

Progress Report to our Community

Fiscal Year
2023

Addressing community health needs.

Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital is committed to shaping health improvement efforts in our service area based on sound data, personal and professional experience, and community need. Through collaborative efforts, Blue Hill Hospital creates healthier communities through the provision of services, resources, and programs beyond our hospital's walls.

We used the results of the 2022 [Community Health Needs Assessment](#) along with community input to inform the development of our three-year [Community Health Strategy](#). As a member of Northern Light Health's Community Health Council, Blue Hill Hospital recognized the value, reach, and influence of aligned engagement efforts with a shared purpose. The following three priority areas were adopted as shared priorities where Northern Light Health member organizations would engage in common strategy to achieve greater statewide impact:

- Mental health
- Social determinants of health
- Substance use

This report is an update on Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital's progress on our community health strategy for fiscal year 2023 (October 2022 – September 2023), representing the first year of our three-year health improvement plan.



PRIORITY: Mental Health

Three-year approach (2023-2025)		
Goal	Strategy	Objective
Provide youth and families with the mental and behavioral health resources they need to thrive.	Partner with schools and other community organizations to ensure youth and their families have improved access to mental health prevention, early intervention, and treatment services.	Educate and empower others to recognize, support, and respond to mental and behavioral health needs of youth.

Shared objective:

Increase the number of individuals trained to support the mental health needs of youth.

Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital trained staff in Psychological First Aid (PFA), an evidence-informed approach to help anyone — children, adolescents, adults, and families — in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic experience and has proven to be effective when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis at any time. PFA shines a light on the impact of collective trauma, builds resiliency, and assists in self-care action plans by incorporating five evidence-based principles: safety, calming, connectedness, self and community reliance, and hope.

Certified Blue Hill Hospital staff then engaged schools and/or youth serving organizations to educate and empower individuals to respond to mental and behavioral health needs of youth using the PFA training model. Attendees received training in eight core elements: engagement, safety, stabilization, information gathering, practical assistance, connection to social supports, information on coping, and connecting with collaborative services. Systemwide collective impact of our shared objective resulted in 35 training sessions with of 584 individuals trained.

Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Blue Hill Consolidated School	Healthy Acadia
Community Compass	Healthy Peninsula
Curriculum Coordinators in Hancock County (Union 93 and Union 76)	Help Me Grow
Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)	Maine Coast Fisherman
Downeast Community Partners (Blue Hill Peninsula preschool educators and Head Start)	Nichols Day Camp*
Downeast Partners & Friends	Stonington High School
Early Childhood Care Providers Group*	The Early Childhood Interest Group, chaired by Healthy Peninsula
	WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)

- Two community organizations* trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA); 25 individuals trained in PFA.
- Developed directory of behavioral health resources for youths (and adults) in the LGBTQ community.
- Engaged in “Help Me Grow” and Children’s Behavioral Health Services with DHHS
- Provided resources and participated in YMCA Healthy Kids Fair, WIC Community Baby Shower
- Outreach to Director of Community Program to Maine Coast Fisherman regarding behavioral health support for fisherman
- Participating with the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety’s Fisherman’s Empowerment grant project.

- Implementation of Medical Neighborhood Team to proactively address complex patient needs, including behavioral health issues, in a multi-disciplinary setting.
- Stonington High School – a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) from Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital offers regular mental health consultation to staff and students; helps provide educational resources; potential point of contact for PFA training.

PRIORITY: Social Determinants of Health

Three-year approach (2023-2025)		
Goal	Strategy	Objective
Improve health outcomes for vulnerable populations.	Partner with community to improve equitable access to social supports, community resources, and healthcare services.	Connect individuals with community resources they need to improve their health and wellbeing.

Shared objective:

Increase community partner engagement with findhelp.org.

Findhelp.org is the nation's leading social care network, making it easier to connect patients and their families with free or reduced-cost programs from local partners and national support services with dignity and ease, and is one component of Northern Light Health's response to need in the communities we serve. Northern Light findhelp will continue to develop, allowing users to search and connect to community services.

Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital engaged in meaningful, trusted community partnerships to reach priority populations with equitable access to community resources and social supports and connect individuals with community resources they need to improve their health and well-being through the findhelp.org platform. Blue Hill Hospital participated in a monthly systemwide workgroup focused on engagement efforts to educate community partners on the availability and uses of findhelp.org. We assisted those community partners with adding their program information to the platform directory and with activating the ability to receive referrals or requests for information through the platform. Systemwide community engagement efforts resulted in 28 partners offering 89 programs that increased engagement with [findhelp](https://findhelp.org).

Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Age Friendly Coastal Communities	Good Shepherd Food Bank	Opiate-Free Island Project*
Blue Hill Chamber of Commerce	Hancock/Washington County	Prosper Consortium
Bridging Neighbors Project	Homeless Providers Coalition	Restored Hope
Deer Isle Stonington Coalition on Substance Use	Healthy Acadia	Rotary Club
Down East Family YMCA	Healthy Island Project*	Simmering Pot
Downeast Community Partners	Healthy Peninsula*	Substance Use Prevention Council
Downeast Partners for Children and Families	Hospice Volunteers of Hancock County	Heart of Maine, United Way
Downeast Substance Treatment Network	Maine Seacoast Mission	WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
Early Childhood Interest Group	Medical Neighborhood Team	
	Next Step Domestic Violence Project	

- Three community partners* added six programs to the findhelp directory:
 - Healthy Island Project: HIP Lunch Box Program
 - Healthy Peninsula: Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Furry Friends Food Bank, Healthy Peninsula Family Resource Center, Simmering Pot Meal Delivery
 - Opiate-Free Island Project: Syringe Exchange Program
- Implementation of a closed-loop referral system between Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital and community partner Healthy Peninsula using the findhelp.org platform to support “Bridging Neighbors” volunteer resource connection collaboration.
- 81 food bags distributed to patients in need, in partnership with Good Shepherd Food Bank
- 600+ lbs. of fresh produce distributed to patients at Blue Hill Family Practice July-Sept in partnership with Mainers Feeding Mainers program.
- 37 “Welcome Baby” bags distributed to new families for a healthy start, in partnership with Healthy Peninsula
- Partnered with Downeast Community Partner’s Thaw Fund to support the purchase of heating fuel for people living in poverty in Hancock County
- Sponsored the Heart of Maine United Way’s Hancock County Food Drive to support food security efforts.
- Provided 120 quarts/month of free, fresh soup via Simmering Pot, a partnership with Healthy Peninsula
- Sponsored Down East Family YMCA Healthy Kids Fair and Pridefest celebration, a partnership with Healthy Acadia
- 40 Blood Pressure checks conducted at Juneteenth celebration in partnership with Healthy Acadia
- Partnered with Comfort Cases to stock 16 personal care backpacks to have for babies-teenagers entering Foster Care.

PRIORITY: Substance Use

Three-year approach (2023-2025)		
Goal	Strategy	Objective
Reduce deaths, disability, and suffering associated with substance use disorder.	Leverage community partnerships to reduce barriers and improve access to and availability of substance use prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction services. Optimize relationships with partners who can help us engage effectively with populations in need.	Improve pathways to prevention, treatment, and recovery for individuals with substance use disorder.

Shared objective:

Improve distribution and preventive access to state sponsored Naloxone kits.

In collaboration with other Northern Light Health member organizations and community-based organizations, trained Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital staff representing pharmacy and community health departments worked diligently to improve processes and partnerships to reduce barriers and provide equitable access to state-sponsored Naloxone (Narcan) kits for priority populations.

Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital participated in the Maine Naloxone Distribution Initiative¹, which provides state-purchased naloxone to community organizations, clinical sites, and end-users throughout Maine to distribute free of charge. Through a collaboration with Bangor Public Health & Community Services, Blue Hill Hospital worked in the emergency department and primary care settings to provide education on the use of these naloxone kits to end-users to facilitate the reversal of private overdoses in the community. Systemwide collective impact of our shared objective resulted in 1,453 naloxone kits distributed throughout Northern Light Health's service area.

Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Deer Isle-Stonington Community Coalition on Substance Use	Hub and Spoke Clinical Advisory Council
Downeast Substance Treatment Network	Inspire Warming Center
Downeast Substance Use Prevention Council	Nichols Day Camp
Hancock County Sherriff's Office	Opiate Free Island Project
Healthy Acadia	Prosper Consortium
Stonington Lobster Boat races	Restored Hope for Recovering Addicts
	Blue Hill Fair

- 23 state-sponsored naloxone kits distributed
- Engaged in collaborative efforts with listed partners.
- Installed a locked kiosk in the waiting room of Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital's main entrance for disposal of unwanted or expired medication.
- Collected 125+ lbs. of expired unwanted, unused medications.
- Stocked Primary Care Practices with Deterra medication waste bags in, a program in partnership with the Hancock County Sherriff's Office and Healthy Acadia.
- Assisted in the distribution of 452 kits of Narcan, 350 fentanyl test strips and 46 Xylazine test strips at the Blue Hill Fair in partnership with Opiate Free Island Project and others.
- Distributed and provided education for 36 kits of Narcan at Ellsworth Pridefest with Healthy Acadia
- Distributed and provided education for 20 kits of Narcan at the Stonington Lobster Boat races.
- Sponsorship of the Opiate Free Island Partnership Recovery Celebration at the Island Community Center in partnership with OFIP and where Dr. Cobb was the guest speaker.
- Sponsorship of Opiate Free Island Partnership Jacinta presentation focused on recovery.

¹ [Distribute Naloxone – Maine Drug Data Hub](#)