

Fiscal Year 2021

PROGRESS REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

Addressing community health needs



Northern LightSM

Home Care & Hospice

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Colleen Hilton, RN
President
Home Care & Hospice

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 hampered 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 a renewed commitment to improving the social determinants of health, and we have greater access to people and our communities.

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 shared three-year health improvement plan. In addition to the extraordinary outreach and collaborative efforts during the coronavirus pandemic, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice continues to engage in priority areas of work, including:

- Social determinants of health
- Substance use
- Older adult health/healthy aging
- Mental health

At Home Care & Hospice, we know that our neighbors are looking for trusted places where they can turn to for personalized care that is exceptional—and we want them to choose us. 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,

Colleen Hilton, RN
President, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice

Progress report update

FY 2021 Progress Report

Priority #1: Social Determinants of Health

Objective: Increase the number of patients screened for food insecurity and referred to community resources from 3447 to 3619 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 Home Care & Hospice Social Workers in all business units (Home Health Care, Hospice Care, and Palliative Care) screened patients for food insecurity on their initial visit, in fact, it is one of the main reasons we are requested. We do more than ask however, we review the patient's income to determine what programs they may be eligible for (i.e., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or Meals on Wheels). We then make referrals and/or help assist patients to complete paperwork for various programs as needed. We may also connect them with services they pay for out of pocket if they can afford to do so or contact local church groups.

Partners engaged: Northern Light Home Care & Hospice partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- Local food banks
- Meals on Wheels

Outcome measure: In FY21, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice screened over 2,200 patients for food insecurity. Of those individuals screened, we identified over 100 Mainers who were at risk of becoming or were food insecure. We were then able to connect those patients to much-needed resources in order to facilitate overcoming that insecurity.

Project leads: Cathy Bean, manager of Community Health Services; Jena Jones, Provider Relations liaison

Next steps: In fiscal year 2022 (FY22), Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will continue to implement these strategies to screen all incoming patients for food insecurity.

Priority #2: Substance Use

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

Status: Not started

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: In FY21, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice opted to focus on navigating a global pandemic and continuing necessary work already underway to benefit community health in lieu of establishing prevention partnerships on substance use. As such, our efforts to impact substance use via Prevention Partnerships were sidelined until resources could be sufficiently allocated to start the project. Despite this difficulty, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice was able

to work on advocating for the adoption of legislation aimed at creating a firm policy regarding disposal of opiates for hospice patients. Together with Home Care & Hospice Alliance of Maine, hospice physicians and Northern Light's vice president of Government Relations, our team worked to advocate on behalf of this very important policy to ensure proper disposal of hospice medications. The law, titled, "LD 330: An Act To Improve the Process of Disposal of Hospice Medications Used in the Home" was signed by Governor Mills on June 14, 2021.

Partners engaged: No partnerships were engaged in this effort in FY21

Outcome measure: In FY21, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice was unable to yield any outcome measures as efforts on this priority were not started. We did, however, participate in advocating on important legislation that would assist in the proper disposal of medications used within the home for hospice patients.

Project leads: Cathy Bean, manager of Community Health Services; Jena Jones, Provider Relations liaison

Next steps: In FY22, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice has revised the strategy for establishing Prevention Partnerships. We have new personnel on board who are working to establish these relationships and efforts and we feel hopeful that sufficient resources are in place for us to execute this necessary work.

Priority #3: Older Adult Health/Healthy Aging

Objective: Increase initiatives to promote end-of-life and palliative care options from two to four by 9/30/21.

Status: In progress

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: In FY21, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice social work took the lead on assisting patients and families with filling out Advance Directives in all business units. In the past three years, we have facilitated and co-facilitated trainings with social workers statewide (Home Health Care, Hospice Care, and Palliative Care) in the many types of Advance Directives. At this time, every social worker is trained in all kinds of end-of-life planning efforts. Social work is uniquely qualified to begin these difficult conversations.

Partners engaged: Northern Light Home Care & Hospice partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- Hospital-based Palliative Care teams across Northern Light Health.
- We distribute our packets and information to all senior-based community centers, local organizations, and provider practices to ensure the material reaches as many Maine seniors as possible.

Outcome measure: In FY21, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice continued to assist patients in maintaining control of their care and ensuring their wishes are met by encouraging Advance Directives are in place for all individuals coming into care.

Project leads: Cathy Bean, manager of Community Health Services; Jena Jones, Provider Relations liaison

Next steps: In FY22, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will continue to ensure that all patients have access to information on Advance Directives and are prepared to plan accordingly for any and all future healthcare needs.

Priority #4: Mental Health

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

Status: In progress

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: In FY21, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice provided education to healthcare professionals once monthly on the topic of Self-Care and Vicarious Trauma. Home Care and Hospice also initiated a once quarterly Suicide Awareness and Prevention module for clinical staff members that highlight the importance of managing ideation and follow-through steps.

Outcome measure: In FY21, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice held 15 virtual events, trained 219 staff members in mental health initiatives on a variety of topics, and created a place for mental health and clinician compassion fatigue to be discussed at time of hire and electively thereafter.

Project lead: Meisha Nickerson, manager of Education

Next steps: In FY22, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will continue to train and support mental health needs through the onboarding and staff education process. Home Care & Hospice will implement motivational interviewing practices into elective education to influence clinician ability to communicate positively and effectively with patients who have mental health needs.

Conclusion

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice 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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