

Fiscal Year 2020

# PROGRESS REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

Addressing community health needs



**Northern Light**<sup>SM</sup>

Blue Hill Hospital

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John Ronan, MBA, FACHE  
President

**Northern Light**  
**Blue Hill Hospital**

The emergence of COVID-19 has brought unique challenges to our community, but with these challenges have come new opportunities. The needs of our patients and communities have called on us to unite and respond with unprecedented levels of collaboration. Trust in one another's expertise and commitment has been evident week after week as we respond to both emergent and extended needs.

Our shared response has included a focus on the needs of our most vulnerable community members, including older adults and people of all ages experiencing hunger or homelessness. Together, we have provided food, housing, and transportation for those negatively affected by COVID-19; as well as childcare for essential workers.

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 along with 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 2020, representing the first year of our three-year health improvement plan. In addition to the extraordinary outreach and collaborative efforts during the coronavirus pandemic, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital continues to engage in priority areas of work, including:

- Social determinants of health
- Substance use
- Access to care

As Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, we know that our neighbors are looking for places where they can go for personalized care—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,

John Ronan  
President, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital

# Progress report update

## FY 2020 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 3 by 9/30/20.

**Status:** Foundational work started

**Strategy to achieve the objective (approaches taken, and resources used):** In fiscal year 2020 (FY20), Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital participated on a Northern Light Health (NLH) systemwide Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) workgroup responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the effectiveness of a system approach to SDOH screening and intervention inclusive of food security and other social needs. To date, the workgroup's focus has been on the identification of the SDOH screening and referral process, local resource development, provider training and education requirements for the screening tool's implementation, quality review and management of these efforts. NLH system defined SDOH screening and intervention as a strategic priority to improve the health of the patients it serves.

**Partners engaged:** Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- Northern Light AR Gould Hospital
- Northern Light Beacon Health
- Northern Light CA Dean Hospital
- Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center
- Northern Light Home Care & Hospice
- Northern Light Inland Hospital
- Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital
- Northern Light Mayo Hospital
- Northern Light Mercy Hospital
- Northern Light Sebec Valley Hospital

**Highlights:** In FY20, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, as part of the NLH SDOH workgroup, engaged in literature reviews and outreach efforts to other healthcare system's efforts in this realm to learn about the successes and challenges related to this type of screening effort that will ultimately help to inform how we will operationalize this effort throughout our system.

**Outcome measure:** In FY20, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital's identified individual targets were not met for this priority area of work due to the deliberate approach by Northern Light Health as a system, to define a standard process for SDOH screening and intervention. As a result, this year's efforts have primarily been foundational. To date, the efforts of this workgroup has resulted in increased support for this initiative and the development of a screening tool for identifying patients in need.

**Project lead:** Mike Murnik, MD, Senior Physician Executive

**Next steps:** In fiscal year 2021 (FY21), Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital will continue participating in the SDOH workgroup through NLH. The group will proceed with identifying the specific social needs to be

recommended for inclusion in the system screening process. The group will also continue discussions and planning for provider education efforts to increase understanding of SDOH and current development of NLH screening and intervention protocol. We anticipate roll-out implementation of the SDOH screening efforts to take place in the coming year. In addition, we'll also continue to consider COVID-related changes to primary care and how these may impact feasibility and provider/patient receptiveness of SDOH screening and referral.

## Priority #2: Substance Use

**Objective:** Access to Treatment: Increase the number of Medication-Assisted Treatment options for opioid use readily available in local communities from 3 to 4 by 9/30/20.

**Status:** Completed

**Strategy to achieve the objective (approaches taken, and resources used):** In FY20, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital was able to increase the availability of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) options for opioid use in the local communities. This program allows for patients to obtain rapid access into MAT for Substance Use Disorders. Initially, primary care providers were the first to qualify and implement MAT, Blue Hill Hospital has now expanded the focus to include Emergency Department providers which enables the organization to reach more of those who need assistance.

**Partners engaged:** Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- Northern Light Blue Hill and Maine Coast Emergency Department
- Northern Light Blue Hill Primary Care Medical Staff
- TEAMHealth Medical Staff
- DownEast Treatment Center

**Highlights:** Eight Medical Providers have received education and training to offer MAT at both Northern Light Maine Coast and Northern Light Blue Hill Hospitals. Frontline and provider MAT program champions were identified and assisted with implementation. Various highlights to this program include; development of Emergency Department and Primary Care MAT protocols, policies, implementation of Telehealth MAT visits, and recruitment of primary care providers. Virtual training on Trauma Informed Care was offered to all staff as a supplemental resource to assist with reduction of stigma associated with Substance Use Disorders.

**Outcome measure:** In FY20, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital increased the number of Medication-Assisted Treatment options to 4 total sites. There was a total of 28 patients who have referred and participated in the MAT program.

**Project lead:** Mike Murnik, MD, Senior Physician Executive

**Next steps:** In FY21, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital will continue Trauma Informed Care training with the goal to develop a Trauma Informed Care Ambassador program. This will allow ambassadors to educate, disseminate resources, and provide trauma-informed care to the local communities. New providers will be onboarded with education and certification in MAT. Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital will look to increase the ability to use telehealth visits to coordinate continued care and support.

### Priority #3: Access to Care

**Objective:** Increase the number of patients accessing non-urgent care by community paramedicine programs from 25 to 45 by 9/30/20.

**Status:** In progress

**Strategy to achieve the objective (approaches taken, and resources used):** In FY20, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital deployed various strategies to enhance patient care services through collaboration with various community paramedicine partners. External community partner work engaged Emergency and Inpatient nursing leadership, social work and discharge planning, lab director, and registered nurses from all primary care locations to develop workflows for identifying patients, making referrals, communicating results, and coordinating with community resources. Program education and availability was communicated to local and external stakeholders.

**Partners engaged:** Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- Healthy Peninsula
- Memorial Ambulance
- Castine Volunteer First Responders
- Peninsula Ambulance Corps
- Northern Light Blue Hill Care Team: Primary Care Providers, RNs, MAs, Social Work, clerical staff, administration, ED and Inpatient Director, Care Management
- Northern Light Home Care & Hospice
- Northern Light Beacon Health

**Highlights:** In FY20, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital worked with local paramedicine community partners to develop alternative and creative methods in providing non-contact patient care services with local and external partners due to limitations of current pandemic. Traditional paramedicine efforts were unable to continue, and non-contact community-based resources such as curbside visits, physically distanced visual assessments, medication reconciliation, telephonic and mail outreach were provided. In addition, the paramedicine program was also able to assist with obtaining necessary durable medical equipment, assist with food insecurity programs, and connect patients and families with other community resources and services as needed.

**Outcome measure:** In FY20, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital engaged four community partners. The partners include: Healthy Peninsula, Memorial Ambulance, Castine Volunteer First Responders, and Peninsula Ambulance Corps. The community paramedicine programs received and provided services to 41 total patients. The pandemic did impact two community paramedicine programs in the area due to lack of available personal protective equipment. However, one area program was able to modify and create alternative visits through establishing a curbside visit program.

**Project lead:** Mike Murnik, MD, Senior Physician Executive

**Next steps:** In FY21, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital will increase the number of patients accessing non-urgent care by continuing the paramedicine program partnerships. This will include increasing the number of unique individuals participating in this program to a total of 58 participants and utilizing alternative options and modalities to assist patients, such as initiating services through providing curbside or physical distanced programming. Future community collaborations will be explored to enhance home care services for local community members.

# Conclusion

Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital continues work on identified priorities through its 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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