



YUMA REGIONAL  
MEDICAL CENTER



**2022-23** Yuma County Community Health  
IMPROVEMENT PLAN

# Yuma Regional Medical Center 2022/23 CHNA Implementation Plan

## Addressing Significant Health Needs

Yuma Regional Medical Center and Yuma Rehabilitation Hospital conducted a Community Health Needs Assessment in 2022. Working collaboratively with our Yuma County public health partners and Southwest Arizona Town Hall (formerly known as the Southwest Arizona Futures Forum, or SAFF), Yuma Regional Medical Center adopted the below-listed community health priorities as a working document and vision to address the top health concerns within our defined service area, Yuma County. In alignment with our mission, goals and strategic priorities, Yuma Regional Medical Center will focus on the below listed five (5) priorities:

1. Mental Health
2. Substance Abuse
3. Access to Healthcare Services
4. Diabetes
5. Cancer

**Strategies for addressing these identified health priorities are outlined below.**

## Priority Area: **Mental Health**

High incidence of those who reported fair or poor mental health. Symptoms of chronic depression. Suicide deaths (particularly in young adults). Ratio of mental health providers. Of note, key informants rated mental health as a top concern.

### Goals:

- Increase availability and access to behavioral health providers in community
- Reduce ER holding times due to lack of inpatient psychiatric facility beds
- Reduce ER transfers of psychiatric inpatients to facilities outside of Yuma County
- Increase awareness among adults and teens alike, related mental health wellness strategies and coping skills

**Strategy 1:** Recruit additional behavioral health providers to the community to expand access to care (increased providers = more appointments)

**Target Population(s):** Patients currently needing to travel for care due to no available providers and appointments.

### **ACTIONS 2023:**

- Recruited the following providers in 2023:
  - Dr. Eyuel Terefe, Psychiatry Residency Program Director
  - Janelle Rudnick, NP, Inpatient BHU
  - Full-time agency provider coverage for inpatient BHU
  - The onboarding of a Psychiatry Residency Program Director is instrumental in preparing for and establishing YRMC's Psychiatry Residency program to begin summer 2025, where we will train and retain psychiatry providers in Yuma County and increase access to care. The Program Director cares for patients in the outpatient setting.
- In addition, a child and adolescent psychiatrist for our psychiatry residency program has been recruited and will start August 25, 2024. This serves as an important step in meeting the identified need for expanded services for children.

**Strategy 2:** Initiate community coalition to minimize duplication of resources and eliminate gaps in care.

**Target Population(s):** Community leaders, key stakeholders, social service organizations, law enforcement and those directly impacted (families and patients).

### **ACTIONS 2023:**

- Launched collaboration with local law enforcement for education and training.
- Expanded partnership with local law enforcement to accept direct voluntary referrals for evaluation.

Adopted March 2023

- Collaboration with outpatient community programs for potential referrals to inpatient Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) and Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP).
- Initiated transport for patients at outpatient clinics to provide urgent assessments and admission to BHU – minimizing unnecessary Emergency Department visits where appropriate.
- Collaboration with local jail to provide court-ordered treatments for patients (April 2024).
- YRMC serves as an active hub coordinating between agencies to minimize resource use.
- Coordination of efforts with local military and law enforcement to minimize the need to transfer patients outside of the community for care.

**Strategy 3:** Expand local availability of behavioral health services (*acute inpatient and intensive outpatient*) to reduce need to travel out of town for care.

**Target Population(s):** Yuma County service area. Patients and families seeking services.

- YRMC opened a 24-bed Inpatient Adult Behavioral Health Unit in February 2023.
- Behavioral Health Crisis assessments are now provided on-site by crisis team.
  - Additionally, YRMC assessment team is also now providing assessments in the YRMC emergency departments, meeting patients where the need is.
- YRMC now accepts direct admits from local law enforcement minimizing wait times during crisis episodes.
- YRMC also added a full series of needed Intensive Outpatient Program/Groups, including:
  - General mood disorders
  - Acute disorders
  - Military, veterans and first responders
  - Spanish

**New Programs/Groups starting 2024**

- Senior (65+) therapy
- Post-partum depression
- Adolescent emergency (11-17 )
- Recruited the following providers in 2023 to expand local availability to behavioral health services.
  - Dr. Eyuel Terefe, Psychiatry Residency Program Director
  - Janelle Rudnick, NP, Inpatient BHU
  - Full-time agency coverage provider for inpatient BHU
- YRMC opened a 24-bed inpatient Behavioral Health Unit in February 2023 to expand access to inpatient behavioral health. The IP BHU also established a robust IOP for long-term treatment and management of behavioral health patients.

**Strategy 4:** Partner to host behavioral health educational sessions to build community awareness and support.

**Target Population(s):** School systems, adult care facilities, caregivers and directly impacted patients and families.

- Partnership with Yuma County Anti-Drug Coalition to provide ongoing education and support to local schools with a heavy focus on high schools and parents.
- YRMC serves as an active member of the Yuma County Anti-Drug coalition – current efforts include education and State-supported distribution of NARCAN to patients and families who present to the Emergency Department with Fentanyl overdose.
- Ongoing collaborative efforts with local schools and adult facilities to provide education and support for identifying a person in crisis/need.
- YRMC is currently in the process of developing geriatric behavioral health services and IOP for local long-term care facilities.

**Strategy 5:** Develop and implement Psychiatry Residency program to grow and retain psychiatrists in our community.

**Target Population(s):** Yuma County service area.

- Dr. Terefe recruited and hired in July 2023 to lead the Psychiatry Residency program. Residency application submitted, new building purchased and renovated to accommodate the residency program and increase space (access) to psychiatry services. ACGME site visit scheduled for May 2024.
- YRMC Psychiatry Residency Program is on track to open its doors to resident physicians in July 2025.
- The following providers were recruited/started in development of the psychiatry residency program in 2023.
  - Dr. Eyuel Terefe, Psychiatry Residency Program Director

Dr. Terefe is instrumental in preparing for and establishing our Psychiatry Residency program starting summer 2025, where we will train and retain psychiatry physicians in Yuma County and improve/increase access to care. Dr. Terefe also cares for patients in the outpatient setting at YRMC Behavioral Health Center. The ACGME site visit is scheduled for May 2024 to gain approval/accreditation of our Psychiatry Residency program.

- In addition, a child and adolescent psychiatrist for our psych residency program has been recruited and will start August 25, 2024.
- Active recruitment is underway for additional Faculty physicians to support and build the academic foundation for our psychiatry residency program. A number of candidates are in process and anticipated to finalize in 2024.

## Priority Area: Substance Use

High incidence of cirrhosis, liver disease death, excessive drinking, unintentional drug-related deaths, illicit drug use. Key informants ranked substance use as a top concern. A total of 24.1% of area adults are excessive drinkers (heavy and/or binge drinkers).

**BENCHMARK** ► Higher than found across Arizona.

**TREND** ► Marks a significant increase since 2019.

**DISPARITY** ► Highest in Yuma. More often reported among men, adults younger than 65, Hispanic.

**Barriers to access attributed:** Lack of locally available detox and support groups.

### Goals:

- Reduce number of patients needing to travel out of town for substance detox and treatment
- Expand awareness and education among students and parents

**Strategy #1:** Develop acute medical detox and treatment services in Yuma County

**Target Population(s):** Yuma County service area

- Develop inpatient chemical dependency detox unit (2024).
- Expand IOP services for chemical dependency patients and families.
- Initiate the ED naloxone program for those identified in need and at high risk.
- This is underway with the establishment of our Psychiatry Residency program and recruitment of an addiction psychiatrist. Active contract negotiations are underway with an addiction psychiatrist anticipated to start late summer 2024.

**Strategy #2:** Partner with community leaders, schools and families to enhance awareness through outreach and education

**Target Population(s):** Yuma County service area

- Family Medicine Resident Physicians rotate through local elementary and middle schools to mentor and educate underserved students through a variety of activities and presentations.

**Strategy #3:** Recruit a hepatology practitioner

**Target Population(s):** Yuma County service area

- Recruited an internal medicine / hepatology physician, Dr. Jinendra Satiya, who will start April 7, 2024.

**Strategy #4:** Develop curriculum for Family Medicine residents in partnership with psychiatry program – to include detox medicine.

**Target Population(s):** Yuma County service area

- Psychiatry Program Director has begun a quarterly Behavioral Health series presented to Family Medicine Residents during their didactics.
- The new Behavioral Health Track just announced its first Family Medicine Resident Physician participant, who will begin their focused educational track in July 2024.

## Priority Area: Access to Health Care Services

Barriers to access attributed to: Inconvenient office hours, lack of available appointments (wait time to get an appointment), primary care physician ratio well below national standard. Emergency department utilization burdened with high volume of non-acute care.

### Goals:

- Expand availability of appointments and reduce wait time for appointments
- Expand availability of primary care providers across community
- Improve physician-to-population ratio

**Strategy #1:** Expand Family & Community Medicine Residency program (growing our own)

**Target Population(s):** Medical students with strong interest in serving community

- Family Medicine Residency program will welcome 11 Residents in July 2024, as we expand our incoming class size by two and welcome a transfer PGY2 Resident.
- YRMC continues to welcome growing numbers of medical students who rotate through a variety of specialty clinical rotations.
- Overall goal to expand program from 26 to 36 residents = 12 per class per year. For this year's match, the program was seeking 12 new residents and matched 11. Now completing SOAP week to work on filling the remaining open spot.

**Strategy #2:** Expand clinic hours and location to serve more people

**Target Population(s):** New graduate physicians serving Yuma County residents and visitors

- New Foothills Medical Plaza opened in July 2023. Over 12,000 new patient appointments completed.
- Acquired Internal Medicine and Diabetes medical practice adding two providers specializing in Diabetes care.
- Increased Pediatric and Primary Care appointments by nearly 4% by expanding hours and increasing efficiency.
- In particular, FM, IM, Peds and OB increased hours to see patients by staggering provider and staff schedules. Some work 7:00 am to 4:00 pm and others 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. This allows clinics to open earlier, close later and offer Saturday services.
- Fall 2023, YRMC opened its Foothills Medical Plaza, adding a second emergency department location with the addition of Primary Care, Peds, OB, and Podiatry providers within that same location. This helps to improve access to care, even closer to patients' homes.
- Increased Transitional Care hours by 10 hours per week by expanding hours (7:30 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday).

Adopted March 2023



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**Strategy #3:** Recruit and retain additional providers to meet community need

**Target Population(s):** New graduate physicians serving Yuma County residents and visitors

- Added 40 new providers in 2023 to include:

**PRIMARY CARE** added **6 providers** in 2023 to include providers in San Luis, Yuma, Foothills

- Erika Benitez, NP, May 2023 – YRMC Primary Care San Luis
- Selina Villarreal, NP, Jul 2023 – YRMC FMC W. 24<sup>th</sup> Street
- Cara Piotrowicz, NP, Jul 2023 – YRMC Foothills Medical Plaza
- Dr. Stephen Gipson, Aug 2023 – YRMC Family Medicine Center
- Wanda Garcia, NP, Jul 2023 – YRMC Transitional Care
- Kaitlin Toner, PA, Feb 2023 –YRMC Transitional Care

**PEDIATRICS** added **1 new provider in 2023** expanding care in the Foothills

- James Lurquin, NP, Feb 2023 – YRMC Foothills Medical Plaza

**SPECIALTY CARE** **12** additional providers recruited in 2023

- 1 Bariatric Surgeon 2023
- 1 Cardiac Electrophysiology 2023
- 1 Endocrinologist 2023
- 3 Gastro NP 2023
- 2 General Surgeon 2023
- 1 General Surgery PA 2023
- 1 OB/GYN – Women’s Health NP 2023
- 1 Psychiatrist 2023
- 1 Psychiatry NP 2023

- Two physicians from the Class of 2023 YRMC Family Medicine Residency are now serving the community as full-time providers. An additional three physicians from the Class of 2024 have made a commitment to serving our Yuma community after residency. This speaks to our ongoing dedication to supporting a flourishing graduate medical education program where over 35% of graduates from our program are choosing to stay in Yuma following graduation.

Recruitment Efforts:

**PRIMARY CARE** added **6 providers** in 2023 to include providers in San Luis, Yuma, Foothills

- Erika Benitez, NP, May 2023 – YRMC Primary Care San Luis
- Selina Villarreal, NP, Jul 2023 – YRMC FMC W. 24<sup>th</sup> Street
- Cara Piotrowicz, NP, Jul 2023 – YRMC Foothills Medical Plaza
- Dr. Stephen Gipson, Aug 2023 – YRMC Family Medicine Center
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**PEDIATRICS** added **1 new provider in 2023** expanding care in the Foothills

- James Lurquin, NP, Feb 2023 – YRMC Foothills Medical Plaza

**SPECIALTY CARE 12** additional providers recruited in 2023

- 1 Bariatric Surgeon 2023
- 1 Cardiac Electrophysiology 2023
- 1 Endocrinologist 2023
- 3 Gastro NP 2023
- 2 General Surgeon 2023
- 1 General Surgery PA 2023
- 1 OB/GYN – Women’s Health NP 2023
- 1 Psychiatrist 2023
- 1 Psychiatry NP 2023

## Priority Area: Diabetes

High incidence of deaths attributed to diabetes. Overall prevalence of diabetes is high among adults. Kidney disease prevalence and deaths. Key informants ranked diabetes as a top concern.

### Goals:

- Reduce incidence through diabetes education (inpatient and outpatient)
- Recruit additional providers to include pediatric endocrinology

**Strategy #1:** Expand availability of diabetes support and education (inpatient and outpatient)

**Target Population(s):** Patients diagnosed as diabetic or borderline

- Acquired Internal Medicine/Diabetes medical practice adding two providers specializing in Diabetes care.
- Implemented Chronic Care Management program focused specifically on keeping our diabetic patient population healthier.
- Implemented nutrition counseling in our Diabetes and Primary Care practices.
- Develop (2024) national accreditation for best practice inpatient diabetes management program with standardization in treatment and follow-up.
- Added registered dietician to Transitional Care Services to help with diabetes management.
- Pediatric Endocrinologist coverage by Dr. Hassan through YRMC Pediatrics Subspecialty Clinic.

**Strategy #2:** Recruit additional specialists (adult endocrinology)

**Target Population(s):** Serving Yuma County residents and visitors

- Adult Endocrinologist recruited and hired August 23.
- Pediatric Endocrinologist coverage by Dr. Hassan through YRMC Pediatrics Subspecialty Clinic.

## Priority Area: Cancer Care

Cancer is a leading cause of death in Yuma County. Identified high prevalence of cancer (non-skin) in Yuma County.

### Goals:

- Improve lung cancer early detection and reduce deaths
- Increase local availability of advanced clinical trials and treatments

### Strategy #1: Implement lung screening program

**Target Population(s):** Yuma County service area – patients with history of smoking

- Put Lung Screening program into services in 2022 for patients with a history of smoking. Patients meeting criteria are scheduled for a low-dose CAT lung scan.
- 471 patients scanned with 14 patients receiving pre-symptom diagnoses and many others being actively monitored.

### Strategy #2: Invest in advanced clinical research facilities and programs

**Target Population(s):** Yuma County service area

- Increasing the number of clinical trials available to cancer patients.
- Initiated an affiliation with University of Arizona Clinical Trial Network to have access to national co-op group trials.
- Recognized as a top performing leader in the recruitment of minorities to clinical trials.
- Lauded as a top recruiting site for a Novartis trial.

### Strategy #3: Recruit additional radiation oncology and palliative care providers

**Target Population(s):** Yuma County service area

- Recruited Ramon Perez, NP for Palliative Care who started January 14, 2024.
- Actively recruiting two full-time Medical Oncologists.
- Actively recruiting three Palliative Care Advanced Practice Providers and one Palliative Care Physician.

### Secondary focus:

It should be noted that the below-listed identified health needs will remain visible and may be addressed as resources allow – to include potential community partnerships that minimize duplication of effort: **Nutrition, Heart Disease and Stroke, Respiratory Disease, Infant Health & Family Planning, Injury & Violence, Physical Activity & Weight, Potentially Disabling Conditions, Tobacco Use, Oral Health.**

In these areas, we have made progress by:

- Starting a stroke support group (February 2024) for patients and their families/caregivers to provide support and resources.
- Earning American Heart Association “Get with the Guidelines” award to include recognition for the addition of diabetes management in our stroke program for best practices.
- Expanding Cardiac Rehab program in conjunction with pulmonologists to develop cardio-pulmonary rehab services.
- Expanding stroke education into the local middle schools and high schools to increase awareness of signs and symptoms for early identification and treatment.
- Hired a Chest Pain Coordinator (December 2022) and applied for DNV Chest Pain/STEMI certification (March 2024).
- Offering new Shockwave IVL procedure for coronaries and peripheral arteries new procedure.
- Rolling out Endobronchial Ultrasound (EBUS) new procedure.
- Bringing the new Watchman Left Atrial Appendage Occluder (LAAO) procedure to the community.
- Championing Ventilator Protocol implementation.
- Supporting Cath Lab nurses, Rad Techs, ECHO Techs and Respiratory Therapists who volunteer regularly at community events.