cared for Veterans.

- Individual veterans' counseling via on-site Veteran Administration counselors.
- Group counseling with on-site Veteran Administration counselors.
- Increased utilization by veterans of our Physical Therapy unit.

PATIENT IMPACT

"As the Custer County Medical Center is located 60 miles from any other health care provider, the services provided by digital x-ray and in-house labs have significantly impacted patients in that they no longer need to travel excessive miles for these specific services. Also, the availability of x-ray and lab results provides our caregivers the ability to provide more timely and improved medical care." — Registered Nurse.

"The community response has been very positive and appreciative." — Executive Director

PROVIDER OR STAFF IMPACT

"On the one hand, it has increased the amount of staff work. However, the ability to provide better access and care to our patients has been very rewarding." — Registered Nurse.

"Custer County has one of the largest legions of veterans in the State of Colorado. Most conditions for these patients are not conducive to long 60-100 mile one-way vehicle rides." — Physical Therapist

Safety Net Medical Home Initiative



MacColl Institute at
Group Health Cooperative