Fiscal Year 2026

Progress Report to our Community

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.

Results from the 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment along with community input informed the development of our three-year Community Health Implementation Strategy. Northern Light AR Gould Hospital recognized the value, reach, and influence of aligned engagement efforts with a shared purpose. The following three systemwide priority areas were adopted by Northern Light Health member organizations to engage in common strategy to leverage the effect on our communities in a consistent and measurable way.

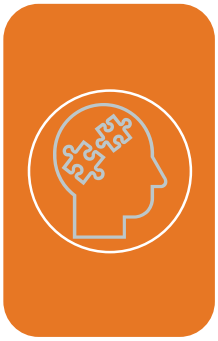


This report is an update on Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's progress on our community health strategy for fiscal year 2026 (FY26),October 2025 – September 2026 representing the first of three years of our three-year, FY26 – FY28 community health improvement plan.

Northern Light SM
A.R. Gould Hospital

Addressing Community Health Needs: FY26 Update

This year brought unexpected organizational shifts. While staffing transitions paused some of our planned work, it allowed us to reevaluate our team's structure to better serve the community moving forward.



Mental Health

Northern Light Health continues to advance mental health equity by offering expanded access to care through school-based programs, telehealth, and integrated care models that make it easier for individuals to access this service where they already receive medical care.

Goal: Improve mental health by strengthening care environments and communities

Shared Objective: Provide community-based training/education to increase awareness, reduce stigma, and improve access to mental health services and resources.

Population(s) of focus: Individuals with mental health needs; Individuals living in poverty.

Community based engagements and impact

- FY26: Through our Healthy Aging Program, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital provided an educational opportunity for older adults to learn about depression and its effects on health and quality of life. The session was led by Ralph McPherson, a licensed social worker, who highlighted the importance of identifying and addressing depression in aging populations, sparked meaningful conversation among participants, and connected attendees with available mental health resources and support services.

Partners: 67 older adults from our community

Clinical actions supporting mental health

Depression screening:

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital is committed to screening our patient population, who are 12 years old and older, for clinical depression using an age-appropriate standardized depression screening tool. Patients with a positive screen are referred to services and/or resources as appropriate.

- FY26: Depression screening was completed for 76.96% of eligible AR Gould Hospital patients.

Additional actions supporting the mental health priority

Community education posts

Connecting with our community through a variety of communication platforms is an important way we share information about mental health awareness and connect individuals with available resources. Behavioral and mental health-related content published on Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's social media platforms, such as Facebook, is measured by reach, which represents the number of unique individuals who see this information.

- FY26: Shared five social media posts promoting behavioral and mental health awareness and access to care, reaching an average of 2,580 individuals per post.

Systemwide collective impact

Collectively, Northern Light Health member hospitals produced the following results:

- FY26:
  - Depression screening was completed for 77.54% of eligible patients, throughout Northern Light Health, a rate that aligns with national benchmarks.
  - Shared 76 social media posts promoting behavioral and mental health awareness and access to care, reaching an average of 2,060 individuals per post.



Substance Use

Northern Light Health advances equity in substance use prevention and care by providing a range of substance use disorder (SUD) services across multiple locations and care settings throughout Maine, providing specialized SUD services for adolescents and community-based integrated care, and through collaboration with community organizations to improve prevention, treatment, and recovery education and awareness.

Goal: Improve access and services to reduce the impact of substance use in our communities.

Shared Objective: Provide education and promotion of substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery.

Population(s) of focus: Individuals with substance use disorders; Individuals living in poverty.

Community based engagements and impact

Partners: ACAP, 66 older adults from our community

- **FY26**: Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's Healthy Aging Program presented Health Risks Associated with Vaping and Alcohol Misuse, delivered in partnership with ACAP and attended by 66 individuals. This session increased awareness of certain kinds of cancer risks and other poor health outcomes, preventive strategies, and healthy lifestyle practices that support well-being and quality of life among older adults generating meaningful discussion among participants

Additional actions supporting the substance use priority

Community education

Substance use-related posts published on Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's social media platforms, such as Facebook, are measured by reach, which represents the number of unique individuals who see this information.

- **FY26**: Shared two social media posts focused on substance use awareness and access to care, reaching an average of 31,673 individuals per post.

Systemwide collective impact

Collectively, Northern Light Health member hospitals produced the following results:

- **FY26**: Shared 31 social media posts focused on substance use awareness and access to care, reaching an average of 3,909 individuals per post.



Chronic Conditions

Northern Light Health continues to advance equity in chronic conditions by combining data-driven population health strategies, rural access initiatives such as our Mobile Mammography unit that travels around Maine and makes getting a mammogram as easy as possible, and care coordination so that our patients and communities have opportunities to prevent, manage, and live well with chronic disease.

Goal: Improve chronic condition outcomes through prevention and early detection.

Shared Objective: Provide education and empower community members in the prevention and management of chronic conditions through healthy behaviors.

Population(s) of focus: Individuals living in poverty; Individuals who are uninsured and underinsured.

Community based engagements and impact

FY26: Northern Light AR Gould Hospital engaged the community in a number of educational programs focused on promoting awareness and resources on a variety of health topics aimed to improve health. Engagements were well received and fostered connections and access to needed resources.

Partners: Mobile Maternal Health Clinic, Maine CDC, Maine Cancer Foundation, ACAP, Northern Maine Trails, multiple local recreation centers.

- Through our **Healthy Aging Luncheon Series**, older adults were engaged to learn about health topics relevant to aging while building connections with others in the community. Presentations included **Health Risks Associated with Vaping and Alcohol Misuse**, delivered in partnership with ACAP and attended by 66 individuals; **Aging Body and Evidence of Movement: Strength Training and Healthy Living to Improve Outcomes**, attended by 103 individuals; and **Allergy Education**, presented by a Northern Light otolaryngologist and attended by 74 individuals. These sessions increased awareness of health risks, preventive strategies, and healthy lifestyle practices that support well-being and quality of life among older adults.
- "**Community Baby Sprinkle**" events, hosted by an ACAP collaborative, inclusive of our pediatric and Obstetrics/Gynecology teams, provided information on services and resources related to childhood health for our pregnant community members, and families with newborns. In addition, at the Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine's Annual Family & Community Fun Day, our team assisted by providing educational information about services and resources.
- **Drive thorugh flu shot clinics** were made available for our community members as an effort to keep our community flu-free. 70 flu shots were administered to adults and 94 flu shots to pediatric patients.
- The **Mobile Maternal Health Clinic**, administered by Maine CDC, hosted a community outreach event in Houlton where our Obstetrics and Gynecology manager educated participants about available maternal health services and discussed opportunities to improve access to maternal healthcare.
- To support **skin cancer prevention**, multiple sunscreen stations equipped with refills were installed throughout Aroostook County, improving residents' access to sun safety resources and educational information. Made possible with a grant from Maine Cancer Foundation.

Clinical actions supporting chronic conditions

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital engages in evidence-based interventions and services that promote appropriate and effective prevention, early detection, and treatment of chronic conditions to improve overall health. Screening results are compared to national benchmarks.

Breast cancer screening

Women ages 40-74 years of age at AR Gould Hospital who had a mammogram to screen for breast cancer.

- FY26: Breast cancer screening was completed for 81.02% of eligible AR Gould Hospital patients, a rate that aligns with national benchmarks.

Colorectal cancer screening

Percentage of patients 45-75 years of age at AR Gould Hospital who were screened for colorectal cancer.

- FY26: Colorectal cancer screening was completed for 70.58 % of eligible AR Gould Hospital patients, a rate that aligns with national benchmarks.

Food bag distribution

Bridging the gap between health and hunger through screening and the provision of food bags to patients in need.

- FY26: Food security screening rates resulted in 53,083 patients screened, 420 patients identified as positive for food insecurity, and 24 food bags given.

Additional actions supporting the chronic conditions priority

Community education

Education specific posts related to chronic health conditions on Northern Light AR Gould Hospital's social media platforms, such as Facebook, are measured by reach, which represents the number of unique individuals who see this information.

- FY26: Shared 37 social media posts promoting education on and care for chronic health conditions, including cancer, cardiology, diabetes, food insecurity, and respiratory health, reaching an average of 3,319 individuals per post.

Systemwide collective impact

Collectively, Northern Light Health member hospitals produced the following results:

- FY26:
  - Breast cancer screening was completed for 79.87% of eligible patients across our healthcare system, a rate that aligns with national benchmarks.
  - Colorectal cancer screening was completed for 71.62% of eligible patients across our healthcare system, a rate that aligns with national benchmarks.
  - Food security screening rates resulted in 311,385 patients screened, 4,124 patients identified as positive for food insecurity, and 2,090 food bags given
  - Shared 264 social media posts promoting education on and care for chronic health conditions, including cancer, cardiology, diabetes, food insecurity, and respiratory health, reaching an average of 2,631 individuals per post.

Enhancing Community Resource Accessibility

Northern Light AR Gould Hospital encourages staff, patients, and community members to use the free, open-access 211 Maine or findhelp.org to find, contact, and/or make referrals to community-based services. In addition, Northern Light Health will:

- Maintain ongoing partnership with MaineHealth and 211 Maine to improve resource listings and community engagement approaches for findhelp.org and 211 Maine.
- Continue our collaboration with Maine CDC, MaineHealth, 211 Maine, and Community Care Partnership of Maine to ensure all community food security resources are included in findhelp.org and 211 Maine.
- Participate in the Maine Community Information Exchange (CIE) collaborative led by the United Ways of Maine to explore creation of a statewide closed-loop network connecting healthcare providers and community-based organizations.