

Fiscal Year 2021

PROGRESS REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

Addressing community health needs



Northern LightSM

Beacon Health

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Carrie Arsenault
President and CEO

Beacon Health

As 2021 nears an end, we approach 2022 with renewed hope, more resilience, and stronger community partnerships. Those partnerships have proven vital as the pandemic encumbered the gains we had made in Maine and nationally to address the opioid epidemic. Unemployment and food insecurity remain higher than pre-pandemic levels too.

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 Beacon Health continues to engage in priority areas of work, including:

- Social determinants of health
- Mental health
- Physical activity, nutrition, weight

At Beacon Health, we know that our neighbors are looking for trusted places where they can go for personalized care that is exceptional—and we want them to choose Northern Light Health. We are determined to be the best option for them while continuing to collaborate with our community partners. I look forward to what we can accomplish in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Carrie Arsenault, MBA
President, Northern Light Beacon Health

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 22 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 Beacon Health 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 Beacon Health partnered with the following Northern Light Health on this priority:

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

Outcome measure: In FY21, Northern Light Beacon Health 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, as a result 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: Jaime Rogers, LCSW, MBA – Director, Community & Behavioral Health Services

Next steps: In fiscal year 2022 (FY22), Northern Light Beacon Health 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: Mental Health

Objective: Increase educational programs to raise awareness, readiness, and access to mental health services from 0 to 4 by 9/30/21.

Status: Completed

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: In FY21, Northern Light Beacon Health partnered with Healthy Life Resources of Northern Light Acadia Hospital to offer quarterly leadership training and support for raising awareness of behavioral health, acute stress, and resilience. These sessions were well attended, and staff feedback was very positive. Plans continue for additional sessions in FY22. Additionally, the “Good Health is Good Business” series continued, with several sessions focused on similar topics as offered to Beacon staff and leaders. We completed at least four educational and support programs, and plan to continue these efforts in the coming year.

Partners engaged: Northern Light Beacon Health partnered with the following entities on this priority: Northern Light Acadia Hospital, Healthy Life Resources

Outcome measure: In FY21, Northern Light Beacon Health partnered with Northern Light Acadia Hospital Healthy Life Resources team to offer at least seven community and/or staff/leadership outreach sessions related to behavioral health, mental wellness, and resiliency.

Project lead: Jaime Rogers, LCSW, MBA – Director, Community Care and Behavioral Health Services

Next steps: In FY22, Northern Light Beacon Health will continue these activities. As the COVID-19 pandemic wears on, these sessions continue to be well attended and participation high. Feedback from participants has been supportive and indicates they appreciate these sessions and support.

Priority #3: Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Weight

Objective: Increase the total number of health coaching participants at Northern Light Health from 225 to 300 by 9/30/21.

Status: Completed

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: In FY21, Northern Light Beacon Health engaged health plan members with printed and email communications to educate plan members about the wellness benefits that were available to them as members of the Northern Light Employee Health Plan. Programs included individual health coaching, quarterly wellness courses, and weekly wellness classes. We successfully implemented a four week stress management course (Stay Well) to help plan member identify and develop coping skills related to stress. We also successfully implemented a four week nutrition education course (Bite Sized Nutrition) to help plan members understand nutrition and how it relates to their overall health. We continued to offer weekly virtual wellness classes for employees that included: yoga, group fitness, and self-care. We also started to implement group coaching, where a health coach would lead wellness discussions for a group of interested health plan members that wanted to learn as a group and support one another.

Partners engaged: Northern Light Beacon Health partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- Northern Light Home Office
- Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center
- Northern Light Beacon Health
- Northern Light AR Gould Hospital
- Northern Light CA Dean Hospital
- Northern Light Mayo Hospital
- Northern Light Acadia Hospital
- Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital
- Northern Light Inland Hospital
- Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital
- Northern Light Mercy Hospital
- Northern Light Sebecook Valley Hospital
- Northern Light Foundation
- Northern Light Home Care and Hospice
- Northern Light Pharmacy
- Northern Light Laboratory

Outcome measure: In FY21, Northern Light Beacon Health was able to effectively recruit and health coach 419 health plan members and help them improve their health and overall wellbeing. As mentioned previously we were able to offer and implement new wellness programs to support plan members with stress management, nutrition education, and physical activity.

Project lead: Andy VanEss, Wellness Program Manager

Next steps: In FY22, Northern Light Beacon Health will continue to offer a variety of wellness programs to support the everchanging needs of our employee population. These include individual and group health coaching, quarterly courses (stress, weight loss, nutrition) weekly virtual classes (fitness, yoga, self-care) and webinars. Webinars will be a new offering for FY 22 and will include topics like: fad diets, plant-based nutrition, and resistance training. We will continue to engage health plan members about our programs via system emails and mailings. Continue to partner with Total Health leads and member wellness champions on wellness initiatives. Our goal for FY22 will be to increase the number of participants in all programs.

Conclusion

Northern Light Beacon Health 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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