

Fiscal Year 2022

# PROGRESS REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

Addressing community health needs



Northern Light<sup>SM</sup>

Home Care & Hospice

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**Colleen Hilton, RN**

President,  
Northern Light  
Home Care & Hospice

Senior Vice President,  
Northern Light Health

This past year, we not only continued our ongoing work to safeguard our communities from the COVID-19 pandemic, but we set our sights towards the future. We looked to build and improve upon the delivery of healthcare so families, friends, and neighbors have access to the very best resources for generations to come.

While the pandemic still looms and may for quite a while, we will never stop looking forward and thinking strategically about addressing the most critical community health needs. 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 2022, representing the third year of our three-year health improvement plan. In addition to the extraordinary ongoing 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

I hope you find the update contained in this report informative. If you ever have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to [communitybenefits@northernlight.org](mailto:communitybenefits@northernlight.org). Lastly, we know our community trusts us to provide exceptional healthcare and resources that complement a healthy, enriched life, and we are dedicated to maintaining that trust through hard work and commitment to doing what's right for Maine. We look forward to our continued services in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

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

# Progress report update

## FY 2022 Progress Report

### Priority #1: Social Determinants of Health

**Objective:** Increase the number of patients screened for food insecurity and referred to community resources from 3,619 to 4,000 by 9/30/22.

**Status:** In progress

**Strategy:** In fiscal year 2022 (FY22), Northern Light Home Care & Hospice screened every patient coming on to services for food insecurity. As a result of these screenings, patients were referred to social work services, Meals on Wheels, food pantries, and other meal delivery services. Home Care & Hospice and Northern Light Mercy Hospital received a Eunice Frye Grant in FY22 that screened patients being discharged from Mercy Hospital for Food Insecurity. Home Care & Hospice staff added MSW services to their care and a box of food was delivered on admission.

**Partners engaged:** Northern Light Home Care & Hospice partnered with the following entities on this priority:  
Northern Light Mercy Hospital  
Local area food banks, community food sourcing groups, meal delivery services to support homebound patients

**Outcome measure:** In FY22, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice screened 8,909 patients upon admission to services. Of those, 105 had positive screenings and follow-up referrals were made.

**Project lead:** Cathy Bean, Manager of Community Health Services

**Next steps:** In fiscal year 2023 (FY23), Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will continue this work and will broaden the screenings to include many social determinants of health. Home Care & Hospice will engage local community-based organizations to increase availability of housing, transportation, food, and other resources. For example, we plan to engage local food banks, meal delivery services (e.g., Meals on Wheels and Simply Delivered for ME for community members who do not qualify for Meals on Wheels), local Area Agencies on Aging, Community Action Programs (CAPs), Manna, and food share networks.

### Priority #2: Substance Use

**Objective:** Increase the number of partnerships with community-based substance use prevention efforts from zero to one by 9/30/22.

**Status:** In progress

**Strategy** In FY22, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice established a process that allows us to routinely educate patients and families coming into hospice services how and when to properly dispose of hospice

medications to include controlled substances. Home Care & Hospice received funding from the Nightingale Society to provide Detera bags for safe drug disposal.

**Partners engaged:** Northern Light Home Care & Hospice partnered with the following entities on this priority:  
Northern Light Pharmacies  
Other pharmacies and law enforcement for drug takeback locations.

**Outcome measure:** In FY22, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice taught safe drug disposal to all hospice patients and their caregivers.

**Project lead:** Cathy Bean, Manager of Community Health Services

**Next steps:** In FY23, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will continue this important work. We will educate staff on safe medication storage and disposal.

### Priority #3: Older Adult Health/Healthy Aging

**Objective:** Maintain initiatives to promote end-of-life and palliative care options at two by 9/30/22.

**Status:** In progress

**Strategy:** In FY22, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice screened all incoming patients across all three service lines to ensure they have the opportunity to have their wishes on medical care documented via advance directive screenings. When patients report they are interested, our clinical teams work with patients and families to complete documents that will protect their needs and wants as it pertains to advance care planning.

**Partners engaged:** Northern Light Home Care & Hospice partnered with Northern Light Palliative Care Teams on this priority.

**Outcome measure:** In FY22, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice screened 4,113 patients across five sites to ensure that they have access to advance directives.

**Project lead:** Cathy Bean, Manager of Community Health Services

**Next steps:** In FY23, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will continue this important work with our patients. We remain committed to ensuring that our patients have access to Advance Directives and End of Life Planning.

### Priority #4: Mental Health

**Objective:** Increase educational programs to raise awareness, readiness, and access to mental health services from two to four by 9/30/22.

**Status:** Foundational work started

**Strategy:** In FY22, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice stopped providing monthly staff support sessions due to low participation. Employees who are in need of services are referred to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and group EAP sessions were convened after sentinel events. The education department had several vacancies that were filled at the end of FY22. Work has now begun to create the necessary annual trainings to support mental health awareness, care, and support so that our clinicians may offer comprehensive care relating to behavioral health challenges.

**Partners engaged:** Northern Light Home Care & Hospice partnered with the following entities on this priority:  
Northern Light Acadia Hospital  
Employee Assistance Program

**Outcome measure:** In FY22, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice offered two EAP support sessions to staff in the field.

**Project lead:** Cathy Bean, Manager of Community Health

**Next steps:** Northern Light Home Care & Hospice focuses primarily on adult and older adult mental health needs and will continue offering services to our patient population. However, in FY23, Home Care & Hospice will not pursue mental health as a formal priority area of work but rather as a consistent practice that we engage in.

## 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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