



Public Health
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Ransom County Public Health

Ransom County Public Health Department

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12/13/2023 – 9:30am: Lisbon Area AIC SBARE Testimony

Hello. My name is Brenna Welton, and I am the Administrator at Ransom County Public Health in Lisbon, ND. In my role as Administrator, I am involved in our community health needs assessment, which is a requirement of our local hospital. These assessments are conducted every 3 years, and they examine the health needs and concerns in our community, which help health care leaders identify potential actions to address those needs and concerns.

In 2018, our needs assessment determined that services for our aging population were very much needed in our community. Some of the services that were lacking in our rural area included transportation, care coordination, companionship, and mental health. I am happy to report that we were able to bring those much-needed services to our rural community in 2021 with Lisbon Area Aging in Community (AIC).

This project started in 2019 when NDSU Extension, along with the collaboration of other partners, submitted a grant application to Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies. They were awarded a grant to pilot the Aging in Community (AIC) project in two rural communities. The Lisbon area was identified as a pilot site community. Since that time, we have attended Stakeholder and Steering Committee meetings on a regular basis to discuss the services that were needed for our elderly population to stay within our community, and to safely remain in their homes. The COVID pandemic put our efforts on hold for a bit; however, in 2021, a volunteer coordinator was hired and later followed by a program coordinator. AIC then recruited and trained several volunteers to help carry out the needs of our community. Katie Wentz, Program Coordinator and Elise Meyer, Volunteer Coordinator have made this program what it is today, which is a successful and impactful addition to our community.

Many people have benefited from these new community services. Some of our clients at Public Health have stated they feel more connected to their community through the many events that have been hosted by AIC. They are also grateful they are able to make it to doctor appointments in town and around the Jamestown and Fargo area. They have also reported feeling less isolated. These statements confirm just how appreciated these services truly are. In addition to our patients, AIC cliental and volunteers have expressed their gratitude and overall satisfaction of this program through surveys, and they all wish for these services to continue.

For example, a Fall 2022 Participant Satisfaction Survey concluded 100% of clients rated AIC as “good” or better, and 93.8% of clients would recommend this program to others. The Fall 2023 Participant survey results revealed 92% of respondents felt less lonely, 89% felt more confident living at home, and 89% felt more connected to resources in my community.

Several other small, rural, communities have reached out asking how our community was able to start this program and offer these much-needed services. We know, that without the initial grant dollars that were received to start up this amazing program, these services would not be available to the aging population in Ransom County. I am hoping after hearing my testimony today, you can all understand the impact and value this program has on our small, rural area, and how such a program could also benefit many other counties in the state of North Dakota. Please consider helping to improve our aging population’s overall health, safety, and quality of life by supporting the request of additional operating dollars for NDSU Extension. Additional operating dollars will allow grant funded projects like AIC to continue and expand.

Thank you for your time and consideration today.

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