



# *Community Health Implementation Plan*

Kearney Regional Medical Center  
May, 2023

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# *Introduction*

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## **Community Health Implementation Plan**

Kearney Regional Medical Center has prepared the following implementation plan to address its 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), fulfilling the requirements established by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requiring that non-profit hospitals develop implementation plans to address the significant health needs identified in their community health needs assessments.

In this implementation plan, KRMC will share its strategies to address each of the significant health needs identified in its community health needs assessment. These strategies will describe the actions KRMC intends to take to address each need and the anticipated impact of these actions, identify the resources needed to address each health need, and describe any planned collaboration between KRMC and other facilities or organizations addressing one of the identified health needs.

KRMC is a full-service, 93-bed acute care hospital and affiliate of Bryan Health, a non-profit, Nebraska-owned health system. Since opening in 2014, KRMC has grown to include a medical clinic, 24-hour emergency room and Level III Trauma Center, Maternity Care Center and Level II Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

KRMC worked with Two Rivers Public Health Department (TRPHD) to complete their 2019 Community Health Survey. We will continue to work with TRPDH, CHI Good Samaritan, and other community partners to be in alignment for the next iteration of the next CHNA and CHIP reporting requirements.

For the purposes of this report, the community served includes the city of Kearney and Buffalo County, Nebraska. Buffalo County is one of seven (7) counties served by Two Rivers Public Health Department.



# *Background*

Health System Overview

02

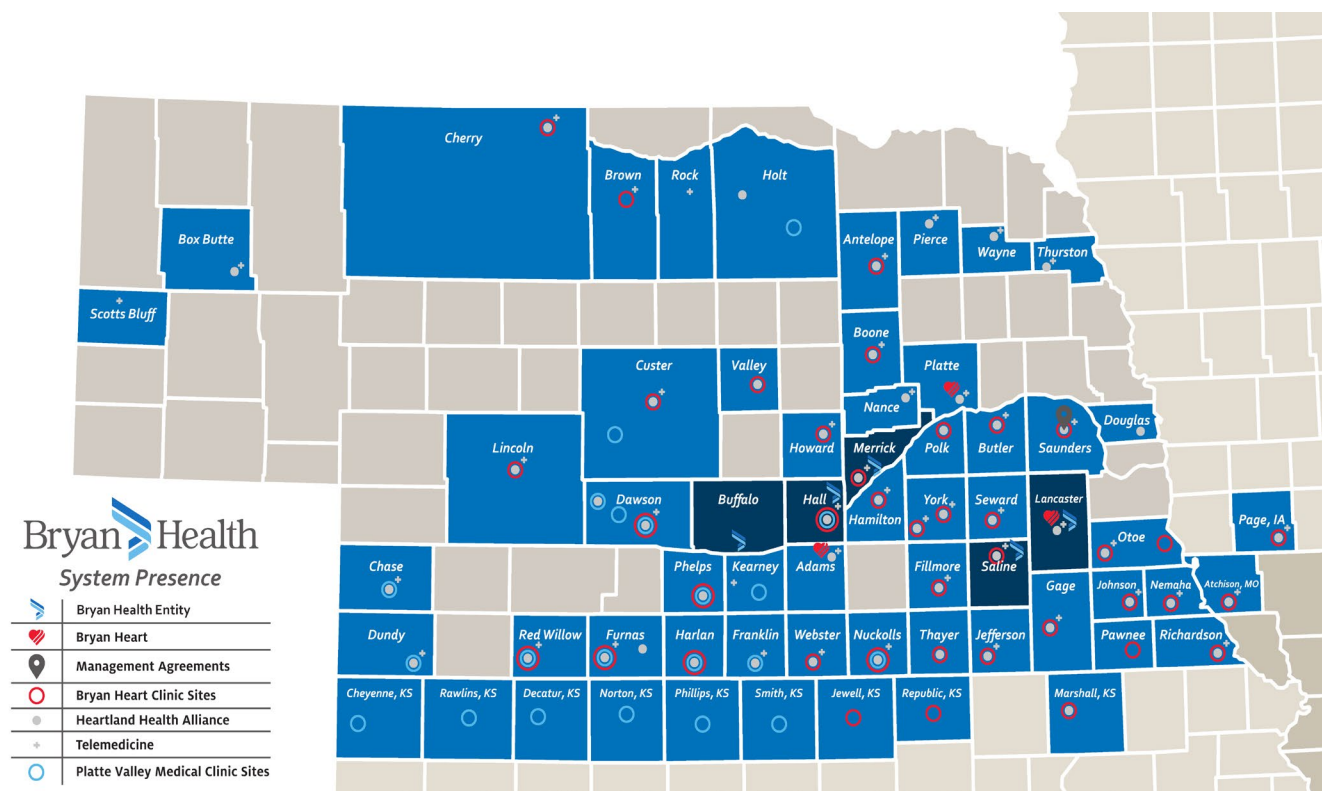
Needs Assessment Overview

03

# Health System Overview

## Who We Are

As of January 2022, Kearney Regional Medical Center joined Bryan Health system, a not-for-profit, Nebraska-owned-and-governed health care organization. Bryan Health works to provide care throughout Nebraska. Bryan Health provides a comprehensive range of health care services with more than 6,500 staff members and outreach sites that span the state of Nebraska and into Iowa, Kansas and Missouri.



## Community Benefit

In 2021, Bryan Health provided **\$140.1 million** in community benefits.

**\$15.2 million** of this was given as free and discounted health services provided to patients who could not afford to pay and who met all the criteria for financial assistance.

**\$102.3 million** represents the unreimbursed cost of Medicaid, Medicare, and other public programs.

## Aligned Strategy

KRMC's focus is closely aligned with the results of its CHNA.

KRMC will continue to focus on cardiovascular disease, the nursing shortage and access to care. This will be accomplished by devoting internal resources and deepening external partnerships.

Furthermore, community health improvement is a driving strategy within KRMC's 2023 strategic plan.



# *Implementation Strategies*

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# Overview

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## Prioritized Significant Health Needs

Through its 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment, KRMC identified three significant health needs within our region that require prioritized focus over the next three years:

These significant health needs were selected based on input from Kearney Regional Medical Center's Leadership Board and Board of Trustees.

*Cardiovascular Disease*

*Nursing Shortages*

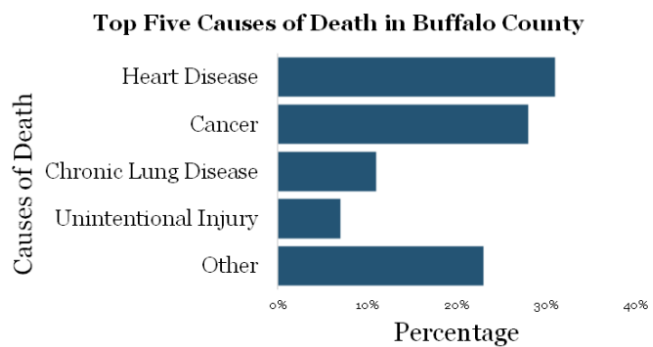
*Access to Care*

# Cardiovascular Disease

## Summary

According to Two Rivers Public Health Department, heart disease is the leading cause of death in Buffalo County. Annually, 79/100,000 people in Buffalo County die from cardiovascular disease.

Of the top ten chronic conditions treated at Kearney Regional Medical Center/Platte Valley Medical Clinic from January 1, 2017 to June 30, 2022, four were related to cardiovascular conditions:



**81,898**

Hypertension

**40,035**

Heart disease

**28,537**

Heart Failure

**15,343**

Atrial Fibrillation



Kearney Regional Medical Center and Platte Valley Medical Clinic provide a full range of services for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cardiac-related diseases.

The following programs and services have been added, or are in the process of being added, to help address cardiovascular disease:



# Cardiovascular Disease

## Heart Failure Program

Kearney Regional Medical Center cares for heart failure patients in a variety of ways:

- Providing personalized education
- Providing scales, blood pressure monitors, O<sub>2</sub> stat monitors for patients to help track vitals
- Offering more education opportunities on heart failure, other cardiac diseases and comorbidities to empower our community with knowledge on health maintenance and management.

The national benchmark for heart failure readmissions is 21.6%.

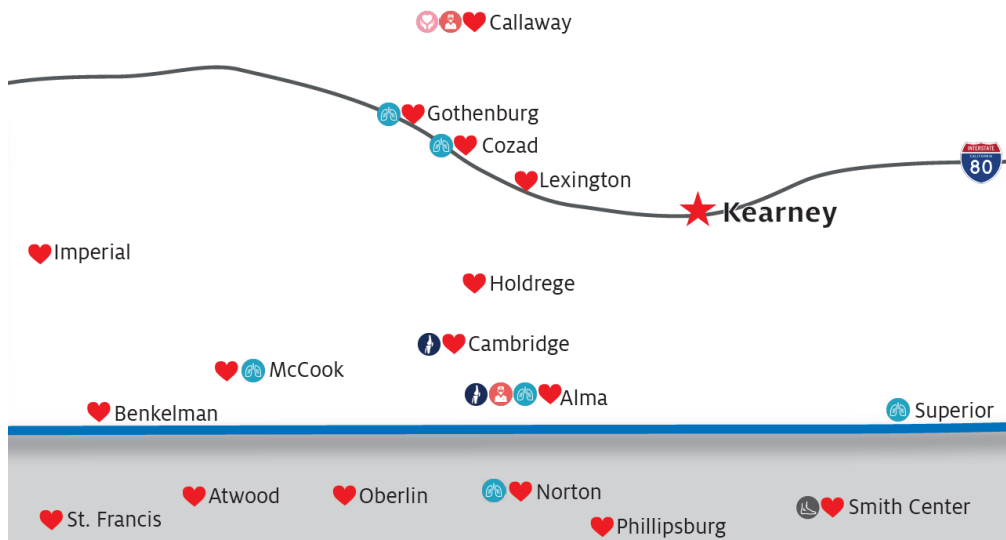
At KRMCC, the readmission rate in 2021 was 10.64 percent, and just 8.42% in 2022.

## Outreach to Critical Access Hospitals

Platte Valley Medical Clinic operates 15 outreach cardiology clinics in Greater Nebraska and Northern Kansas. By having PVMC providers meet with patients for routine or follow-up appointments in their own community, this greatly decreases travel and other barriers for at-risk patients.

This improves the likelihood of patient's heart health being maintained or increasing.

In 2021, cardiology outreach providers made 4,679 visits, and in 2022 they increased outreach clinic visits by 5% for a total of 4,926 visits.



# Cardiovascular Disease

## Stroke Program

Kearney Regional Medical Center earned Primary Stroke Center certification in April 2020 by meeting/exceeding all standards for stroke program accreditation:

- Stroke program coordinator has extensive experience in acute stroke care and provides community education on stroke prevention
- The specially-trained stroke team of ER/ICU nurses arrive bedside within 15 minutes of alert
- 24/7 access to lab testing and advanced imaging
- 24/7 access to neurologists

Since starting the stroke program in April 2022 and through January 29, 2023, KRMC has treated 254 stroke patients.

The national benchmark for Door-to-Needle Times for Acute Ischemic Stroke is 60 minutes.

KRMC has exceeded this benchmark 87% of the time since starting the stroke program in April 2022.

## TAVR

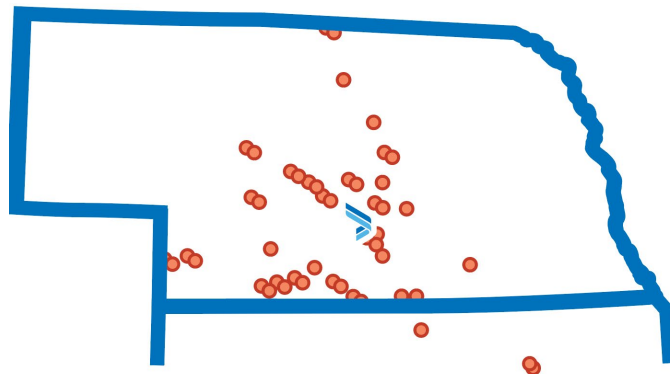
In May 2021, Kearney Regional Medical Center began performing transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) surgery. This procedure helps patients who have a narrowing of the aortic valve. It is a less-invasive alternative to open heart surgery, making it a preferable option for older patients who may not be a suitable candidate for open heart surgery.

As of January 29, 2022, 52 procedures have been completed at KRMC with a remarkable average 30-day survival rate of more than 97 %.

Patients came from 53 zip codes across Nebraska to receive TAVR surgery. In 2022 KRMC was the only provider of this type of surgery in Nebraska outside of Lincoln and Omaha.

The national average length of stay for an open heart surgery is 5 days and 1.6 days for a TAVR.

The average length of stay for a TAVR patient at KRMC is 1.0.



# Cardiovascular Disease

## Cardiac Rehab & Pritikin Program

Kearney Regional Medical Center began offering patients the Pritikin Intensive Cardiac rehab program in April 2022.

Pritikin ICR is one of only three intensive cardiac rehab programs to be approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

The program provides a variety of programs to participants include weekly virtual cooking schools; and educational workshops and videos on healthy eating, healthy mindset, and exercise.

Since starting the program in April 2022, and as of January 29, 2023, KRMCC has provided 2,167 education and exercise sessions .

Since beginning in April 2022, KRMCC Pritikin patients have achieved the following outcomes:

- Blood pressure improvement: 16-20 %
- PHQ-9 depression scale: Improvement 22%
- Functional capacity Improvement: 15%



## Watchman Procedure

Kearney Regional Medical Center will be starting a program in Summer 2023 for patients suffering from atrial fibrillation not caused by a heart valve problem (also known as non-valvular AFib).

Watchman is a one-time, minimally-invasive procedure where an implant about the size of a quarter is placed on top of the left atrial appendage (LAA), permanently closing it off to keep blood clots from escaping. This procedure will help to reduce strokes, lessen use of blood thinners, and decrease risk of bleeding from falls or minor injuries.

In national clinical trials, 96 % of people were able to stop taking blood thinners just 45 days after the WATCHMAN procedure.

**WATCHMAN™**  
LEFT ATRIAL APPENDAGE CLOSURE IMPLANT

# Nursing Shortages

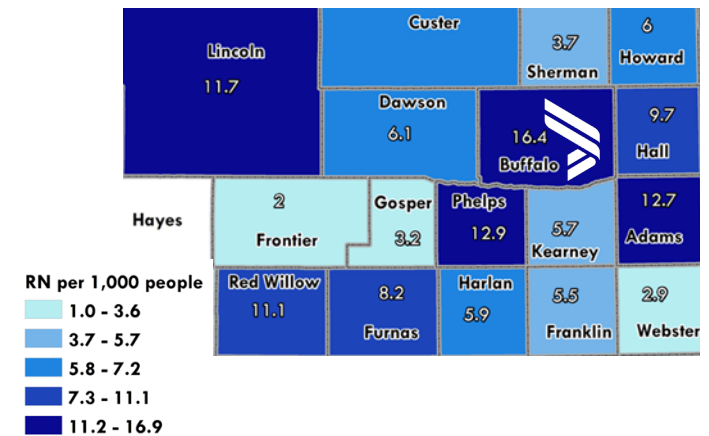
## Summary

According to the Nebraska Center for Nursing, by 2025, Nebraska will experience a shortage of

**5,435 nurses.**

According to the Nebraska Center for Nursing's 2022 Biennial Report, Buffalo County has 16.4 nurses per 1,000 people and neighboring counties have even smaller ratios available for staffing. Nurses are leaving the workforce for a variety of reasons, causing staffing shortages. In December of 2022 there were 36 open nursing positions at KRMC.

According to the American Hospital Association, the average time to hire an RN is 89 days.



Filling these nursing roles is critical to providing high-quality, safe patient care and ensuring access to all who seek care.



Kearney Regional Medical Center is working on the following strategies to help address nursing shortages:

# Nursing Shortages

## Nurse Residency Program

In 2018, Kearney Regional Medical Center launched a Nurse Residency Program. This program is designed for new graduates and provides an in-depth orientation program and assistance preparing for the NCLEX board assessment.

This Six-Week Program Provides:

- Exposure to various nurse/career tracks
- Experience managing sophisticated technologies
- Training in leadership and problem-solving
- Career track placement
- Certification in:
  - Basic Arrhythmia
  - Advanced Cardiac Life Support
  - Pediatric Advanced Life Support — if designated in critical care area

Following the program, residents and nursing managers 'bid' for placement in a unit at KRMC.

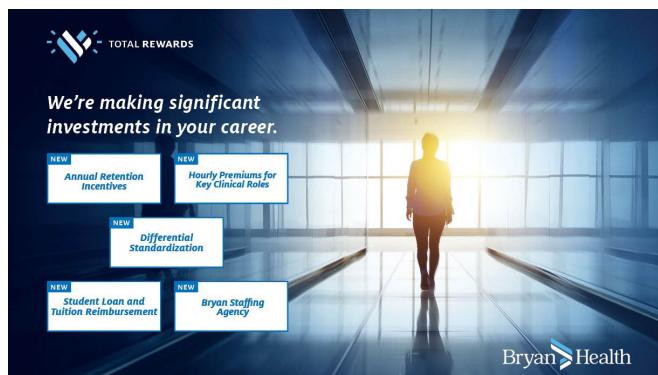
To date, two classes of 20 total students have completed this program, and more are planned in the future.



## Workforce Incentive Programs

In January 2022, KRMC and all other Bryan Health entities launched a two-year comprehensive Workforce Incentive Program to approximately 6,500 staff, including:

- Retention Incentives
- Student loan repayment
- Tuition remission
- Student loan repayment
- Shift differentials



# Nursing Shortages

## Recruitment of LPNs

In Q1 of 2023, Kearney Regional Medical Center began utilizing Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in the acute care setting, under the supervision of a Registered Nurse (RN).

LPNs can provide bedside care to patients, walk them to the bathroom, take vital signs, assist with daily living activities and perform assessments.

Kearney Regional is promoting the LPN program to current students at Central Community College who receive their LPN license and plan to go on to receive their RN license while already practicing.

Using LPNs in the acute care setting will help to address the need for more RNs without changing the current staffing ratios for patient care.

## Recruitment

Kearney Regional Medical Center has a full-time Senior Recruiter who:

- Sources candidates on Indeed and LinkedIn
- Cold calls potential candidates (50 per week)
- Attends all relevant job fairs (5-15 per year)
- Arranges clinical rotations and job shadowing
- Brings high school and college students on-campus for tours and job information

With the support of the Bryan Health HR team, this has been a very successful effort.

In January 2023, KRMC was cited by Nurse.org as one of the safest hospitals in the United States--and the safest in the Nebraska--to work as a nurse.

KRMC also achieved a 94th percentile rating for employee satisfaction on its 2022 Press Ganey Employee Engagement Survey. These two top marks have aided in recruitment.



# Access to Care

## Summary

According to the TRPHD 2020 Community Health Needs Assessment, Two Rivers Health Department identified at least five counties with a reported shortage of care professionals in the following areas:

- Psychiatry and Mental Health
- Family Practice/Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- General Surgery
- Primary Care

The TRPHD CHNA also identified our community as having an increasingly growing and poverty-impacted population in need of greater access to healthcare services:

- The TRPHD population increased 2.6% from 2010 to 2018.
- The TRPHD poverty percentage increased 0.5% from 2012 to 2018 (State: -0.8%).
- In 2018, 16.2% of TRPHD residents reported their health as "fair" or "poor" (State: 14.5%).



Kearney Regional Medical Center and Platte Valley Medical Clinic, the provider group that provides services at KRMC, are working on the following strategies to help address provider growth and expanded access to care:

# Access to Care

## Recruitment/Retention of Primary Care Providers

Platte Valley Medical Clinic added Family Medicine services in 2018, significantly expanding access to care for families in the Kearney area.

Platte Valley Medical Clinic has continued to recruit for and work to retain family medicine providers including physician (MD/DO) and mid-level (PA-C, APRN) specifically by recruiting Advanced Practice Registered Nurse-level providers who are able to practice independently.

Internal Medicine is a primary pillar of the Platte Valley Medical Clinic, especially with an increasingly aging population needing access to this specialized type of primary care.

In the past three years, three Internal Medicine physicians have moved to hospitalist roles at KRMC, which has spurred additional recruitment to backfill demand for Internal Medicine services. PVMG is actively recruiting and conducting legacy planning for this service line .

KRMC has been successful in developing a pipeline of talent within the organization by offering Tuition Assistance and Loan Forgiveness programs that have helped multiple staff members move into advanced practice roles.

Plans are in place to continue these efforts to meet demand for primary care services.

## Growth of General Surgery & Vascular Services

Platte Valley Medical Clinic has added two surgeons and two mid-levels to its General Surgery team since 2018. Recruitment for this team has been strategic with each surgeon adding complimentary skills including trauma, vascular, and colorectal surgery. This specialized care and expanded coverage helped KRMC earn Level III Trauma Certification in 2022.

With growth, a fourth general surgeon is under consideration to expand the trauma program.



## Master Facility Plan

A multi-million-dollar master facility plan is currently under development to expand both clinic and inpatient space at Kearney Regional Medical Center.

This expansion is needed due to a continually increasing census as the demands for care in the region grow and will allow for more growth of physician services at Platte Valley Medical Clinic



# Access to Care

## Transportation Services

KRMC currently partners with Ryde Transit and other independent contractors to provide transportation services for patients who are unable to travel to the hospital/clinic for care.

In 2022 KRMC provided more than 350 rides. We are looking to further expand this service in the future to help improve access to healthcare.

In Spring of 2022, KRMC entered a preferred partnership with Air Methods Tri-City LifeNet to provide an option for flight medical care for our patients. In the first year, LifeNet has completed 50 flights that transported to and from KRMC. Flight services, like Tri-City LifeNet, allows for greater access to care in Nebraska and Kansas for our patients and other facilities.



## Virtual Visits

Platte Valley Medical Clinic began utilizing Virtual Visits on a regular basis during the COVID-19 pandemic in spring of 2022. All 23 physicians on staff with PVMG at the time were trained on, and conducted, at least one virtual visit, with many conducting over 100 virtual visits during 2020.

Usage of virtual visits will greatly expand when KRMC migrates to Epic in February 2024. The addition of Epic/MyChart will improve patient access for routine/non-emergent appointments.



**MyChart** by **Epic**

## Telemedicine

KRMC currently provides these telemedicine services: nephrology, neurology, pulmonology/intensivist services, psychology, mental health triage, and nutrition. Telemedicine allows for better coverage of inpatients at KRMC and is part of KRMC's current strategic plan.

**Bryan** TELEMEDICINE

**TeledigmHealth**



# *Appendix*

Sources

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# Sources

## Health System Overview

### Who We Are

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### Community Benefit

Source: *Journeys Magazine*, Bryan Health, Summer 2022. <https://www.bryanhealth.com/about-bryan-health/journeys-magazine/>

### Aligned Strategy

Source: *Kearney Regional Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment*. Accessed 03/07/23. <https://www.bryanhealth.com/about-bryan-health/community-health-needs-assessment/>

## Cardiovascular Disease

### Summary

Source 1: Two Rivers Public Health Department – County Dashboard, Buffalo County. Accessed at <https://trphd.ne.gov/public-health-data/county-dashboards/buffalo-county.html>

Source 2: *Inpatient and outpatient chronic conditions for patients at KRMC, 1/1/17 to 6/30/22; NHA*. <https://www.nhadatadimensions.org/Tableau/Tablea>  
[u](#)

## Heart Failure Program

Source: *Trends in 30- and 90-Day Readmission Rates for Heart Failure*. April 19, 2021. Circulation: Heart Failure. Vol. 14, No. 4. American Heart Association. <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/CIRCHEARTFAILURE.121.008335>

## Stroke Program

Source: *Improving Door-to-Needle Times for Acute Ischemic Stroke*. January 17, 2017. Cardiovascular: Quality and Outcomes. Vol. 10, No. 1. <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/full/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.116.003242>

## TAVR

Source 1: Bryan Health Subject Matter Experts.

Source 2: *Length of Stay and Discharge Disposition After Transcatheter Versus Surgical Aortic Valve Replacement in the United States*. Vol. 11, No. 9. Circulation: Cardiovascular Interventions. <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIRCINTERVENTIONS.118.006929>

## Cardiac Rehab & Pritikin Program

Source: Bryan Health Subject Matter Experts.

## Watchman Procedure

Source: Watchman website. Accessed 03/07/23. <https://www.watchman.com/en-us-hcp/patient-selection-referrals/referral-process.html>

## Nursing Shortages

### Summary

Source 1: *NHA Nursing Shortage Work Group Report*. December 2021. Nebraska Hospital Association.

<https://dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Open%20Meeting%20Act%20Docs/CFN%2012.3.21%20F%20NHA%20Nursing%20Shortage%20DRAFT%20Report.pdf>

Source 2: *2022 Biennial Report: 2021 RN and 2021 LPN Renewal Survey Data*. 2022. Nebraska Center for Nursing.

<https://center4nursing.nebraska.gov/sites/center4nursing.nebraska.gov/files/doc/2022%20CFN%20-%20BIENNIAL%20REPORT.pdf>

Source 3: *2022 Environmental Scan*. 2021. American Hospital Association.

<https://www.aha.org/guidesreports/2022-12-05-2022-environmental-scan>

### Nurse Residency Program

Source: Bryan Health Subject Matter Experts.

### Recruitment

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<https://nurse.org/articles/safest-hospitals-by-state/>

## Access to Care

### Summary

Source: *TRPHD Community Health Needs Assessment*. August 2020. Two Rivers Public Health Department. Accessed at <https://trphd.ne.gov/> in Public Health Data, Community Health Assessment.

<file:///C:/Users/ber006/Downloads/TWO%20RIVERS%20PUBLIC%20HEALTH%20DEPARTMENT%20-%20CHNA%20-%202008-11-2020%20Final.pdf>

### Recruitment/Retention of Primary Care Providers

Source: Bryan Health Subject Matter Experts.

### Growth of General Surgery & Vascular Services

Source: Bryan Health Subject Matter Experts.

### Master Facility Plan

Source: Bryan Health Subject Matter Experts.

### Transportation Services

Source: Bryan Health Subject Matter Experts.

### Virtual Visits

Source: Bryan Health Subject Matter Experts.