



COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

HEALTH CARE



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The provision of health care services is one of Centre County's growing industries. This growth may be attributed to an increasing senior population and Centre County being

designated as an attractive and safe place to retire.

Within a ten year period (1990-2001), 1,516 new jobs were created in health services in the County.¹ This increase accounted for 13.6 percent of the total jobs created for that period and a 50% jump from 1990.

Although Centre County is currently behind when it comes to the provision of more specialized health care services, our aging population in the County will drive the market by creating opportunities for future growth in the specialized fields. Health care industry trends in Centre County are addressed in more detail in the Economic Development component of the Comprehensive Plan.

Centre County's Hospitals

Mount Nittany Medical Center
(formerly Centre Community Hospital)
1800 East Park Avenue, State College



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Situated in College Township near the crossroads of I-99 and Mount Nittany Expressway, this non-profit, health care facility has been in business for over 100 years. As the third largest employer in the County, the Center employs approximately 960 employees and 176 physicians. It is classified as a 200-bed acute care facility.³

¹ Centre County Comprehensive Plan Economic Analysis-November 2002, Steve Smith and Martin Shields, Penn State University

² Source: Centre Community Hospital Website

³ Centre Community Hospital's Website

Recognizing future needs, Centre Community Hospital is positioning itself as a regional hospital by implementing a name change to Mount Nittany Medical Center (effective November 6, 2003) as well as establishing more specialized services. The hospital's recent name change is indicative of its new direction. Services not typically provided for at a community hospital will soon be made available to area residents. Some of the changes include: expansion of the Emergency Department, opening of a new surgical intensive care unit, addition of a new wing, and the capability to do spinal surgeries as well as other more specialized operations. In the past, these medical care options were only available at larger health care facilities, i.e., Geisinger Medical Center in Danville and Hershey Medical Center in Hershey.

The new wing, which includes the surgical intensive care unit, will provide for 38 new beds. These beds will help eliminate the 3-bed rooms in the existing building. The hospital will remain as a 200-bed facility. With this addition, it is anticipated that 18-20 new employees will be hired.

Plans for the expansion also took into account the tragedy that occurred on September 11, whereby, the hospital will have available a dedicated decontamination units which could accommodate up to 20 patients.

Cancer care is also an important component of this facility's services. In 2000, Centre Community Hospital became one of the founding members of the Penn State Cancer Institutes. A team of professionals specializing in cancer is dedicated to care for area cancer patients. This is just one of the many clinical services made available to better serve the needs of area residents.

Philipsburg Area Hospital
210 Loch Lomond Road, Philipsburg



Founded in the late 1800s and then named Miner's Hospital, this facility continues to serve the residents of Moshannon Valley. Formerly, Philipsburg Area Hospital was designated as a State Hospital until the state closed its doors in 1990 divesting its health care facilities. Recognizing a need for a medical facility in the Moshannon Valley area, the community reopened the hospital in 1992 as a not-for-profit.

Today, the 52-bed facility employs 230 full and part-time persons as well as 20 physicians.

Services provided by the hospital include: general acute care, CCU (Critical Care Unit) and ICU (Intensive Care Unit), cardiac rehab, emergency care, physical therapy, radiology service and laboratory services.

Recently, Philipsburg Area Hospital received a \$100,000 Federal grant to purchase new medical equipment. These monies are made available to upgrade the technical care-giving capabilities at small, rural hospitals.

As with Mount Nittany Medical Center, Philipsburg Area Hospital also has established specialized clinics to better serve the needs of Moshannon Valley residents. Some of the clinics are: Cardiology, Neurosurgery, Nephrology, and Gastroenterology.

Centre Community Surgical Center, Inc.
East Park Avenue, State College



Sharing the Mount Nittany Medical Center's campus, the Centre Community Surgical Center was established in 1993 to alleviate severe problems with insufficient surgical space in the operating rooms of the Centre Community

Hospital (Mount Nittany Medical Center). Opening in 1994, the Center resides in leased space on the ground floor of the Centre Medical Services Building. A partnership between Centre Community Hospital and Penn State University was formed to construct this complex.

The Center is independent of the Hospital and solely provides out-patient services. This clear distinction between the two facilities was intentional in order to avoid competition for

patients. Today, the Center accommodates approximately 4,000 surgical cases annually. The remaining portion of the Medical Services Building houses physicians' offices.

University Health Services (UHS)

Access to health care is also made available on the campus of the Pennsylvania State University. Students are provided with a wide array of health services such as general and urgent care, women's health services, pharmaceutical, health education, screenings, counseling, physical therapy, and preventive health services.

Faced with an increasing demand to provide a more diverse range of services, the University Health Services Center (Ritenour) is pressed for space. Long-range planning includes moving forward on developing a new facility.

One component of the University Health Services System that interfaces with the community is the provision of emergency medical services. UHS is increasingly called upon to supplement the services provided for within other ambulance service areas.

The 1979 Comprehensive Plan for Centre County reported that there were 55 beds available at the Ritenour Health Center. Today, inpatient services are no longer provided at the Center. Any student needing these services is referred to Centre Community Hospital.

Mountaintop Medical Clinic

402 East Sycamore Street, Snow Shoe

This rural medical center situated in northern Centre County experienced a tumultuous year in 2003. Area residents were notified in early March by the former owners, Geisinger Health Systems, of a closure of this facility. Geisinger had operated the center since 1989. Prior to 1989, the center served as a community health clinic. Three physicians were employed to provide services at the Center for the residents of Snow Shoe Borough, and Snow Shoe and Burnside Townships.

In an effort to retain these services for the area, a non-profit association was formed to take over the center. Geisinger Health Systems sold the

facility to the non-profit for \$1, and it was renamed the Mountaintop Medical Clinic. The non-profit, Medical Center Association, is responsible for raising monies to offset the costs of reopening this facility through memberships and other fundraising efforts.

Taking over the clinic is Keystone Rural Health Consortium of Emporium, Pennsylvania. The Consortium signed a five-year lease and started providing medical services in August of this year.

A Federal grant of \$150,000 was secured to cover the operational expenses for the first two years.

The building which houses the medical center also provides space for the Moshannon Valley Pharmacy and Snow Show Senior Center.

Penns Valley Area Medical Center, PC
4570 Penns Valley Road, Spring Mills



Built in the early 1970s, the Penns Valley Area Medical Center started its early beginnings by providing general practice medical and dental services to the residents of Penns Valley. Since then, the Center has grown and now offers optometry services. In addition, situated on the campus of the Medical Center is the Penns Valley Pharmacy which is independently run.

The two buildings housing these services are owned by the Penns Valley Medical Association, a community not-for-profit organization; however, the medical practices are owned by the physicians.

An expansion of the main medical building occurred in the 1990s. At this time, there are no plans for future expansion of this facility.

Centre Volunteers in Medicine
251 Easterly Parkway, State College

Meeting the medical needs of the uninsured, low income persons in Centre County is the recently incorporated Volunteers in Medicine. Located in the Borough of State College, this Center is the newest clinic established as part of a network of

clinics nationwide. The concept is to provide medical and non-medical services through volunteer professionals.

The Center's Mission is, "...to understand and serve the health and wellness needs of the medically underserved who live in Centre County."⁴ It is estimated that 11,000 of the County's residents would be considered eligible for the Center's services.⁵ Many of these persons may be classified as the County's working poor meaning that they are employed, making low wages and receiving no health care benefits.

In the planning phases of this Center, a needs assessment was conducted. The results also showed that:

- ✚ *Roughly 10% of the Centre County population lives at or below the poverty level.*
- ✚ *About 33% of County employers do not offer health care insurance as a job benefit.*⁶

In order to be eligible for medical care under this program, a resident of Centre County must be at or below the Federal Poverty Guidelines, not be eligible to receive health care services under any insurance plan or program and be willing to apply for medical program for which they may be eligible.⁷

The Center began providing services in January 2003.

Long Term Care Facilities

Centre County's growing senior population has prompted the development of retirement communities and personal care facilities throughout the County. These privately owned entities offer a range of health care services for their residents including long-term care.

Skilled or long-term care is a service that is in demand. In addition to the skilled care being offered at the privately run retirement

⁴ Volunteers In Medicine Website (www.cvim.net)
⁵ Zimpler, Harry, "Volunteers in Medicine Comes to Centre County", *State College Magazine*, October 2002
⁶ Ibid
⁷ Ibid

communities, the County provides these services for its residents at Centre Crest as noted in the County Facilities and Services section of the Comprehensive Plan. Unlike other counties, Centre Crest, on average, fills 97% of its beds.

It is anticipated that the need for personal and long-term care services will increase in the next decade as the County's population moves into retirement age.

Conclusion

The face of health services is constantly changing to better meet the needs of our communities as well as keep pace with technological advances. The market will continue to dictate the health services provided, and it is anticipated that the next ten years will bring more diversified and specialized services to the County in order to meet these new demands. Our aging population will play an important role in this change.

Unfortunately, the uninsured will continue to have a difficult time accessing the health care system. Programs such as Volunteers in Medicine need to receive community support in order for this segment of our population to receive proper care.

Coordination is key to improving access to health care services. The health care delivery system needs to be given consideration in County and municipal long-range plans as well as the related elements of comprehensive planning.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOAL

Promote the appropriate location and maintenance of existing and proposed community facilities, utilities, and services for the citizens of Centre County.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES OBJECTIVES-Health Care

Encourage accessible and exceptional medical and health care facilities and services throughout the County.

HEALTH CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

Assure equal access of medical facilities and human services to all population sectors within the County, regardless of age, sex, income, religious or ethnic background.

Coordinate public transportation services with medical facilities and human service agencies.

Investigate alternative housing programs for institutional long-term care of the aged and physically handicapped.