

Progress Report to our Community

Fiscal Years
2023-2025

Addressing community health needs.

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center 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, Eastern Maine Medical Center 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, Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center'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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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:

Bangor Public Library	Hilltop School*
BARN (Bangor Area Recovery Network)	Shaw House
Challenger Learning Center*	Together Place
Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center’s student volunteer program*	

- Three community organizations* trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA); 28 individuals trained in PFA.
- Shaw House - provide monthly clinic via Family Practice and Residency
- Started Primary Care Depression Screenings for 12 year old's and older.
- Trauma Informed Care - collaboration with Acadia, Together Place, and BARN (Bangor Area Recovery Network)
- Five new staff members trained as PFA trainers

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Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Bangor Area Homeless Shelter*
Local school districts
Maine Recovery Advocacy Project
NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center's
Volunteers & Concierge Staff, Cardio Rehabilitation,
Marketing, and nurse managers*
Together Place Peer Run Recovery Center*
University of Maine, Orono
Yellow Tulip Project

- Three community organizations* trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA); 40 individuals trained in PFA.
- Hosted 46 students, representing eight local schools, attended the Youth Mental Health Summit held March 15, 2024, in collaboration with Northern Light Acadia Hospital, NAMI, Yellow Tulip Project, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Maine Recovery Advocacy Project, UMaine Orono, and local school districts.
- Created materials for the "I Am More" campaign with local high school students to share during Mental Health Awareness Month in May. These photos were displayed in a public area on the main campus, sharing the stories of the youth participants and amplifying the widespread nature of mental health needs.
- Partnered with American Foundation for Suicide Prevention to promote "Out of the Darkness" events throughout the Bangor area.

Fiscal Year 2025 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

All Souls Church, Bangor
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Bangor Area Recovery Network*
Bangor Public Health and Community Services
Bangor School Department
Hope for Healing

Literacy Volunteers of Bangor*
NAMI Maine
Open training for EMMC staff*
OUT Maine
Partners for Peace
Penquis

- Three community organizations* trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA); 23 individuals trained in PFA.
- Partnered with the Bangor School District and Bangor Public Health and Community Services to review the data from the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS).
- Conducted our second annual Youth Mental Health Summit on March 13, 2025, to address the mental health crisis among teenagers in Maine, while working to break the stigma. Partners include: Penquis, OUT Maine, Bangor Public Health and Community Services, Northern Light Acadia Hospital, NAMI Maine, Partners for Peace, Hope for Healing, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.
- Grew the therapy dog program with more than 20 therapy dogs. Visits have taken place on the pediatric unit at Acadia Hospital, with various on and off-site practices, and local schools that request a visit.
- Established a grief support group for youth, called Beacons for Kids as a partnership between the Community Engagement Office at EMMC and All Souls Church in Bangor.

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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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, Eastern Maine Medical Center 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](https://findhelp.org) 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](https://findhelp.org) and Maine 211 to address food security and other patient needs.

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Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Bangor Area Homeless Shelter*	Hope House PCHC
Bangor Public Library*	Lafayette Family Cancer Institute
Bangor YMCA*	Penquis Community Action Program (CAP)
Christine B. Foundation	St. Joseph Hospital
Good Shepherd Food Bank	

- Three community partners* added nine programs to the findhelp directory:
 - Bangor Area Homeless Shelter: Bangor Area Homeless Shelter, Food pantry
 - Bangor Public Library: Computer classes, Knit Night at the Library
 - Bangor YMCA: Camp Hope, Camp Jordan, Membership for All, Open Door Program, Summer Day Camp
- Partnered with Good Shepherd Food Bank on Shelter and Nutrition for All Children (SNAC) Program
- Community Closet for patients; undergarments for sexual assault victims (SANE)
- Northern Light Cancer Care provided dental, medication, copay, and MaineCare application assistance. Additionally, they provided items such as walkers, canes, shower chairs, wigs, and living expenses such as auto repairs and lodging while patients were in treatment.
- Partnered with St. Joseph Hospital, in Bangor, on a community garden located on St. Joseph's property.
- Thirty-six childbirth education classes were offered to the community in the last year with 510 enrolled participants.
- Provided Irving cards/Taxi/Uber vouchers to patients and families in need to help traveling back and forth to Eastern Maine Medical Center.

Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Bangor Public Library	Local police departments, churches, and other organizations
Boys and Girls Club	Maine Mental Health Connections*
Community Health & Counseling	Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center*
Eastern Area Agency on Aging	Partners for Peace*
Good Shepherd Food Bank	Salvation Army of Bangor*
Literacy Volunteers of Bangor*	Together Place

Five community partners* added 10 programs to the findhelp directory:

- Literacy Volunteers of Bangor: Reading and English Language Tutoring.
- Maine Mental Health Connections: Together Place Housing, Employment Connections, Together Place Soup Kitchen.
- Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center (EMMC): Caring Calls; Volunteer Opportunities.
- Partners for Peace: Family Shelter, Domestic Abuse Hotline, and Legal Services.
- Salvation Army of Bangor: Direct Assistance.
- Creation and opening of an on-campus community cupboard to provide food, blankets, hats, and gloves to patients and staff. This is a zero-barrier cupboard, with 24/7 badge access for staff to assist patients with their needs.
- Launched Community Conversations, a Lunch & Learn style series, with speakers sharing information about the work that they do and how our organization and community can help address the needs in our community.

- Maintained partnership with Good Shepherd Food Bank to provide food bags to those who screen positive for food insecurity.
- Started a grief support group called Beacons of Hope, facilitated by the Volunteer Services Department and the Spiritual Care Department in collaboration with community clergy members.
- Expanded Animal Assisted Therapy: Partnership with Bangor Public Library to aid in programs addressing youth literacy, academic support, stress relief, and educational workshops for the community to learn more about therapy dogs.

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 18,111 searches by Penobscot County residents compared to 6,939 searches in 2023. Search data trends show that food assistance remains the dominant need in Penobscot County.

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center created the following findhelp resource folders:

Food security

1. Commodity Supplemental Food Program – Eastern Area Agency on Aging
2. Food Pantry – Bangor Area Homeless Shelter
3. Senior Food Mobile Program – Good Shepherd Food Bank
4. Food Pantry – Salvation Army of Bangor
5. Bangor Food Pantry – Hammond Street Congregational Church

Housing

1. Bangor Area Homeless Shelter (short term housing) – Bangor Area Homeless Shelter
2. Senior Housing – Penquis
3. Assisted Living Services – Penquis
4. Transitional Housing – Hope House Health & Living Center
5. Affordable Housing – Weston Associates, Inc.
6. HUD Public Housing Program – BangorHousing
7. Shelter – Hope House Health & Living Center
8. Family Shelter – Partners for Peace

Transportation

1. Lynx Mobility Services – Penquis
2. Penquis Transportation Brokerage – Penquis
3. Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) – ModivCare Solutions, LLC
4. Road to Recovery – American Cancer Society
5. Long Distance Medical Program – Tri-County Cap Transit
6. Volunteer for Veterans – Disabled American Veterans

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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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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, Eastern Maine Medical Center 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:

Bangor Area Recovery Network (BARN)
 Bangor Public Health and Community Services
 Co-Occurring Collaborative Serving Maine
 Health Equity Alliance (HEAL)

Hermon School District
 Maine Substance Use Disorders Learning Community
 OPTIONS
 Project ECHO: Low Barrier MOUD for Maine

- 127 state-sponsored naloxone kits distributed
- Staff trained in Trauma Informed Care
- Family Medicine and Residency curriculum expansion to outreach the homeless population impacted by substance use disorder. A collaboration with community organizations. Peer to Peer consults between Acadia providers and pediatric primary care providers (internal and external to Northern Light Health).
- Began planning for naloxone training with the Hermon school district. Training will take place in fiscal year 2024 on October 6, 2023.
- Whitney Jandreau, PharmD, BCPS, Clinical Pharmacist Specialist presented:
 - “Naloxone and Addiction Neurobiology and Stigma...Oh my!” at MPA/MSHP Fall Conference
 - “Patient Case: QTc or Not QTc...That is the Question” at Project ECHO: Low Barrier MOUD for Maine

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

- “Safe and Effective Opioid Practices in the Hospital: Pharmacy Perspective” to Co-Occurring Collaborative Serving Maine.
- “Best and Promising Practice: Inpatient Pharmacists Advancing MOUD” to Maine Substance Use Disorders Learning Community

Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Brewer High School	Hermon High School
Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)	Maine Recovery Advocacy Project Youth Caucus

- Distributed 61 state-sponsored naloxone kits.
- Staff provided naloxone training to Hermon High School staff and established a partnership with Brewer High School to provide naloxone training.
- Staff presented at Hermon High School on substance use and the teenage brain. Presentations were done with the health class.
- The Youth Mental Health Summit featured a youth-led Naloxone training that was facilitated by youth from the Maine Recovery Advocacy Project Youth Caucus.
- Promotion of the Drug Enforcement Agency’s Drug Take Back that occurred on April 27th.

Fiscal Year 2025 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Penquis	Bangor Area Recovery Network (BARN)
Bangor Public Health and Community Services	

- Distributed 97 state-sponsored naloxone kits.
- Partnered with Penquis Substance Affected Youth (SAY) program to present at the Youth Mental Health Summit, who provided information about how to support those who have been impacted by someone else’s choices related to drugs and alcohol.
- Formalized, and disseminated to leaders, a hospital-wide process for Naloxone distribution to at-risk patients, who are being discharged.
- Partnered with BARN on their Recovery Palooza event where community members celebrate recovery from substance use disorder, offering resources, and fostering a supportive environment.