



Community Health Needs Assessment

2022

Prepared by:
Joan Copeland
Carolyn Wood
Shonna Cannaday
J. Brent Fuller, CPA



Table of Contents

General Background of Palacios.....	3
History.....	3
The Hospital.....	4
Demographics	5
Community Healthcare Needs	10
Introduction.....	10
Financial Assistance.....	10
Mental Health.....	10
Language Barrier	11
Trust and Stigma.....	11
Community Partnerships.....	11
Community Outreach and Programs.....	12
Specialization	12
Retaining and Recruiting Physicians and Staff.....	14
Primary Care	14
Transportation	14
Recommendations.....	14
Community Involvement	14
Staffing.....	15
Bibliography	17

General Background of Palacios

It is often called the best kept secret in Texas. Located 90 miles southwest of Houston on the shore of Matagorda Bay, Palacios is a small, laid-back town and they want to keep it that way. Birdwatching at its best, great fishing and beautiful sunsets over the Bay are just a few ways to describe Palacios. Anyone who visits Palacios is enamored by the friendliness and hospitality of the citizens and the beauty of the Bay. The townspeople are proud of the rich history and are committed to its future.

History

Legend has it that a Spanish ship sailing into the Gulf shipwrecked. As the sailors looked toward the bay they saw three palaces but as they swam to the shore the palaces disappeared. The bay was then called 'Tres-Palacios' after the Spanish Governor at the time, Jose Felix Trespalacios. The town of Trespalacios was surveyed into lots in 1902 and the town changed its name to Palacios. The Southern Pacific Railroad also extended its line to Palacios this year and the town began to form. In 1903 the post office was opened, and the first church was organized. The population began to grow and in 1904 the Pleasure Pavilion was started on the central waterfront. It featured a two-story open-air central structure with two large wings on either side that offered bathhouses, swimming, fishing, skating, picnicking and other forms of entertainment for the residents. Numerous buildings went up at this time. The City of Palacios was incorporated in 1909 with Ruthven Duncan as the first Mayor and the Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1910. The newly founded city of Palacios continued to grow in the 1910's and 1920's. A public library was established, a town newspaper and several small churches and other businesses that began to take shape in the community during this time. One of the businesses that is still present today is the fishing industry as well as growing fruit such as peaches, figs and oranges.

In 1926 a summer training camp was formed for the 36th Infantry of the Texas National Guard. It was leased to the US War Department in 1940 and became a training facility for anti-aircraft artillery and housed around 15,000 personnel and several German war prisoners. In 1930 the camp was renamed Camp Hulen after John Hulen, commander of the Thirty-sixth Infantry Division. By the mid 1930's the City of Palacios had two public schools and a population of more than two thousand. In 1946 Camp Hulen was closed and the City of Palacios population began to decline.

Being on the seawall, it is no stranger to bad weather and in 1961 Hurricane Carla hit the city causing severe damage to historical structures throughout the town. Since this time, Palacios has begun to grow and rebuild its city and population. Many have realized the beauty and simplicity of the town and with industry nearby, people began to move into the region. The South Texas Nuclear Plant known as the South Texas Project has employed more than 1000 residents that remain today. South Texas Project being on school district land, it has created additional tax revenue which in turn has provided the Palacios School District the funds to open the Palacios Marine Education Center, a one of its kind in Texas. The Education Center is 27 acres of pristine shoreline and serves classes and instruction for four institutions in the state of Texas including Palacios ISD, Wharton County Junior College, Texas State Technical College, and the Texas A&M Sea Grant program. The community has enjoyed the recreational and educational benefit of historic pavilions built over the Tres Palacios Bay since 1904. Storm damage in 2011 dismantled the last of these on the pier. The desire to build a coastal educational pavilion that honors the past and looks toward the future is a desire among many in the area. In 2013 the city hired an architect/engineer team to design a new pavilion for the community. The Pavilion with its stunning bay view is an octagonal structure with over three thousand square feet and is used for community gatherings, education, school tours and private events.

The seafood processing industry is the largest industry in Palacios, sending fresh and frozen shrimp and crabmeat nationwide, including the largest blue-crab-processing plant in the United States. Home to about 400 vessels, Palacios is the third largest shrimping port on the Texas Gulf coast, proclaiming to be the 'Shrimp Capital of Texas'.

The City of Palacios has a council-manager government. The schools are served by the Palacios Independent School District and is comprised of two elementary schools, one junior high and one high school. The city is accessed by State Highway 35 and by Palacios Municipal Airport. The Palacios Channel connects the Port of Palacios to the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway.

[The Hospital](#)

Being that Palacios is the "Shrimp Capital of Texas" and the fishing industry is a primary industry in the area, the hospital plays a primary role in serving the emergent and primary care of its citizens in maintaining health and longevity to continue its long fishing tradition. The

hospital has a team of medical staff and professionals that have worked to build the trust that the community has in the healthcare that has been provided over recent years; particularly in emergency medicine and routine primary care, as will be noted in throughout this Community Health Needs Assessment.

The Hospital in Palacios has a close connection with the community through their regular facilitation of local health fairs and health screening opportunities by encouraging community participation. The size of the hospital and community overall allow for the hospital to work in close connection with the citizens of Palacios in providing outreach and preventative care in the community. While primary care and emergency services are prevalent, the community does see additional needs in mental and behavioral health services and continued outreach programs.

Demographics

Palacios, Texas Population 2022

4,331

Population by Race

Race	Population	Percentage
White:	3,109	67.75%
Other race:	717	15.62%
Asian:	398	8.67%
Two or more races:	228	4.97%
Black or African American:	107	2.33%
Native American:	30	0.65%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander:		0.00%

Palacios Median Age



40.1 Total



38.1 Male



49.3 Female

Palacios Adults

There are 3,518 adults, (634 of whom are seniors) in Palacios.

Palacios Sex Ratio



Female 2,024 44.11%



Male 2,565 55.89%

Palacios Household Types



Type	Count	Owner	Rent
Male	143	48.3%	51.7%
Non-Family	486	53.5%	46.5%
All	1,524	74.5%	25.5%

Married	688	87.1%	12.9%
Female	207	100%	0%

74.5% Rate of Home Ownership

3.84 Average Family Size

3 Average Household Size



Education Attained

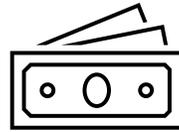
	Count	Percentage
Some College	457	15.12%
Less Than 9th Grade	618	20.44%
High School Graduate	1,166	38.57%
Graduate Degree	242	8.01%
Bachelor's Degree	250	8.27%
Associates Degree	169	5.59%
9th to 12th Grade	121	4.00%

Education by Race

Race	Total	High School	Bachelors
Hispanic	2,329	1,181	56
White	809	761	436
Other Race	369	151	
Asian	343	239	
2+ Races	228	63	
Black	107	55	
Native American	30	30	

The highest rate of high school graduation is among Native American people with a rate of 100.00%.

The highest rate of bachelor's degrees is among white people with a rate of 53.89%



Earning by Education

Name	Average	Male	Female
Overall	\$26,801	\$31,454	\$21,404
Less Than 9th Grade	\$16,825	\$	\$
High School Graduate	\$37,594	\$	\$30,278
Some College	\$19,073	\$19,664	\$14,875
Bachelor's Degree	\$25,402	\$	\$
Graduate Degree	\$37,034	\$36,507	\$

\$26,801 Average Earnings

\$31,454 Average Male

\$21,404 Average Female

Palacios Poverty by Race

Name	Total	In Poverty	Poverty Rate
White	810	34	4.20%
Other	485	420	86.60%
Hispanic	2,329	774	33.23%

22.22% Overall Poverty Rate

16.45% Male Poverty Rate

19.26% Female Poverty Rate

Income by Household Type

Name	Median	Mean
Households	\$49,167	\$57,390
Families	\$73,445	\$67,411
Married Families	\$72,713	-
Non-Families	\$21,389	\$35,986

Marriage Rates in Palacios

48.2%	Overall Marriage Rate
44.8%	Male Marriage Rate
52.1%	Female Marriage Rate



Place of Birth

75.64%	Born in Palacios
82.83%	Native Born
17.17%	Foreign Born
10.39%	non-Citizen
6.78%	Naturalized

82.83% of Palacios residents were born in the United States, with 75.64% having been born in Texas. 10.39% of residents are not US citizens. Of those not born in the United States, the largest percentage are from Latin America.

Non-citizens include legal permanent residents (green card holders), international students, temporary workers, humanitarian migrants, and illegal immigrants.

Community Healthcare Needs

Introduction

The purpose of the Community Health Needs Assessment is to identify the needs in the specific community, regardless of the hospitals abilities to meet those needs. In order to identify these community needs, the consultants of DHCG conducted interviews and focus groups with members of the community who include PCMC staff, PCMC Board Members, and local members of the community. These individuals represented all socioeconomic levels, prominence in the community, a variety of ages, and races.

Financial Assistance

Like many counties in Texas, Palacios is not immune to the growing cost of healthcare. During our focus groups, residents communicated that one barrier in the community to receiving healthcare services is the ability to pay. 22.22% of Palacios residents live in poverty and 60% of the uninsured population in Palacios qualify for financial assistance. Based on our findings, residents may not be aware PCMC's financial assistance program prior to treatment.

Mental Health

One of the most prominent issues residents feel plague the community are their mental health needs. The mental health crisis in Palacios is exacerbated by many factors, including the large, impoverished population, mental health stigma, and general lack of resources. PCMC does not have any providers for mental health, with many residents travelling to Victoria and Houston for care, or not receiving care at all.

A large part of the Palacios community is impoverished and/or lack resources for mental health services in other communities. One barrier that prevents the community from receiving mental health services is the stigma surrounding mental health in the community. The community expressed a need in outreach and education on mental health in the general community, and in schools. Young adults were among those mentioned in the focus groups who struggle the most with mental health.

The community expressed need for a licensed professional counselor or physician to help mitigate their mental health needs. PCMC would have the volume to support a practitioner for services, provided for all ages, based on focus group findings.

Language Barrier

Communication in the community has come a long way in the community since the last Community Health Needs Assessment. Though the hospital has staff in the hospital that can translate for their Vietnamese and Spanish speakers, they do tend to only advertise their services and outreach in English.

The hospital has a need for more unification with the Vietnamese and Hispanic population. These portions of their population do not receive as many services or participate in the hospital's outreach as much as their counterparts.

Trust and Stigma

Some of the interviewees expressed concerns that there may be some trust issues and stigma with the hospital in the community. This stigma seems to come from the thought that a smaller hospital may not have the resources and knowledge that larger hospitals in neighboring towns have.

Some individuals also expressed concern that non-English speaking residents were wary of the hospital and receiving services. 17.17% of residents are foreign born, and 10.39% are not US citizens, with that population mostly being from Latin America. This percentage of the population is in need of more engagement with the hospital.

Community Partnerships

Several residents expressed a need for more community partnerships with the hospital to garner more community participation with the hospitals. The residents felt that community participation is vital to the health of the community.

The HUB

The HUB is a group in Palacios that acts as a community center of sorts. They provide education, Workforce Solutions, health services, etc. One of the health services they have provided in the past is a diabetes nurse. The HUB is very involved in the community and could work to promote health fairs, preventative screenings, and general activities of the hospital.

Wellness Council

The Wellness Council is a community led group that discusses community health and works to improve specific areas. The council has a lot of weight in the community and could help garner attention for hospital programs and activities.

Schools

Some residents vocalized the need for partnership with schools in the area. This partnership could include education such as mental health, a mental health counselor, nutrition education/diabetes prevention, or vaccines and screenings.

Community Outreach and Programs

The community was very vocal about the continued need for community outreach and participation in Palacios. The health fair held in Palacios was well-received and the community would like to see more events like it. Other events that the community were interested in were preventative screenings and various outreach programs. Outreach in the community could be as simple as passing out fliers to schools to remind parents of vaccinations. These programs will continue to build trust with the community and the hospital.

Specialization

Our focus groups showed a need for more specialized providers in the community. The community spoke highly of the swing-bed program, physical therapy, and the visiting cardiologist, but travel out of the county for all other specialties. They also spoke about the difficulty the hospital had in retaining visiting specialist. Specialist were hard to keep in the schedule due to low volume of patients, but the residents explained that they did not think it was due to low volume, but due to uncertainty in scheduling and the public's limited on knowledge on the services offered.

We recognize that many rural communities struggle to employ, and retain, specialty providers due to lower volume of patients compared to the cost associated with specialty providers. The hospital has been successful in incorporating a visiting cardiologist in their schedule. Dr. Yue visits the primary care clinic once a month upon appointment. Though it is difficult to meet various needs of the community with a smaller population, the hospital shows initiative to coordinate visiting specialties, and has had multiple in the past. The hospital may consider

reaching out to community partnerships to market visiting specialist more frequently or try to incorporate telehealth in the community.

The following are specialty areas focus groups felt are missing in the community:

Maternity and Women's Health

PCMC currently does not offer any non-emergent OB or women's health services. Several residents stated they felt this was a need in the community.

Pediatrics

PMC has family care providers for all ages but does not employ any pediatric providers.

Mental Health

Mental health is a widespread need in Palacios. The hospital may consider looking into incorporating a mental health provider in their rotation. More specifically, the youth in Palacios are in desperate need, according to the focus groups. Working with the schools in the community could be the key to meeting this need.

Geriatric Care

Palacios has a large elderly population and needs more geriatric care in the community. From the focus groups, we learned that PCMC's swing bed program is highly utilized by the community. The community has a nursing home in the community, not associated with PCMC, and others in neighboring communities. The residents thought that home health would be a good avenue for the hospital to explore, as they have a large aging population.

Dermatology

Several residents see a need for dermatology in the community, as all residents must travel out of town to receive services. Specifically, the elderly in the community sees dermatology as a need.

Nutrition

Residents also expressed interest in the hospital offering nutrition services to the community. The community, like many others, struggles with healthy living. The residents would like to see the hospital make a stronger initiative to educate and treat the nutrition deficiencies in the community.

Retaining and Recruiting Physicians and Staff

As previously mentioned, the hospital struggles to recruit and retain providers, specifically specialist, due to the community's smaller population. In Palacios' case, the cost can exceed the need. To combat this issue the hospital can work on marketing their visiting specialist more aggressively or incorporating telehealth into the hospital.

Primary Care

The hospital has primary care available at Palacios Medical Clinic. They have one doctor and one nurse practitioner available for all ages. PMC also has an MD who visits once a month for patients of all ages. According to our findings, the clinic is well-received by the community. Most residents use this facility for primary care or travel outside of Palacios.

PMC used to regularly accept walk-ins, but most days the schedule is full. The residents have expressed a need for more appointment availabilities. Both the MD and nurse practitioner are well-respected in the community and their services are well-utilized.

Transportation

Though the community has worked to provide transportation, residents still struggle to find transportation for appointments in and outside of town. Palacios has a high elderly population that struggles with consistent transportation. The hospital should consider working with community partnerships to let the community know the services they offer in regards to transportation. The community, like the HUB and Wellness Council, seemed receptive to help the hospital combat the transportation issues.

Recommendations

Community Involvement

Overcoming Stigma

More community involvement is essential to overcoming the various stigma's associated with the hospital. This stigma pertains to many areas including mental health and non-English speaking residents.

The hospital and community would both benefit from repeated attempts to engage in the community. Specifically for the non-English speaking population, it may take repeated attempts

to gain that population's trust. But as they see the hospital as a trusted resource, they will be more likely to utilize the hospital.

Education

Services

The community is in need of more engagement with the hospital. Based on our findings, the community is not fully aware of all the services the hospital has to offer. The hospital should focus on their partnerships within the community to spread the word of the offered services. This could include schools passing out fliers to let parents know of visiting providers or working with the community center to plan a monthly nutrition/cooking course.

Financial assistance

Residents in Palacios may not be aware that they qualify for financial assistance. The hospital should work to educate the community of their policies to ensure that residents are receiving the medical care they need.

Staffing

Based on our findings, the hospital should continue to work to find providers and staff to help care for the needs of the community. Specifically in the following three areas:

Primary Care

The Palacios Medical Clinic is well-utilized in the community and has the volume to support another provider. When the clinic has a full schedule, PCMC is losing patients to providers in surrounding areas.

There is a need in the community for more walk-in availability to accommodate the large volume of patients awaiting services. Another provider may combat the need for more walk-in availability.

Mental Health

Mental health is one of the communities' largest struggles. The hospital should look into recruiting a mental health provider. This could include a visiting provider or telehealth. They may also look into working with schools in the area to host a counselor or telehealth sessions. Some residents were concerned that telehealth would not be widely accepted because of limited

resources for the youth and aging population but working with the schools or community center could help combat this need.

Specialist

As previously mentioned, many residents are inquiring about specialty providers. Though the population size may not afford it, the hospital can investigate whether the cost exceeds the needs. Some examples of vulnerable areas include women's health, maternity, geriatric care, pediatrics, nutrition, and dermatology.

Bibliography

Griffin, M. (2019, Aug. 19). Handbook of Texas Online: Palacios Texas. Retrieved from Texas State Historical Association: <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/palacios-tx>

Palacios, Texas Population 2022. . (22, December 8). Retrieved from World Population Review: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/palacios-tx-population>

Palacios Texas- Everything There Is To Know About Palacios, Texas. (n.d.). Retrieved from Historic Texas: <https://www.historictexas.net/search?query=palacios>

Palacios, C. o. (2022). City of Palacios History. Retrieved from City of Palacios: <https://cityofpalacios.org/history/>