



Gifford Medical Center

Strategic Initiatives and Process for Public Participation

Strategic planning is key to Gifford Medical Center's success and mission of meeting the community's health needs.

Every three years, Gifford engages in an extensive strategic planning process that results in the identification and implementation of a list of initiatives the hospital strives to achieve over the coming three years. Success at achieving those initiatives throughout, and by the conclusion, of the three-year period is extensively monitored by the hospital's leaders, including its volunteer Board of Trustees.

Strategic initiatives

Gifford's current strategic plan spans the years of 2007-2009. The plan includes the following initiatives:

- Expanding patient access to care through the appropriate additions of new providers and services;
- Improving Surgical Services efficiency;
- Improving quality; and
- Continually working to ensure high employee satisfaction.

These initiatives have or will positively impact the availability of local, quality, accessible health care. In this year's Hospital Report, we describe some our efforts around patient access to care.

There is no greater service that Gifford can provide to the public than consistent access to health care providers. When someone is sick, he or she needs to be able to see a health care provider. Having a relationship with a health care provider is also among the best things individuals can do to maintain their good health. With that responsibility in mind, Gifford through its day-to-day operations and strategic planning process sets access to providers among its chief goals. Achieving that goal involves a variety of efforts, including recruitment, retention, retirement planning and employee satisfaction. Below we describe some of our efforts in these areas.

1. Retirement planning

Gifford is fortunate to have a host of beloved providers who have worked with the medical center, providing local care to area families for decades. To appropriately plan for the area's future medical needs, Gifford must be

conscientious of the fact that these providers will not be in practice forever. To ensure continued access to primary and specialty care services in our region, Gifford administrators have engaged in open discussions with providers who are nearing retirement age about their future plans. The hospital is then planning accordingly, namely by working to recruit new providers to ensure no disruption in the availability of care, especially difficult-time-to-find specialty care providers.

2. Recruitment and other opportunities

Gifford additionally is recruiting new providers to meet existing needs, such as the constant need for primary care providers. One successful effort that will surely be a trend in health care is the addition of “mid-level providers,” or nurse practitioners and physician assistants. These care providers help ensure patients have quick access to particularly primary and acute care.

The medical center also tries hard to be open-minded to new providers who seek out employment or practice space at Gifford because of the hospital’s positive reputation.

3. Employee satisfaction

Lastly, Gifford works hard to do all it can to retain its excellent providers and other clinical and non-clinical staff by providing an outstanding workplace environment, a variety of educational and training opportunities, employee appreciation events and other employee satisfaction efforts.

In 2009, the Human Resources Department expanded its outreach to employees to ensure high satisfaction. Having employees, who enjoy their work and feel supported by their managers and the organization as a whole, greatly improves the experience patients have at Gifford. Gifford works hard to ensure employees feel valued and appreciated. Recently, that effort was expanded to include additional support from the Human Resources director who has begun attending department meetings to collect employee feedback. Members of the Human Resources team are also meeting one-on-one with employees. Roles or duties within the Human Resources Department have changed and significant effort is being made to reach out to employees to ensure they feel well supported and happy in their workplace.

Public participation

Identifying these strategic planning and the community’s health care needs would not be possible without input from the public. The former annual Community Needs Assessment process, annual Hospital Report Card meetings, business leaders roundtable discussions, patient satisfaction surveys and one-on-one comments to hospital staff and board members help direct strategic planning and operational decisions.

It is indeed a representation of the public – the hospital’s Board of Trustees – that makes the hospital’s yearly operational and longer-term capital and strategic planning decisions. These decisions propel the hospital into the future – with community members all the while giving board members direction, much like constituents to Selectboard members.

The hospital additionally offers many other public participation and volunteer opportunities. More than 100 community members volunteer at the hospital and its community clinics. Volunteers generously give of their time at Gifford’s Thrift Shop, gift shop and front desk. They raise money for the hospital and provide clothing for the needy through the Thrift Shop. They knit hats for babies born at Gifford’s Birthing Center and make quilts for newborns and nursing home patients. They visit patients, provide office support and work at the Adult Day Program in Bethel and the Menig Extended Care Facility nursing home on the main campus in Randolph.

More than 20 Chaplaincy Program volunteers come to Gifford from six different area churches to visit patients. The hospital also partners with numerous community and state organizations and businesses to provide, and receive, services surrounding primarily community health issues and initiatives. In addition, community members serve on hospital board committees, and hospital staff in turn serves on many community organizations and committees. The hospital’s approximately 300 corporators are kept apprised of hospital activities through the hospital’s Annual Meeting, and board members are elected at the Annual Meeting by this body of corporators.

Gifford also works hard to keep the community apprised of hospital happenings, news, services and free care opportunities. A significant number of news releases to local media; a newspaper insert called Update and published throughout the region twice annually; some direct mailings; the hospital’s Web site, www.giffordmed.org; and the hospital’s carefully assembled Annual Report all tell the public what is happening at Gifford. The hospital also opens its conference rooms for public meetings and hosts its own events, including community health fairs, support groups, classes and clinics.

Two examples in 2009 include an Advance Directive day, where hospital staff and volunteers helped community members and staff complete Advance Directives and the start of twice-monthly free sessions for any suffering from grief and loss.

To learn more about public events

To learn more about events happening at the hospital, log onto www.giffordmed.org or contact:

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To volunteer

Volunteers are essential to Gifford. If you are interested in volunteering at Gifford Medical Center, please contact:

Volunteer Coordinator
Gifford Medical Center
44 South Main St.
Randolph, VT 05060
Phone: (802) 728-2324
Fax: (802) 728-2302

Learn more about Gifford plans

For more information about Gifford's strategic plan, contact:

Administration
Gifford Medical Center
44 South Main St.
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Phone: (802) 728-2304

For more information about capital expenditure plans and a depreciation schedule for existing facilities, contact:

Accounting
Gifford Medical Center
44 South Main St.
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