



# LaMoure County Health Department

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Good morning Senator Lee and members of the Health Service Committee. My name is Tony Hanson, Administrator/CEO of LaMoure County Public Health Department. It is with pleasure that I stand before you to report positive results of our Southeast Central Regional Public Health Network Pilot Project. We are thankful for your financial investment in this project.

In the year 2000 LaMoure County was one of four counties in the state that needed to formalize their Public Health Department. That year the Benedictine Health System (BHS), whom I work for, initiated a contract to LaMoure County Commissioners for Public Health Services. Since that time, services to clients in LaMoure County have been unable to reach their full potential due to a lack of resources. The regional network project helped our department to realize efficiencies that have maximized the department's ability to provide efficient, quality public health services in LaMoure County.

Specifically, the positive enhancements since the initiation of this collaboration are:

- A. Staffing of PH office on a daily basis
  - a. Increased credibility of the public health office as a health care entity to meet the core services of PH – linking of people to the service – point of entry established.
  - b. Continuity of services to the customer – answers the phone, greets customers, timely making of appointments, making of referrals, and delivery of messages to nurses. This did impact nursing care to 20+ clients on a daily basis. Approximately 25 calls per day are not missed by the constituents.
  - c. Improved efficiency of nursing staff time - Nurses previously used to do billing, all general office tasks, and now these nurses use this time as true clinicians delivering nursing care.
- B. Securing of additional unclaimed revenue of \$22,000
  - a. Training and consultation with CVHU for implementation of Ahlers and Zirmed for electronic billing to 3<sup>rd</sup> party payers. Claims are followed up on and funding secured.
  - b. Customer satisfaction increased with the new process as again we are credible with the business office practice model, and this directly increases the number of services offered. Clients served increased from 300 to over 1100.
- C. Documentation of clinical services
  - a. Uniformity of charting all clients seen whether in the office, senior center, schools, and worksites are documented with ability to have no duplication of numbers.
  - b. Time saved by nurses not looking for data, charts, or paper documentation again impacts the number of clients able to be served.

- c. Credible documentation (now have history and physicals, current med sheets) leads to improved repertoire with clinical partners, and strengthening of these partnerships (accurate transferring of data and client referrals)

D. Empowering of nurses as clinicians

- a. Staffing of nursing professionals from 1.25 FTE to 2.5 FTE
- b. Policies developed and provide uniform quality care
- c. Educational opportunities provided with the collaborative: chronic disease management, school nursing, immunization delivery, tobacco program, nursing health maintenance to the senior population – improved quality of care given -- ability to move towards accreditation
- d. Shortage of nurses – due to collaborative staff exchange is viable and provides continuity – example of LCHD staff nurse on LOA and their staff nurses assisted without disruption of services to the clients

E. Enhanced Positive Community Support of LaMoure County Health Department

- a. Business Model impacted care delivered and this resulted in increased general fund revenue to the yearly PH budget - we were able to explore, secure and utilize other revenue sources, while serving people more efficiently and effectively.
- b. Community Assessment to increase community services is a daunting task that is now a viable activity with the process started. With the strengthening of nursing care delivery and continuity of communication with health providers – there is an established repertoire and likewise the groundwork for working together to complete the process will occur.

My final thoughts are that this project was worth the money for the State of North Dakota to invest in. To be at the point where our Health Department is today would have been very difficult to accomplish alone. The challenge was only having one year to accomplish everything – imagine the possibilities if this group would have had 2 years! On behalf of LaMoure County citizens we thank you for this opportunity.