

## STRATEGIC PLANNING: 2009

### CASE STUDY SERIES: COMMUNITY BENEFIT PLANNING - Part 3 of 3

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The third in our series of case studies on Strategic Planning 2009 brings a strategic approach and accountability to community benefit programming and integrates community benefit activities with the health system's strategic priorities.

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#### Community Benefit Planning

- Build relationships/partnerships with your community.
- Provide solid basis for tax exemption.
- Take a cost benefit approach to investments in community benefit.
- Align community benefit planning with strategic initiatives.

#### Case Study: *Multi-Site Health System*

Identifying and addressing community health needs and priorities is a major focus in 2009 for this urban/suburban hospital system as it prepares its response to the IRS Form 990 and Schedule H.

Assessing the unmet needs of the system's communities and hospital utilization is creating a compelling case for refocusing the system's community benefit activities to address these needs, thereby improving the health of area residents while reducing inappropriate utilization.

Understanding system-wide competencies, community health priorities and existing financial commitments is helping the system refocus community benefit programs on identified clinical priorities that align with strategic initiatives. Key aspects of this endeavor include:

- A community health index focusing attention on at-risk populations within the service area and their needs.
- Review of utilization data to assess major areas of need in the hospital's community.
- Focus groups and surveys to identify how economic challenges are impacting key populations and to identify health needs, priorities, and preferences of the area residents.
- An evaluation of current programs, their cost and impact on addressing community need and reducing health care costs.
- A restructuring of community benefit programs using evidence-based approaches to support strategic priorities and to ensure good stewardship of hospital resources.

These changes are moving the system from a model that simply counts activities and accomplishments to a strategic approach that ensures system resources are used in the most effective manner for the communities' needs.

For answers to questions about how to refocus your community benefit planning activities contact Nancy Erickson at 732-418-3234 or [nerickson@newsolutionsinc.com](mailto:nerickson@newsolutionsinc.com)

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**New Solutions, Inc. (NSI)** is a management consulting firm offering a broad base of services tailored to meet the diverse and changing needs of health care providers. NSI offers a full array of health care consulting including development and implementation of strategic and service line plans, business development and marketing plans, community needs assessments, medical staff development, outcomes measurement and monitoring, and regulatory compliance activities.

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