

Progress Report to our Community

Fiscal Years
2023-2025

Addressing community health needs.

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital is committed to shaping health improvement efforts in our service area based on sound data, personal and professional experience, and community need. Through collaborative efforts, AR Gould Hospital creates healthier communities through the provision of services, resources, and programs beyond our hospital's walls.

We used the results of the 2022 [Community Health Needs Assessment](#) along with community input to inform the development of our three-year [Community Health Strategy](#). As a member of Northern Light Health's Community Health Council, AR Gould Hospital recognized the value, reach, and influence of aligned engagement efforts with a shared purpose. The following three priority areas were adopted as shared priorities where Northern Light Health member organizations would engage in common strategy to achieve greater statewide impact:

- Mental health
- Social determinants of health
- Substance use

This report is an update on Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's progress on our community health strategy for fiscal years 2023 (October 2022 – September 2023), 2024 (October 2023 – September 2024), and 2025 (October 2024 – September 2025) representing the three years of our three-year health improvement plan..

PRIORITY: Mental Health

Three-year approach (2023-2025)		
Goal	Strategy	Objective
Provide youth and families with the mental and behavioral health resources they need to thrive.	Partner with schools and other community organizations to ensure youth and their families have improved access to mental health prevention, early intervention, and treatment services.	Educate and empower others to recognize, support, and respond to mental and behavioral health needs of youth.

Shared objective:

Increase the number of individuals trained to support the mental health needs of youth.

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital trained staff in Psychological First Aid (PFA), an evidence-informed approach to help anyone — children, adolescents, adults, and families — in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic experience and has proven to be effective when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis at any time. PFA shines a light on the impact of collective trauma, builds resiliency, and assists in self-care action plans by incorporating five evidence-based principles: safety, calming, connectedness, self and community reliance, and hope.

Certified AR Gould Hospital staff then engaged schools and/or youth serving organizations to educate and empower individuals to respond to mental and behavioral health needs of youth using the PFA training model. Attendees received training in eight core elements: engagement, safety, stabilization, information gathering, practical assistance, connection to social supports, information on coping, and connecting with collaborative services. Systemwide collective impact of our shared objective, since this effort began in 2023, has resulted in 110 training sessions with 2,066 individuals trained.

Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

AMHC (Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc.)
Aroostook County Action Program's Prevention Team
and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) Team*
Aroostook County Action Program Early Care and
Education

Loring Job Corps Health Center Staff*
Recreation Directors of Aroostook County
Easton Recreation Department

- Dawn Roberts, Community Health Coordinator, and Jo-Ellen Kelley, Hospital Volunteer, completed the 28-hour PFA training course.
- Two community organizations* trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA); 22 individuals trained in PFA.
- Future partnership discussions with Ashland Library and Aroostook County Recreation Departments.
- Aroostook County Recreation Directors training set up for fiscal year 2024 on November 9, 2023.

Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Aroostook County Recreation (directors)*

Job Corps (staff)*

- Two community organizations* trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA); 38 individuals trained in PFA.

Fiscal Year 2025 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP)
Prevention Services*

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)*

- Two community organizations* trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA); 17 individuals trained in PFA.
- Presented PFA information on local tv network WAGM's news segment "Intervention Aroostook" with ACAP.
- Provided after-school programming to youth in grades kindergarten – fifth specific to "nutritional value of apples" and positivity during the holidays.

PRIORITY: Social Determinants of Health

Three-year approach (2023-2025)		
Goal	Strategy	Objective
Improve health outcomes for vulnerable populations.	Partner with community to improve equitable access to social supports, community resources, and healthcare services.	Connect individuals with community resources they need to improve their health and wellbeing.

Shared objective:

Increase community partner engagement with findhelp.org.

Findhelp.org is the nation's leading social care network, making it easier to connect patients and their families with free or reduced-cost programs from local partners and national support services with dignity and ease, and is one component of Northern Light Health's response to need in the communities we serve. [Northern Light findhelp](https://findhelp.org) will continue to develop, allowing users to search and connect to community services.

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital engaged in meaningful, trusted community partnerships to reach priority populations with equitable access to community resources and social supports and connect individuals with community resources they need to improve their health and well-being through the findhelp.org platform.

- In fiscal years 2023 and 2024, AR Gould Hospital participated in a monthly systemwide workgroup focused on engagement efforts to educate community partners on the availability and uses of findhelp.org. We assisted those community partners with adding their program information to the platform directory and with activating the ability to receive referrals or requests for information through the platform. Systemwide collective impact of our community engagement shared objective, since this effort began in 2023, has resulted in 69 partners offering 148 programs that increased engagement with FindHelp.
- In fiscal year 2025, Northern Light Community Health researched [findhelp](https://findhelp.org) data, and engaged clinical user feedback, to understand the most frequently searched social health needs in our geographic region to meet the needs of specific populations. These topic areas were featured on the [findhelp](https://findhelp.org) platform as specific "folders" containing a minimum of five relevant community resource links providing [findhelp](https://findhelp.org) users with easy access to the resources compiled by our organization. In fiscal year 2025, collectively across Northern Light Health, there were 50,990 searches for assistance conducted using [Northern Light Health findhelp](https://findhelp.org) compared to 21,027 searches in 2023. Search data trends show that food assistance remains the dominant need across Maine. This work is ongoing as we continue to identify best options for quick and easy access to resources.
- Additionally, in 2025, Northern Light Community Health participated in a food security resource collaborative convened by the Maine CDC Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Program that included staff from [findhelp](https://findhelp.org), Maine 211, MaineHealth, Community Care Partnership of Maine (CCPM) ACO, and community partners. This

group identified food security resources in counties with high prevalence of cardiovascular disease (Somerset, Piscataquis, Aroostook, and Washington) that were not listed within findhelp and Maine 211. Members of this collaborative added these missing resources to their respective platforms and plan to pursue a quality improvement project to increase CPPM staff use of findhelp and Maine 211 to address food security and other patient needs.

Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Aroostook Agency on Aging*	Presque Isle Recreation
Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP)*	United Way
Good Shepherd Food Bank	

- Two community partners* added 29 programs to the FindHelp directory:
 - Aroostook County Action Program: Central Heating Improvement Program, Early Head Start Program, Energy Crisis Intervention, Energy, Moisture and Infiltration Audit Inspection, Head Start Program, Home Ownership Education, Home Repair Network, Home Repair, Energy & Safety Improvement, Kids Integrated Dental Services, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Support Counseling, Weatherization, and Workforce Innovation & Opportunity - Youth Program.
 - Aroostook Agency on Aging: Bingocize, Caregiver Education & Support, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Congregate Meals, Eldercare Home Care Services, Family Caregiver Respite, Friendly Volunteer Program, Information and Assistance, Living Well for Better Health, Living Well with Chronic Pain, Living Well with Diabetes, Matter of Balance, Meals on Wheels, Medicare and Health Insurance Counseling, Money Minders Program, and Tai Chi Exercise.

Other Social Determinates of Health efforts for FY23 included:

- Community Information Station was installed in emergency department containing local resources.
- 285 food bags were distributed via inpatient and outpatient locations.
- Tool kits were created and distributed to all outpatient clinics.
- Senior programming was provided to the aging community to address health concerns and social isolation.
- A Health Equity presentation was presented to AR Gould provider and managers groups.
- The Community Health Coordinator joined the Area Agency on Aging in their Aroostook Community Health Improvement grant team.
- The Community Health Coordinator was interviewed for a Medical Monday news segment on the FindHelp resource which aired on WAGM-TV and the hospital's social media.

Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Aroostook Area Agency on Aging	Northern Light AR Gould Hospital*
Aroostook Community Health Improvement Team	Saint Apollonia Dental Clinic*
Aroostook Mental Health Center*	United Way
Hope & Justice Program*	

- Four community partners* added ten programs to the findhelp directory:

- Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC): Crisis Services, Disability Management Services, Residential Housing, Mental Health Services - Family and Children's Targeted Case Management Services, Community Education and Consultation Services - Employee and Student Assistant Services
- Hope & Justice Program: Help & Support Line, Abuse & Violence Support Services, and Emergency Shelter
- Saint Apollonia Dental Clinic: Dental Care
- AR Gould: Volunteer Opportunities, Healthy Aging Luncheons
- 78,665 food insecurity screenings conducted; 1,584 patients screened positive for food insecurity.
- 529 food bags were distributed via inpatient and outpatient locations.
- 164 grocery store gift cards distributed.
- 529 patient information kits given out.

Fiscal Year 2025 Partners and Community Impact

As a result of ongoing community engagement and promotion of [Northern Light Health findhelp](#), use of the platform to find assistance continues to increase. In 2025, there were 4,872 searches by Aroostook County residents compared to 1,231 searches in 2023. Search data trends show that food assistance remains the dominant need in Aroostook County.

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital created the following findhelp resource folders:

Food Resources in Aroostook County

1. Meals on Wheels – AAA
2. Congregate Meals- AAA
3. Commodity Food Boxes- AAA
4. Food Pantry- GIFT- Presque Isle
5. Food Pantry – Adopt a Block – Houlton
6. Farm Share Program- Department of Agriculture
7. Food Pantry- United Baptist Church- Caribou

Help with Housing in Aroostook County

1. Section 8 – Caribou
2. Section 8 – Fort Fairfield
3. Sister Mary O'Donnell Emergency Shelter- Presque Isle
4. Emergency Shelter for Domestic Violence- Hope and Justice
5. Domestic Violence Advocacy Center for Native Women- Houlton Band of Maliseet
6. Shared Living Program – For people with intellectual disabilities- Houlton
7. Section 8 – Presque Isle
8. Section 8- Van Buren

Substance Use Recovery Programs in Aroostook County

1. Residential Treatment Facility- AMHC- Presque Isle
2. Crisis Services- AMHC
3. MAT – Recover Together
4. Health Affiliates of Maine – Telehealth Intensive Outpatient Program
5. Options Liaison- AMHC
6. SAMHSA – National Helpline

PRIORITY: Substance Use

Three-year approach (2023-2025)		
Goal	Strategy	Objective
Reduce deaths, disability, and suffering associated with substance use disorder.	Leverage community partnerships to reduce barriers and improve access to and availability of substance use prevention, treatment, recovery, and harm reduction services. Optimize relationships with partners who can help us engage effectively with populations in need.	Improve pathways to prevention, treatment, and recovery for individuals with substance use disorder.

Shared objective:

Improve distribution and preventive access to state sponsored Naloxone kits.

In collaboration with other Northern Light Health member organizations and community-based organizations, trained Northern Light AR Gould Hospital staff representing pharmacy and community health departments worked diligently to improve processes and partnerships to reduce barriers and provide equitable access to state-sponsored naloxone (Narcan) kits for priority populations.

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital participated in the Maine Naloxone Distribution Initiative¹, which provides state-purchased naloxone to community organizations, clinical sites, and end-users throughout Maine to distribute free of charge. Through a collaboration with Bangor Public Health & Community Services, AR Gould Hospital worked in the emergency department and community settings to provide education on the use of these naloxone kits to end-users to facilitate the reversal of private overdoses in the community. Systemwide collective impact of our shared objective since this effort began in 2023, has resulted in 3,257 naloxone kits distributed throughout Northern Light Health's service area.

Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Aroostook Rural Communities Opioid Response Program	Drug Free Aroostook
Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC)	Maine CDC's Aroostook District Public Health
Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP)	Power of Prevention
Bangor Public Health & Community Services	Homeless Services of Aroostook

- 31 state-sponsored naloxone kits distributed.

Other Substance Use initiatives for FY23 included:

- AR Gould Hospital was Gold Star Standards of Excellence (GSSE) Platinum program recipient for efforts addressing tobacco use and exposure by implementing strategies that support tobacco treatment and prevention.
- The hospital partnered with AMHC to bring the Herron Talks to Aroostook County.
- Dawn Roberts, Community Health Coordinator, worked in collaboration with AR Gould Pharmacy Director Kayla Bates on a community outreach naloxone distribution plan.
- The hospital participated in the Great American Smoke Out.
- The hospital engaged in collaborative efforts with listed partners.

¹ [Distribute Naloxone – Maine Drug Data Hub](#)

- Information packets on local substance use prevention opportunities in Aroostook County were distributed to 40 medical providers.
- The Community Health Coordinator attended monthly meetings with local substance use coalitions.
- Four staff members completed Naloxone distribution training.
- The Community Health Coordinator attended the Governor’s Opioid Conference and the Maine Public Health Association’s Annual Conference.

Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

AMHC (Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc.)
Aroostook County Action Program
Drug Free Aroostook

Great American Smoke Out
State Road Advent Christian Church

- 55 state-sponsored naloxone kits distributed.
- Substance use prevention education provided related to naloxone trainings and managing your medications.
- Received the “Gold Star Standards of Excellence” Platinum designation for addressing tobacco use and exposure by implementing strategies that support tobacco treatment and prevention.

Fiscal Year 2025 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Aroostook Community Action Program (ACAP)

- 55 state-sponsored naloxone kits distributed.
- Medication mail back envelopes provided at outpatient offices.