



Community Health Implementation Strategy

Addressing Community Health Needs
Fiscal Year 2026-2028

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Letter from the President and Board Chair

Mainers have developed a reputation throughout the years for our hard work and willingness to lend a helping hand to a neighbor in need. It's our goal to uphold those same standards when it comes to providing healthcare for our community. In order to do so, we engage our community members and work with partners to ensure we understand the greatest barriers preventing our neighbors from living their healthiest lives.

Every three years, through the Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), Northern Light Health collaborates with Central Maine Healthcare, MaineGeneral Health, MaineHealth, Maine Community Action Partnership, and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention to work with local organizations to engage communities to help identify priority health needs through a statewide assessment of community health needs. The data collected informs our community health improvement efforts for the next three years, resulting in this Community Health Implementation Strategy - our road map toward building healthier, thriving communities. Within, you will find our identified data-driven priority areas accompanied by the reasons for their selection and our intended actions to address the need.

We hope that you will take a moment to review the content within and please reach out with any questions or ideas you may have at communitybenefits@northernlight.org. By continuing our collaborative efforts and addressing our local priorities, we can build a healthier Maine today, and for generations to come.



Holly Johnson
Chair, Board of Trustees
Northern Light AR Gould Hospital



Jay Reynolds, MD
President, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital
Senior Vice President, Northern Light Health

Introduction

Northern Light Health and our employees care deeply about our neighbors and communities. Our member organizations work hard to understand and address priority needs. We meet regularly with community partners to plan and implement local solutions that make it possible for people in our communities to lead healthier lives. By working together, we promote a culture of stewardship and foster vibrant communities.

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

About Northern Light Health

At Northern Light Health, we're building a better approach to healthcare because we believe people deserve access to care that works for them. As an integrated health delivery system serving Maine, we're raising the bar with no-nonsense solutions that are leading the way to a healthier future for our state. Our care team—in hospitals, primary and specialty care practices, long-term and home healthcare, behavioral healthcare, and ground and air medical transport and emergency care—are committed to making healthcare work for you: our patients, communities, and employees. For additional information, visit <https://northernlighthealth.org/About-Us> to access our annual report.

About Northern Light AR Gould Hospital

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, a leading provider of healthcare services in Northern Maine, is an acute care hospital located in Presque Isle.

We are governed by a local volunteer board of trustees, so you can be sure that your needs are being addressed by those who know them best—your friends, family, and neighbors.

Our employees choose Aroostook County as their home for the same reasons you do: the beautiful scenery, strong family networks, and safe communities.

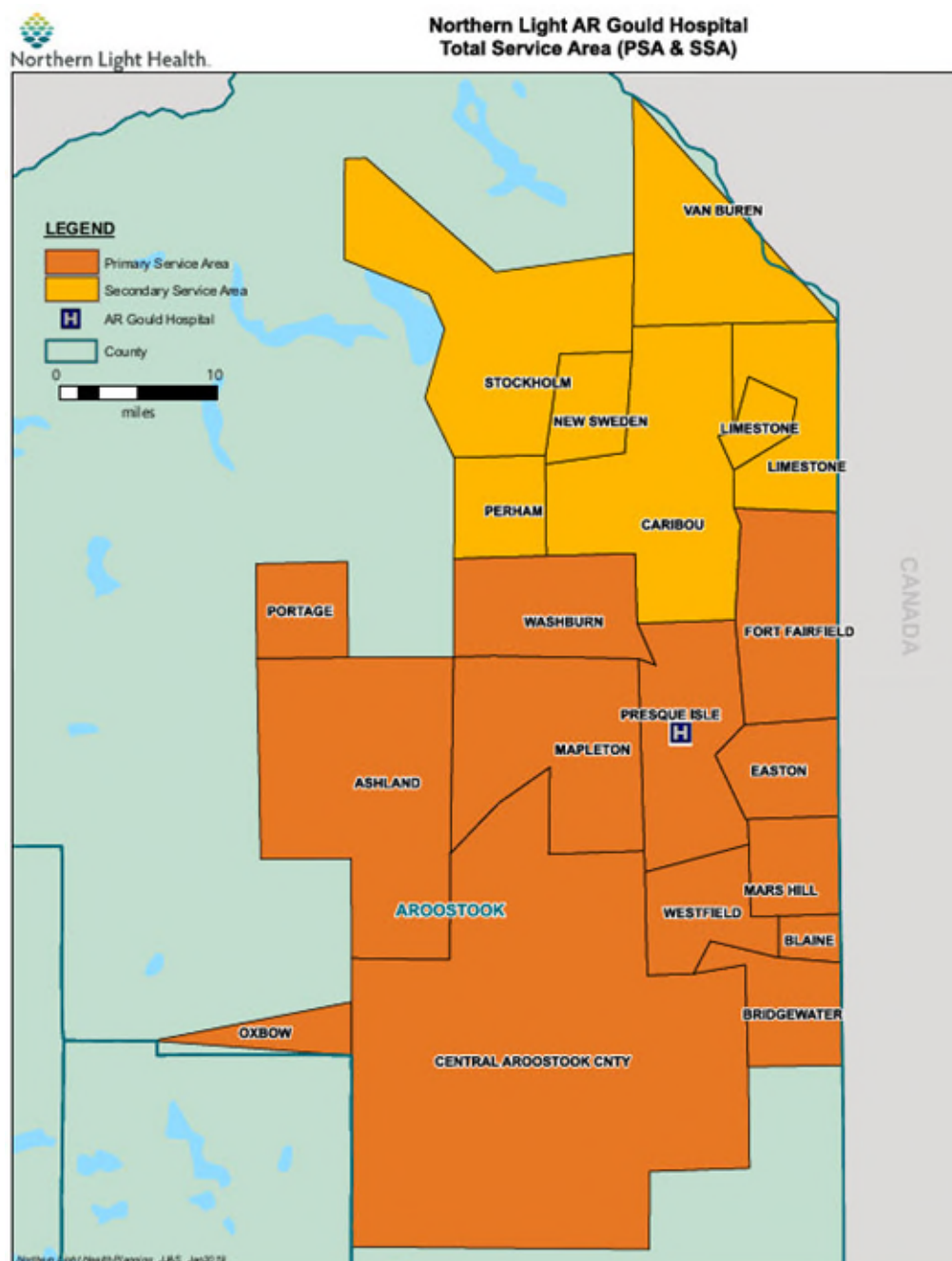
Our connection with Northern Light Health allows us to offer a wide range of healthcare services not typically available in rural communities. We believe that the people of Aroostook County should have access to the very best healthcare. That's why we're bringing high quality healthcare services and advanced technologies and treatments to you.

Turn to us when it's time to bring a new life into the world, recover from an illness or injury, and discover the best ways to stay healthy and well. We're working hard to bring advanced medical specialties and the most up-to-date technology to the people of Northern Maine through services including advanced cancer care, cardiology, dialysis, sleep medicine, imaging, emergency response, and orthopedic services.

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital is a member of Northern Light Health, an integrated health delivery system in Maine with nine hospitals, home care and hospice, emergency transport network, population health company, and retail pharmacy.

Definition of Community Served

Located in Presque Isle, Maine, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital has a service area comprised of both primary and secondary service areas, together referred to as the total service area. Total service areas (TSAs) are developed by the Northern Light Health Planning department based on neighboring zip codes from which a majority of a hospital's inpatient admissions originate. TSAs can sometimes overlap due to hospital locations or because of the specialty services provided by the hospitals.



Reference the associated Aroostook [County Health Profile](#) for key demographic information.

Addressing Community Health Needs

Shared Community Health Needs Assessment

In 2025, Maine's four largest healthcare systems – Northern Light Health, Central Maine Healthcare, MaineGeneral Health, and MaineHealth – as well as the Maine Community Action Partnership, and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention partnered to research and publish a shared Community Health Needs Assessment (Shared CHNA). The Shared CHNA provides a comprehensive review of health data and community perspective on a broad set of health issues in Maine. Value in partnering is derived from the recognition that the partners' missions cut across the multitude of factors that influence a person's health and well-being and the overlap in service areas, patient populations, and services and programs.

This assessment cycle, the Maine Shared CHNA continued its collection and analysis of data covering community conditions and social drivers of health, protective and risk factors, and health conditions and outcomes at the urban, county, state, and national level. This cycle saw expanded efforts to engage communities across Maine; conducting statewide focus groups with the following populations: multigenerational Black/African American; veterans; people who identify as a protected class; women; youth; and young adults. In addition, county-level focus groups engaged people having low-income, key informant interviews were held with individuals having specialized knowledge or experience relevant to community health and well-being issues, and a statewide community survey, which was open to anyone in living in Maine, to learn about local resources and strengths of their communities and their own health and well-being. Both the quantitative and qualitative data were used to inform a health and well-being prioritization process held with stakeholders at county-based forums. These reports and the community input received are fundamental to achieving our goal of being a trusted and valued partner to improve the health of the people and communities we serve.

Results of the 2025 Shared CHNA along with community input were used to inform the development of this three-year Community Health Implementation Strategy by Northern Light AR Gould Hospital. The efforts identified within help demonstrate our commitment to our community, as we provide benefits reflective of our mission and tax-exempt status. These benefits include a focus on the clinical, social, and environmental factors that influence the ability of people to lead healthier lives.

Community Health Implementation Strategy

This Community Health Implementation Strategy was developed with input from community stakeholders including those who serve priority populations, public health partners, business leaders, and community advocates.

Priorities were selected after weighing the severity of each priority area, availability of known and effective interventions, determination that the priority area was un-addressed or under-addressed, and community collaborations underway with Northern Light AR Gould Hospital.

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital reserves the right to amend this Community Health Implementation Strategy as circumstances warrant. For example, certain community health needs may become more pronounced and require enhancements or a refocus to the selected priorities of focus.

Process and Methods for Priority Selection

Community members and stakeholders identified priority areas based on three domains as detailed in the county-level Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) report:

Community conditions

- Factors that affect people's health and well-being in the places where they live, work, and play.

Protective and risk factors

- Protective factors are characteristics associated with more positive health and well-being outcomes.
- Risk factors are characteristics associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes.

Health conditions and outcomes

- Health conditions refers to a person's state of health.
- Health outcomes are the changes in one's health status as a result of healthcare services or interventions.

The county CHNA forum priority voting revealed that *mental health, substance use, and chronic conditions* were among the top priorities identified in almost every county. Northern Light Health recognized the value, reach, and impact of aligned engagement efforts with a shared purpose and therefore, identified these three priority areas for Northern Light member hospitals to engage in common strategies to achieve greater statewide impact. We are uniquely positioned to have the most impact on these priorities through system and community-clinical collaborations to meet the needs of those we serve.

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's Community Health Implementation Strategy was developed to include our systemwide shared priority areas of work reflecting upon the quantitative health profile indicators and qualitative prioritization derived from the Shared CHNA's community engagement process. AR Gould Hospital's planning team also considered local readiness and capacity to address these needs in partnership with our communities. Our planning team included representatives with knowledge and insight of the communities we serve.

Members of AR Gould Hospital's Community Health Implementation Strategy team included individuals representing the following organizations:

- Aroostook County Action Program, currently open due to staff changes
- Department of Health and Human Services, Cardiovascular Health Grant
- Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Aroostook District Public Health Liaison
- Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, Ambulatory Performance Improvement Program Manager
- Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, Board Member
- Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, Community Health Coordinator
- Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, Director of Community Outreach & Philanthropy
- Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, Library Coordinator/Lead Employee Engagement & Health Teams
- Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, Manager of Quality
- Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, Northern Light Health, Senior Vice President
- Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, Senior Physician Executive
- Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, SVP & President

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, Volunteer/ Community Member

The following criteria were used for the health need selection process:

- **Shared CHNA prioritization:** How the health priority ranked in the Shared CHNA.
- **Systemwide:** Priority areas of work as determined by Northern Light's Community Health Workgroup.
- **Health equity:** Which populations are disproportionately affected by the priority area of focus; which populations may be experiencing unique barriers to resolve the issue; and what data or themes emerged from the CHNA Forums, the County Data Health Profile, and the Community Engagement Profile that reinforce selecting one or more populations of focus.
- **Ability to leverage local community assets:** Identification of potential community partnerships to engage in order to address the priority need, or to build on current programs, emerging opportunities, or other community assets.
- **Expertise:** Northern Light AR Gould Hospital experts and local partnership experts in various priority areas.
- **Feasibility:** Northern Light AR Gould Hospital has the ability to have an effect given the community benefit resources available.

Annually, our internal team will convene to determine if changes need to be considered to best address the priority health needs of our community.

NOTE: There were no written comments received related to the most recently conducted Shared CHNA and Community Health Implementation Strategy for inclusion in this report.

Evaluation Efforts

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will monitor and evaluate the strategies related to this priority area of work for the purpose of tracking the implementation of those strategies as well as to document the anticipated impact. Through internal quarterly reporting practices, we plan to document and track measures, approaches and resources used, partners engaged, and highlights related to this priority area of work. These quarterly reports will inform our fiscal year-end Progress Report to Our Community that will be made publicly available on our Community Health Implementation Strategy web page.

Feedback Opportunity

Contact communitybenefits@northernlight.org with feedback on this report.

Approval from Governing Board

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's Community Health Implementation Strategy and Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) were reviewed by the hospital's governing board and a resolution was made to approve and adopt both the Shared CHNA and the Community Health Implementation Strategy on May 1, 2025.

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Selected Priorities of Focus

Northern Light members will engage in the following three systemwide priorities to leverage the effect in our communities in a consistent and measurable way:



Behavioral Health

Rationale

Behavioral health encompasses mental health, substance use, and health behaviors. Untreated behavioral health needs stemming from a variety of factors such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other factors, are associated with financial and housing instability through increased unemployment or underemployment and fragmentation of supportive social relationships. Individuals with unaddressed behavioral health needs often cycle in and out of poverty and homelessness, worsening their mental and physical health outcomes. Behavioral health can affect an individual's ability to practice good health behaviors and seek care or resources when needed. Limited healthcare options, lack of support, and fear of stigma may prevent individuals from seeking help, indicating an ongoing need to increase mental health awareness, dispel common misperceptions, and address barriers to accessing behavioral healthcare.

The Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's Community Health Implementation Strategy team recognizes that addressing behavioral health through specific mental health and substance use needs are priorities for our community with a focus on health equity, especially for those who may be experiencing health disparities. There are substantial local community assets and AR Gould Hospital has resources available to help support these needs. Furthermore, there are many options for evidence-based mental health and substance use interventions and services that promote appropriate and effective prevention, identification, and treatment for behavioral illnesses.

Priority: Mental Health

Intended actions to address the need

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will strengthen communities and care environments to improve awareness of mental health needs and improve health outcomes by:

- Providing identification and treatment of depression through routine screening.
- Providing evidence-based training and education to schools and other youth-serving organizations.
- Reducing the stigma surrounding mental health through education, community-based programs, and promotion of available resources.

- Collaborating with community organizations to increase community awareness of mental health needs and strengthen resources and support networks.
- Promoting Northern Light Health's findhelp.org as a resource for community services and supports.

Anticipated impact of these actions/expected outcomes

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital anticipates increased knowledge and availability of mental health services in Aroostook County, while decreasing mental health stigma of community members seeking such services.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will:

- Dedicate internal staff resources (e.g., Community Health Coordinator, Director of Community Outreach, Marketing and Communications, and primary care office staff, etc.) to address and promote activities related to this priority.
- Provide community education around mental health services in Aroostook County at our Healthy Aging Luncheon series designed to engage some of our most vulnerable residents who may socially isolate if opportunities to connect and learn were not available.
- Partner with community organizations to promote and support mental health services in our emergency department and patient lounges. The information will be in the form of handouts and rack cards from local agencies containing community resources.
- Provide a youth event around healthy coping strategies and stigma reduction around mental health with local recreation departments.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will collaborate with:

- AMHC (Aroostook Mental Health Center) to provide educational opportunities and information on services available to community members in Aroostook County.
- Local recreation departments and the United Methodist Church to provide space to promote and engage community members in various mental health program efforts.
- United Methodist Church to provide space to promote and engage community members in various mental health programming efforts.

Population of focus

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital has resources and partnerships available to be leveraged in support of this need specific to the following populations:

- Individuals with mental health needs
 - Over 20% of Aroostook County adults report having depression and over 25% report having anxiety during their lifetime.
- Individuals living in poverty
 - Nearly 15% of Aroostook County residents live in poverty, a significantly higher proportion than state and national rates. Over 18% of Aroostook County children live in poverty, a significantly higher proportion than the state and national rates. Additionally, just over 47% of school-aged children live in households where the total income of the family is less than 185% of the established Federal Poverty Level, which is higher than the state's rate. Individuals living in poverty are more likely to experience mental health needs than those not living in poverty.

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Priority: Substance Use

Intended action to address the need

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will improve access and services to reduce the impact of substance use in our communities through prevention, treatment and recovery by:

- Increasing access to Medication Assisted Treatment through primary care offices.
- Providing community education and promotion of substance use prevention and treatment options.
- Partnering with community organizations to support and promote substance use recovery resources.
- Promoting Northern Light Health's findhelp.org as a resource for community services and supports.

Anticipated impact of these actions/expected outcomes

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital anticipates increased access to Medication Assisted Treatment and increased knowledge and availability of substance use resources and services in Aroostook County while reducing stigma associated with community members seeking such services.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will:

- Dedicate internal staff resources (e.g., Community Health Coordinator, Director of Community Outreach & Philanthropy, Marketing and Communications, and primary care office staff, etc.) to address and promote activities related to this priority.
- Provide community education related to substance use prevention resources such as Naloxone education and training, and other relevant substance use topics through community outreach efforts (e.g., Healthy Aging Luncheon engagements, collaborative presentations, etc.).
- Partner with community organizations to promote and support substance use recovery resources in our emergency department and patient lounges. The information will be in the form of handouts and rack cards from local agencies containing community resources.
- Provide Naloxone kits in our emergency department and primary care as needed.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will collaborate with:

- Aroostook County Action Program through their Drug Free Communities grant to mobilize communities to prevent youth substance use.
- AMHC's (Aroostook Mental Health Services) Residential Treatment Facility through their Options (Overdose Prevention through Intensive Outreach, Naloxone & Safety) Program that helps community members get connected to Medication assisted Treatment and recovery services.
- United Methodist Church to provide space to promote and engage community members in various substance use programming efforts.

Population of focus

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital has resources and partnerships available to be leveraged in support of this need specific to the following populations:

- Individuals with substance use disorders
 - Aroostook County experiences higher overdose and alcohol-induced deaths compared to state and national statistics. Additionally, over 22% of adults in Aroostook County are current cigarette smokers, a significantly higher proportion than state and national rates.
- Individuals living in poverty
 - Nearly 15% of Aroostook County residents live in poverty, a significantly higher proportion than state and national rates. Over 18% of Aroostook County children live in poverty, a significantly higher proportion than the state and national rates. Additionally, just over 47% of school-aged children live in households where the total income of the family is less than 185% of the established Federal Poverty

Level, which is higher than the state's rate. Individuals experiencing poverty are at an increased risk for substance use disorders and social and emotional impacts across the lifespan.

Chronic Conditions

Priority: Chronic Conditions

Rationale

Chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and obesity result in significantly higher rates of healthcare utilization and costs and cause poorer health outcomes and decreased quality of life. Individual behaviors such as avoiding smoking, limiting alcohol consumption, maintaining a healthy diet, and engaging in regular physical activity can significantly reduce the risk of developing chronic conditions. Community conditions such as poverty, housing instability, poor housing quality, and transportation issues are associated with higher risks of chronic conditions because they make it harder to access healthcare and maintain good health. A comprehensive approach to addressing chronic conditions, including environmental approaches, healthcare system interventions, and community programs, can support healthy individual behaviors and communities and improve access to services to prevent and manage chronic conditions.

The Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's Community Health Implementation Strategy team determined it was feasible to address this need with a focus on health equity, especially for those who may be experiencing health disparities. There are substantial local community assets and AR Gould Hospital has resources available to be leveraged in support of this need. Furthermore, there are many options for evidence-based interventions and services that promote appropriate and effective prevention, early detection, and treatment of chronic conditions.

Intended action to address the need

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will improve chronic condition outcomes for our communities through chronic disease preventions, early detection, and health outcomes by:

- Ensuring that community members have access to chronic conditions screening and preventive care services.
- Partnering with community organizations to educate and empower community members in the prevention and management of chronic conditions through healthy behaviors.
- Supporting prevention and management of chronic conditions by providing access to healthy food options through distribution of food bags in partnership with community organizations.
- Promoting Northern Light Health's findhelp.org as a resource for community services and supports.

Anticipated impact of these actions/expected outcomes

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital anticipates increased access to screening opportunities to identify and treat chronic conditions with a focus on cardiovascular health, skin cancer and healthy eating and active living options in Aroostook County.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will:

- Dedicate internal staff resources (e.g., Community Health Coordinator, Director of Community Outreach, Marketing and Communications, and primary care office staff, etc.) to address and promote activities related to this priority.
- Provide community education, equipment and promotion of skin cancer prevention and screening through community partnerships.

- Provide community education, periodicals, equipment and promotion of cardiovascular disease prevention, screening and healthy lifestyle changes through our Health Aging Luncheon series, libraries and recreation centers.
- Provide community education around healthy eating and active living to help reduce obesity rates in youth and seniors through recreation center programs and our Healthy Aging Luncheon series.
- Provide food resources to patients that screen positive for food insecurity.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will collaborate with:

- Local recreation centers and other outdoor activity area programs in Aroostook County to provide space for Sunblock stations and information.
- Local libraries to display and lend cardiovascular health (CVH) materials for public use through a partnership with the Maine CDC who provided funding for CVH activities.
- Recreation Centers and other outdoor recreation venues to provide cardiovascular health programming.
- United Methodist Church to provide space to promote and engage community members in various chronic conditions programming efforts.

Population of focus

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital has resources and partnerships available to be leveraged in support of this need specific to the following populations:

- Individuals living in poverty
 - Nearly 15% of Aroostook County residents live in poverty, a significantly higher proportion than state and national rates. Across the lifespan, individuals living in poverty are at an increased risk for chronic conditions and lower life expectancy.
- Individuals who are uninsured and underinsured
 - Nearly 9% of Aroostook County residents are uninsured and over 35% are enrolled in MaineCare. Approximately 9% of residents report cost barriers to health care.

Health Priorities Not Addressed

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital considered all priorities identified in the Shared CHNA, as well as other sources, through an extensive review process. We recognize that domain specific priorities may inherently be linked to one another and that for priorities not specifically selected by Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, community based organizations are poised to address and lead effective efforts. Priorities not selected, are listed below:

Community Conditions

- Housing and transportation were not selected as standalone priority areas of focus, but we understand their connection to higher risks of chronic conditions and will look to community benefit organizations focused on these issues to lead efforts. Our hospital collaborates with patients in need of transportation to and from their healthcare needs by providing access to rides (e.g., taxi, vans, ride share programs, Aroostook Regional Transportation, buses, etc.).
- Provider availability was not selected as a standalone priority of focus as Northern Light Health currently has efforts to attract and retain providers. Northern Light recognizes the importance of provider availability to care for our community members and feel confident that our planned work on these efforts, in addition to our identified priority areas of work within this strategy, will have a positive impact on provider availability.

Protective and Risk Factors

- Cancer prevention was not selected as a standalone priority of focus as these efforts are linked to our chronic conditions' priority area of work. We'll continue to engage in collaborative work and initiatives with community benefit organizations focused on this issue to lead efforts.
- Nutrition was not selected as a standalone priority of focus, but we understand its connection to higher risks of chronic conditions. We will continue to engage in collaborative work and initiatives focused on nutrition but will look to community benefit organizations focused on this issue to lead efforts.

Conclusion

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital is thankful for the participation and support of our community members and many area organizations in the Shared CHNA process and for contributing their knowledge of local community health needs. Through existing and future partnerships, collaborative efforts will be essential in addressing the identified community health implementation strategies prioritized within.

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital will engage in another Shared CHNA in 2028 and looks forward to ongoing community participation in these important efforts.

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Appendix

Evaluation of Impact

Progress report on selected priorities from Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's last (2022) Community Health Needs Assessment.

Northern Light Health and Northern Light AR Gould Hospital are committed to promoting a culture of community stewardship and partnering together with community stakeholders to address high priority health issues. To do so effectively, we regularly monitor the effect of our community health efforts and make this information widely available to our communities in the form of annual Community Benefit statements, and this triennial Community Health Implementation Strategy. The following annual Progress Report to Our Community provides a summary evaluation of impact of the actions taken by AR Gould Hospital to address community health priorities adopted in 2022.

Measuring and reporting on progress is critical to making a difference in the communities we serve, and in the lives of those we care for. The following annual Progress Report to Our Community is provided:

- Progress Report to Our Community Fiscal Years 2023-2025

For additional information, visit <https://northernlighthealth.org/Community-Health-Needs-Assessment/2022-Community-Health-Strategy>

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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

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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.)	Great American Smoke Out
Aroostook County Action Program	State Road Advent Christian Church
Drug Free Aroostook	

- 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.