

Fiscal Year 2021

PROGRESS REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

Addressing community health needs



Northern LightSM

A.R. Gould Hospital

Table of Contents

Progress Report to Our Community

Introduction 3

Progress Report Update

Priority #1: Social Determinants of Health 4

Priority #2: Substance Use 5

Priority #3: Access to Care 6

Priority #4: Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Weight 7

Conclusion 8





Gregory T. LaFrancois,
CPA, MHA, FACHE
President
A.R. Gould Hospital

As we entered 2021, we came together to vaccinate and beat down the coronavirus pandemic that gripped our communities. We came together as community partners and our combined strength led to our ultimate success. Those partnerships were vital in protecting our communities in the immediate coronavirus fight and remain vital as we plan to create the structure to address continuing threats such as the opioid epidemic, unemployment, and food insecurity.

The pandemic taught us to become even better at working together. We have renewed commitment to improving the social determinants of health, and we have better ways to reach people than ever before.

In 2019, Northern Light Health partnered with three healthcare systems and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention to create a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). We used that assessment and public input to develop a three-year strategy to improve the health and well-being of the communities that we serve.

This report is an update on the progress of our community health strategy for fiscal year 2021, representing the second year of our three-year health improvement plan. In addition to the extraordinary outreach and collaborative efforts during the coronavirus pandemic, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital continues to engage in priority areas of work, including:

- Social determinants of health
- Substance use
- Access to care
- Physical activity, nutrition, weight

At AR Gould, we stand ready to support Aroostook County in collaboration with all community partners. We are proud of our work to improve the lives of folks in the County. It is our absolute privilege to care for them and we look forward to discovering new and better ways to make healthcare work for the entire County. I look forward to what we can accomplish in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Greg LaFrançois, CPA, MHA, FACHE
President, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital

Progress report update

FY 2021 Progress Report

Priority #1: Social Determinants of Health

Objective: Increase the number of sites implementing screening and referral for health-related social needs from 0 to 1 by 9/30/21.

Status: In progress

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: In fiscal year 2021 (FY21), Northern Light AR Gould Hospital participated in the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Workgroup, which met bi-weekly through November 2020. The Workgroup suspended meetings after this date to accommodate new system-level SDOH efforts. In January 2021, Northern Light Health activated four critical path project teams to plan and operationalize a system approach to identifying patients with social health needs. These groups oversaw standardization of the Cerner Social History Tool, which will ensure patient demographics and health history are documented in a consistent fashion across all Northern Light Health member hospitals. The existing “Food Insecurity” form in Cerner was then updated to include six additional evidence-based questions to assess patients’ housing status and safety, transportation, utilities, daily activities, and isolation. The updated screening form aligns with most of the recommendations developed by the SDOH Workgroup members. Both the “SDOH Screening” form and the updated Social History Tool went live in Cerner on 5/18/21 and are now available for use. Additional efforts during this year included foundational work to operationalize the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) and developing recommendations for implementation of a social care network platform (Aunt Bertha). These additional Cerner functions are slated to go live in fiscal year 2022 and will provide Northern Light Health with enhanced ability to understand social needs by populations and geographic location and provide seamless patient referrals to community-based organizations for assistance with social needs. Moving forward, the SDOH Workgroup will be re-established in FY22 as the “SDOH Team” and report to the Northern Light’s Quality Council and will be responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of Northern Light Health system’s implementation of SDOH screening and intervention.

Partners engaged: Northern Light AR Gould Hospital partnered with the following Northern Light Health members on this priority:

Acadia Hospital, Beacon Health, Blue Hill Hospital, CA Dean Hospital, Eastern Maine Medical Center, Home Care & Hospice, Inland Hospital, Maine Coast Hospital, Mayo Hospital, Mercy Hospital, and Sebasticook Valley Hospital. In addition, Northern Light Health's Information Services, Clinical Informatics, and Clinical Standards Group.

Outcome measure: In FY21, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital and other member hospitals were unable to initiate SDOH screening and meet the projected targets. This was an accepted outcome of the system led SDOH efforts, which were initiated after the FY20 community health improvement plan’s activities and targets had been established. Ultimately, several key system outcomes were met during this period, including standardization of how and where SDOH information is documented within the electronic health record and adoption of a standard SDOH screening form. This provides a successful foundation for SDOH efforts moving

forward. While screening has occurred, because of inclusion on standard rooming workflows, the reporting capability screening rates and/or results will be completed by IS following additional auditing and mapping of appropriate Cerner concepts and data.

Project lead: Dawn Roberts, Community Health & Volunteer Coordinator

Next steps: In fiscal year 2022 (FY22), Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will participate in SDOH team efforts to operationalize SDOH screening within practice locations, as well as contribute to development of the metrics that will be used to report and evaluate SDOH screening reach and effectiveness. Member hospitals will have a key role in supporting the implementation of Aunt Bertha, primarily through completing an inventory of existing community resources and referral partners and conducting a community resource gap analysis to identify potential weaknesses in their local community services networks. These activities are proposed Key Performance Indicators in the FY22 Annual System Goal and will inform the development of the resource directory within Aunt Bertha. Additionally, member hospitals will have an opportunity to participate in SDOH quality improvement initiatives as part of a recent award to Northern Light Health. This grant, provided through a collaboration between Pfizer, Inc., and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, will support discrete quality improvement projects to understand and improve SDOH screening and referral workflows.

Priority #2: Substance Use

Objective: Increase the number of partnerships with community-based substance use prevention efforts from 10 to 12 by 9/30/21.

Status: Completed

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: In FY21, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's Community Health and Volunteer Coordinator, Dawn Roberts, continued to increase partnerships with community-based substance use prevention efforts by attending meetings of local coalitions and continuing to make connections. Some of the 17 partnerships include Aroostook County Action Programs (ACAP) Drug Free Aroostook Coalition, MicMac Drug Task Force, Aroostook District Coordinating Council, Aroostook Mental Health Centers (AMHC), HRSA RCORP Planning Consortium, Aroostook County Collaborative and Health Service Advisory Committee (please see the list below for additional partnerships). Each of these groups brings several participants from different backgrounds to the table with information around what is happening, services that are available, and opportunities for collaboration. This partnership also explores the gaps in services that exist in Aroostook County.

AR Gould Hospital participated in several events that were related to substance use prevention, these included; The Great American Smoke Out, Walk with a Doc program, Party at the Pad Celebrations (Tobacco Prevention), Smoking Cessation Classes, Promotion of Naloxone Training classes, Air out Tobacco's Dirty Laundry (Easton Recreation Center), Drug Take Back Days, Gold Star Standards of Excellence Program (Gold Award), New Year - New You!- Smoking Cessation information Display, "Don't host" handouts, Quarterly Prevention Booklets, DFA signage- You Matter, Community Needs Assessment Planning, and a local Health Fair. We partnered with AMHC by resourcing one of our providers, trained to prescribe Medication-Assisted Treatment, one day a week in the AMHC Caribou office and we are now offering Medication-Assisted Treatment in our Emergency Department. This is an operational effort, and a contracted, paid for service.

Partners engaged: Northern Light AR Gould Hospital partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP)– Tobacco Prevention, Tobacco Cessation, Drug Free Aroostook, Health Service Advisory, Aroostook County Collaborative
- Power of Prevention (POP)
- MicMac Tribe
- Local Law Enforcement
- Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC)
- Northern Maine Community College (NMCC)
- The Northern Lighthouse (TNLH)
- Boys and Girls Club
- WAGM TV
- University of Maine at Fort Kent (UMFK)
- Cary Medical Center
- Wabanaki Public Health
- Easton Recreation Center

Outcome measure: In FY21, Northern Light AR Gould Hospitals Community Health & Volunteer Coordinator, Dawn Roberts, participated with the lead applicant Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC) in an 18-month planning effort for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program planning grant (HRSA). Through this process, that started in July 2020, we participated in monthly meetings and subcommittee work to conduct a needs assessment, gap analysis, strategic and action plan to strengthen and expand Substance Use Disorder/Opioid Use Disorder (SUD/ODU), prevention, treatment, and recovery services in Aroostook County. Through the work of the consortium, AMHC has been awarded the HRSA RCORP Implementation grant. This is a three-year, \$1,000,000 grant and allows the consortium to continue its work in reducing the morbidity and mortality of substance use in Aroostook County. AR Gould will continue to contribute expertise to represent in the implementation process and support activities to work towards long-term planning efforts that increase coordination of care between prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

Project lead: Dawn Roberts, Community Health & Volunteer Coordinator

Next steps: In FY22, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will maintain the number of partnerships with community-based substance use prevention efforts from 12 to 12 by 9/30/22. We hope to continue the same activities as last year, Great American Smoke Out, Wear Red, Drug Take Back Day, and a Tie-Dye against Tobacco event with a local recreation center. Although these events may take on a different look and feel due to COVID the plan is to still provide the information to patients and the community by any means possible.

Priority #3: Access to Care

Objective: Increase the number of colorectal cancer educational opportunities in the community from 6 to 8 by 9/30/21.

Status: Completed

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: In FY21, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital worked to increase the number of educational opportunities in the community. While the traditional methods of spreading information such as health fairs were not an option due to COVID, we were

able to find ways to engage the community regarding colorectal cancer information. We developed a video about colonoscopies with Dr. Fredrickson and played it in all primary care locations, updated and distributed the Colorectal Cancer Brochure, handed out the brochure at our drive through flu shot clinics, displayed posters in primary care wait rooms in the Fort Fairfield Clinic, featured a Medical Monday segment on colorectal exams with Dr. Bernaiche, ran a press release in the local paper about the Maine Cancer Foundation (MCF) Colorectal Grant award containing information on why and how to get tested, sent information cards to our Healthy Aging group and attended one health fair at ACME Monaco where we provided information for employees. Through these methods we were able to reach over 76,000 people with colorectal cancer education.

Partners engaged: Northern Light AR Gould Hospital partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- WAGM TV
- The Star Herald
- Aroostook County Action Program
- MCF
- ACME Monaco
- Facebook

Outcome measure: In FY21, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital leveraged 10 methods of communication with the community regarding Colorectal Health. By creating an informative video, using print media, updating the brochure, and getting it into as many hands as possible we were able to reach over 76,000 people in the Aroostook County Community resulting in meeting our 2021 goal, even with COVID restrictions.

Project lead: Dawn Roberts, Community Health & Volunteer Coordinator

Next steps: In FY22, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will continue to increase the community's awareness of the benefits of colorectal screenings and availability. Provide information to patients and demystify fears and stigma of colorectal cancer. We plan to provide educational opportunities to community members through outreach events and media and provide education on and access to a limited number of free FIT tests through funding from the MCF by advertising this service in all AR Gould Primary Care locations in Aroostook County.

Priority #4: Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Weight

Objective: Maintain the number of evidence-based programs focused on increasing access to and availability of physical activity and nutrition opportunities at 43 by 9/30/21.

Status: In progress

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: In FY21, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital provided 31 programs focused on increasing access to and availability of physical activity and nutrition opportunities in our community. This number is short of our anticipated goal of 43, several planned activities were unfortunately postponed due to COVID outbreaks and restrictions. Fortunately, the programs that were offered featured a wide array of opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to attend. Using different mediums to engage participants we were able to reach our target audience. Methodologies employed included: educational cards mailed, in person events, Facebook Contests/posts, handouts and other types of mailings encouraging people who may not have felt comfortable joining a group in person to

participate within their own circle and benefiting from some type of physical activity or nutrition activity that we provided.

Partners engaged: Northern Light AR Gould Hospital partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- 5-2-1-0 Let's Go
- ACAP Head Start Program
- ACAP Nutrition Program
- Age Friendly Presque Isle
- Aroostook Area Agency on Aging
- Aroostook Center Mall
- Aroostook County Action Program
- Aroostook State Park
- Bike Coalition of Maine
- City of Presque Isle
- Dr. Bruce Alexander
- Easton Recreation Center
- Limestone Chamber-Recreation Center-Police Department
- Nordic Heritage Center
- Northern Maine Community College, Cooperative Extension
- Presque Isle Historical Society
- Presque Isle Recreation Center
- Prevention Services
- SAD 1
- St. Apollonia Dental Clinic
- Tobacco Prevention

Outcome measure: In FY21, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital provided 31 programs focused on increasing access to and availability of physical activity and nutrition opportunities in our community. Some of these programs included: six - Walk with a Doc events, two - hikes, eight - cooking classes, two - Party at the Splash Pad events, two - bike rodeo/safety events and many more activities designed to engage our community in physical activity and nutrition opportunities. Through different mediums we were able to engage participants in order to reach our target audience resulting in over 73,000 individuals being exposed to programming and messaging. While we came up short on the target goal of 43, the opportunities that the programming offered provided outstanding information for people of all ages and activity levels to create new and healthy habits for the future.

Project lead: Dawn Roberts, Community Health & Volunteer Coordinator

Next steps: In FY22, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital plans to maintain the number of evidence-based programs focused on increasing access to and availability of physical activity and nutrition at 25 by 9/30/22. This number has been reduced from the 2021 goal of 43 due to uncertainty surrounding COVID and what restrictions for programming will be in place in the coming year. Every opportunity to provide education and programming will be explored and weighted with the infection prevention team at AR Gould for safety and precautions and will be offered if approved by them. The hope is to exceed the goal of 25 in 2022, while keeping safety in the forefront of our community efforts.

Conclusion

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital continues work on identified priorities through the Community Health Strategy and is thankful for the participation and support of our community members and many area organizations for contributing their knowledge of local community health needs related to our priorities of action. Through existing and future partnerships, collaborative efforts are essential in addressing the identified community health strategies prioritized within.

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