



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.



Kevin Tesseo
Chair, Board of Trustees
Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital



John Ronan, FACHE
President, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital
Senior Vice President and Regional 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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill Hospital

Originally donated by Mrs. F.B. Richards in 1922, Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital is committed to improving the health of the communities we serve. Our Blue Hill community is a beautiful place, and the people who live here deserve the best care possible, as close to home as they can be.

At Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, we listen to our patients, and we also use community health data, like that collected in our Community Health Needs Assessment, to best serve our communities.

We collaborate with organizations to deliver educational programs to the people we serve. These provide a significant community benefit at no cost to our local friends and neighbors.

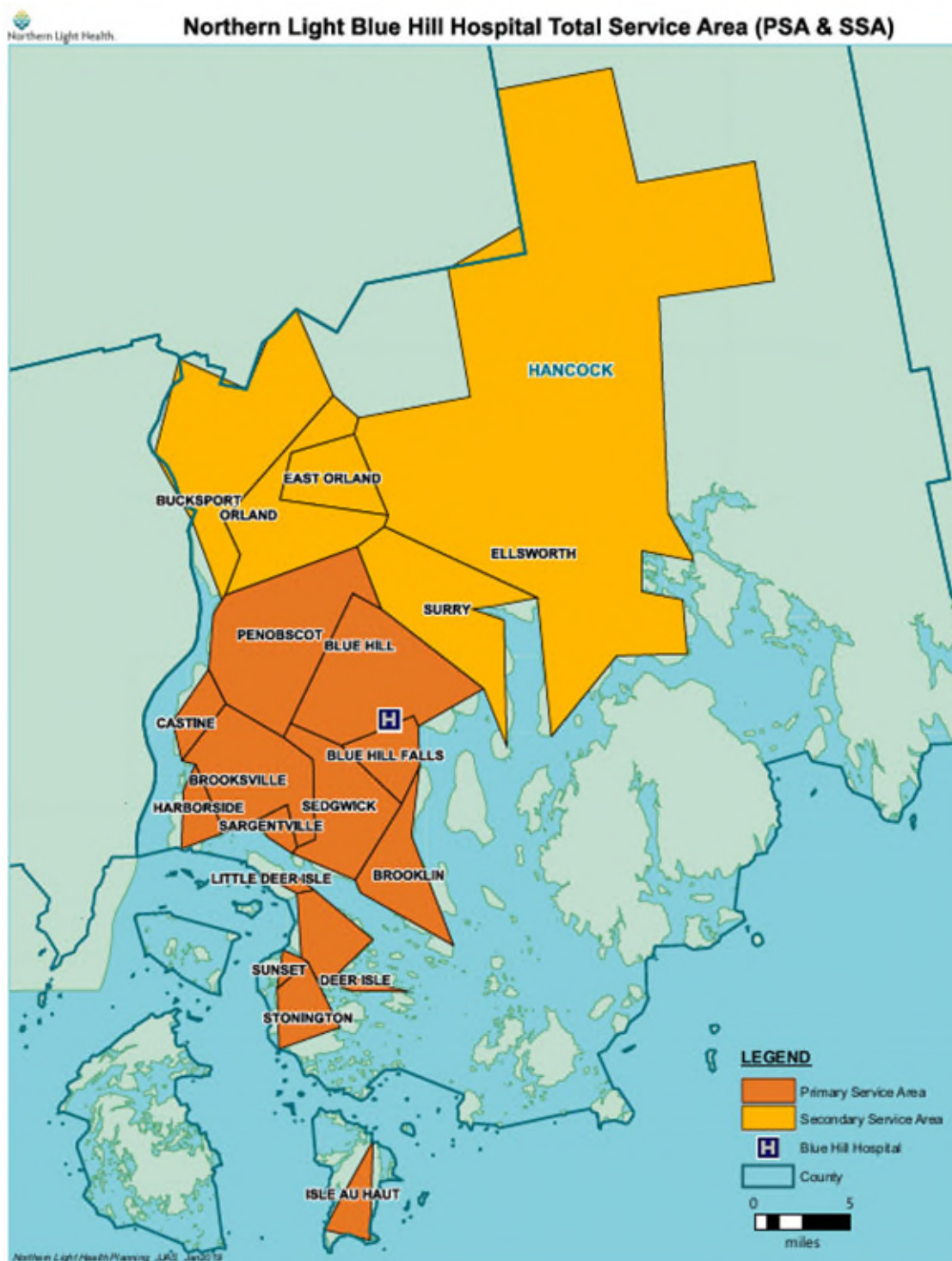
Working closely with our charity care patients, we identify programs that will cover their healthcare costs. When no coverage is available, we offer assistance programs to help ensure that every patient has access to the medical care they need and deserve.

Northern Light Blue Hill 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.

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Definition of Community Served

Located in Blue Hill, Maine, Northern Light Blue Hill 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 Hancock [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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill Hospital.

Northern Light Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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. Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill Hospital's Community Health Implementation Strategy team included individuals representing the following organizations:

- Maine CDC, Downeast District Public Health Liaison
- Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, Community Health Lead
- Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, Director of Quality
- Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, Executive Physician

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 Blue Hill Hospital experts and local partnership experts in various priority areas.
- **Feasibility:** Northern Light Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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 22, 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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill Hospital anticipates:

- Increased access to depression screenings in primary care settings.
- Improve community awareness to help reduce mental health stigma.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital will:

- Dedicate internal staff resources (e.g., community health lead, marketing and communications, and primary care office staff, etc.) to address and promote activities related to this priority.
- Promote activities such as the provision of Provide Psychological First Aid (PFA) training to educators, caregivers, community members and healthcare providers to reduce stigma and improve efforts connected to this priority.
- Work with community outreach staff to promote and share resources related to stigma reduction with community and school partners.
- Design and share depression screening warning signs and crisis hotline information via social media and on patient waiting area monitors to improve awareness and intervention opportunities.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital will collaborate with:

- Northern Light Acadia Hospital, who provides behavioral and mental health services and expertise throughout Maine, in the delivery of services in our area.
- AMHC, Community Health and Counseling Services, Hancock County Sheriff's office, Ellsworth Police Department, Maine State Police, Healthy Acadia, Hancock County Schools, Downeast YMCA, Downeast Community Partners, and Healthy Peninsula.

Population of focus

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

- Individuals with mental health needs
 - Almost 24% of Hancock County adults report having medically recognized depression and over 22% report having medically recognized anxiety during their lifetime. Over 10% of adults reported current symptoms of depression at the time of the assessment.
- Individuals who are uninsured and underinsured
 - Over 10% of Hancock County residents are uninsured, which is significantly higher than the state and national rate. Nearly 10% of residents report cost barriers to health care.

Priority: Substance Use

Intended action to address the need

Northern Light Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill Hospital anticipates increasing access to Medication Assisted Treatment and improved community knowledge of substance use prevention/treatment resources throughout Hancock County.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital will allocate staff time of the senior physician executive, physician practice leadership, healthcare practitioners, community health lead, and the director of quality to work toward increasing access to Medication Assisted Treatment and improved community knowledge of substance use prevention/treatment resources.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital will collaborate with AMHC, Community Health and Counseling Services, Healthy Acadia Substance Use Prevention, Hancock County schools to support substance use prevention and treatment; and promote substance use recovery resources.

Population of focus

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

- Individuals with substance use disorders
 - Hancock County experiences higher overdose and alcohol-induced deaths compared to national statistics. Over 9% of Hancock County adults engage in chronic heavy drinking, which is higher than both the state and national rates.
 - 25% of adults in Hancock County have used marijuana in the past 30-days, while almost 20% are current cigarette smokers.
- Individuals who are uninsured and underinsured
 - Over 10% of Hancock County residents are uninsured, which is significantly higher than the state and national rate. Nearly 10% of residents report cost barriers to health care.

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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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, and seasonal free produce markets 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 Blue Hill Hospital anticipates increasing access to screening and increased awareness.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital will dedicate internal staff time:

- At our primary care practices, to optimize access to/reach of current preventive screenings.
- Provide food resources to patients that screen positive for food insecurity.
- Provide community education around healthy eating and active living to help reduce obesity rates in Hancock County while hosting seasonal free produce farmers markets.
- Cancer awareness educational speaker series with Beth Wright Cancer Center.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital will collaborate with:

- Good Shepherd Food Bank and local farmers
- Healthy Acadia
- Beth C. Wright Cancer Resource Center

Population of focus

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

- Individuals living in poverty
 - Nearly 11% of Hancock County residents, including over 13% of children, live in poverty. Across the lifespan, individuals living in poverty are at an increased risk for chronic conditions and lower life expectancy.
- Individuals living with food insecurity
 - Almost 13% of adults and 19% of youth experience food insecurity in Hancock County. Food insecurity can increase the risk of chronic conditions. Obesity-associated cancer rates were higher than the state and national rates.
- Individuals living with multiple chronic conditions
 - Over 16% of individuals living in Hancock County experience three or more chronic conditions.
 - Leading causes of death in Hancock County include heart disease and cancer. Incidence rates for female breast cancer and colorectal cancer are both higher than the state rates. Screening rates for both colorectal and breast cancer are below the state average.
 - Hancock County rates for hospitalizations due to high blood pressure have increased significantly since 2016-2018. The heart attack deaths rate has also increased and is higher than both state and national rates.
- Individuals who are uninsured and underinsured
 - Over 10% of Hancock County residents are uninsured and over 24% are enrolled in MaineCare. Almost 10% of residents report cost barriers to health care.

Health Priorities Not Addressed

Northern Light Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill Hospital, community based organizations are poised to address and lead effective efforts. Priorities not selected, are listed below:

Community Conditions

- Aging related services was not selected as a standalone priority of focus as these efforts are connected to our other priority areas of work and we feel confident that our aging population will benefit from our planned work on those priorities. We will continue to engage in collaborative work and initiatives focused on aging related services that will provide support for this population.
- Housing was not selected as a standalone priority of focus but we understand its connection to higher risks of chronic conditions and will look to community benefit organizations focused on this issue to lead efforts.
- 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

- Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) was not selected as a standalone priority of focus, but we understand its impact on our behavioral health priority areas of work and will look to 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.

Health Conditions and Outcomes

- Access to long-term care was not selected as a standalone priority of focus, but we understand its connection to higher risks of chronic conditions and will look to community benefit organizations focused on this issue to lead efforts. Our hospital has current initiatives that are ongoing and part of our continual mission to improve access to care that support this priority.

Conclusion

Northern Light Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill Hospital's last (2022) Community Health Needs Assessment.

Northern Light Health and Northern Light Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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 2023-2024
- Fiscal Year 2025 progress report updates will be included upon its availability

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
2023-2024

Addressing community health needs.

Northern Light Blue Hill 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, Blue Hill 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, Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill Hospital's progress on our community health strategy for fiscal years 2023 (October 2022 – September 2023) and 2024 (October 2023 – September 2024), representing the first and second 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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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 80 training sessions with of 1,606 individuals trained.

Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Blue Hill Consolidated School	Healthy Acadia
Community Compass	Healthy Peninsula
Curriculum Coordinators in Hancock County (Union 93 and Union 76)	Help Me Grow
Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)	Maine Coast Fisherman
Downeast Community Partners (Blue Hill Peninsula preschool educators and Head Start)	Nichols Day Camp*
Downeast Partners & Friends	Stonington High School
Early Childhood Care Providers Group*	The Early Childhood Interest Group, chaired by Healthy Peninsula
	WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)

- Two community organizations* trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA); 25 individuals trained in PFA.
- Developed directory of behavioral health resources for youths (and adults) in the LGBTQ community.
- Engaged in “Help Me Grow” and Children’s Behavioral Health Services with DHHS
- Provided resources and participated in YMCA Healthy Kids Fair, WIC Community Baby Shower
- Outreach to Director of Community Program to Maine Coast Fisherman regarding behavioral health support for fisherman
- Participating with the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety’s Fisherman’s Empowerment grant project.

- Implementation of Medical Neighborhood Team to proactively address complex patient needs, including behavioral health issues, in a multi-disciplinary setting.
- Stonington High School – a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) from Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital offers regular mental health consultation to staff and students; helps provide educational resources; potential point of contact for PFA training.

Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

AMHC	Medical Neighborhood Team
Community Health & Counseling Services	Memorial Ambulance Service*
Deer-Isle Stonington High School	Northern Light Acadia Hospital
H.O.M.E., Inc.*	

- Two community organizations* were trained in Psychological First Aid (PFA); 34 individuals were trained in PFA.
- A Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), working with Stonington High School's guidance counselor, assessed the school's needs, related to mental health, to develop appropriate educational resources. The LCSW worked with approximately 30 students on an individual basis.
- Behavioral health partners AMHC, Community Health & Counseling Services, and Northern Light Acadia Hospital collaborated on the Medical Neighborhood Team.

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 will continue to develop, allowing users to search and connect to community services.

Northern Light Blue Hill 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. Blue Hill 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.

Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Age Friendly Coastal Communities	Good Shepherd Food Bank	Opiate-Free Island Project*
Blue Hill Chamber of Commerce	Hancock/Washington County	Prosper Consortium
Bridging Neighbors Project	Homeless Providers Coalition	Restored Hope
Deer Isle Stonington Coalition on Substance Use	Healthy Acadia	Rotary Club
Down East Family YMCA	Healthy Island Project*	Simmering Pot
Downeast Community Partners	Healthy Peninsula*	Substance Use Prevention Council
Downeast Partners for Children and Families	Hospice Volunteers of Hancock County	Heart of Maine, United Way
Downeast Substance Treatment Network	Maine Seacoast Mission	WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
Early Childhood Interest Group	Medical Neighborhood Team	
	Next Step Domestic Violence Project	

- Three community partners* added six programs to the findhelp directory:
 - Healthy Island Project: HIP Lunch Box Program
 - Healthy Peninsula: Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Furry Friends Food Bank, Healthy Peninsula Family Resource Center, Simmering Pot Meal Delivery
 - Opiate-Free Island Project: Syringe Exchange Program
- Implementation of a closed-loop referral system between Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital and community partner Healthy Peninsula using the findhelp.org platform to support “Bridging Neighbors” volunteer resource connection collaboration.
- 81 food bags distributed to patients in need, in partnership with Good Shepherd Food Bank
- 600+ lbs. of fresh produce distributed to patients at Blue Hill Family Practice July-Sept in partnership with Mainers Feeding Mainers program.
- 37 “Welcome Baby” bags distributed to new families for a healthy start, in partnership with Healthy Peninsula
- Partnered with Downeast Community Partner’s Thaw Fund to support the purchase of heating fuel for people living in poverty in Hancock County
- Sponsored the Heart of Maine United Way’s Hancock County Food Drive to support food security efforts.
- Provided 120 quarts/month of free, fresh soup via Simmering Pot, a partnership with Healthy Peninsula
- Sponsored Down East Family YMCA Healthy Kids Fair and Pridefest celebration, a partnership with Healthy Acadia
- 40 Blood Pressure checks conducted at Juneteenth celebration in partnership with Healthy Acadia
- Partnered with Comfort Cases to stock 16 personal care backpacks to have for babies-teenagers entering Foster Care.

Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

AMHC	Good Shepherd Food Bank
Blue Hill Peninsula Chamber of Commerce	Hancock County Sherriff's Office
Blue Hill Heritage Trust	Healthy Acadia
City of Ellsworth	Healthy Peninsula*
Community Compass	H.O.M.E., Inc.
Community Health & Counseling Services	Hospice Volunteers of Hancock County*
Deer Isle Adult Education*	Island Food Pantry*
Down East Family YMCA	Next Step Domestic Violence Project
Downeast Housing Collaborative	Northeast Center for Occupational Health & Safety
Ellsworth Public Library	

- Four community partners* added seven programs to the findhelp directory:
 - Deer Isle Adult Education: High School Completion
 - Healthy Peninsula: Bridging Neighbors
 - Hospice Volunteers of Hancock County: Grief Support Groups, Volunteer Support, Evensong, Lending Library
 - Island Food Pantry: Food Pantry
- 1,702 quarts of soup were prepared and donated to the community meal program in collaboration with The Simmering Pot and Healthy Peninsula.
- 50+ patient referrals to the Bridging Neighbors program, a Healthy Peninsula program to reduce social isolation and loneliness, were conducted via findhelp.org, a platform for Blue Hill Hospital providers to make direct patient referrals to community organizations for identified social needs.
- **165 supplemental grocery bags were distributed to patients**, in partnership with Good Shepherd Food Bank. Each bag contained food and community resources.
- **924 lbs.** of fresh produce were distributed at Northern Light Primary Care in Blue Hill through the Mainers Feeding Mainers partnership between Good Shepherd Food Bank and local farmers. The program was renewed for the summer of 2024.
- Employee donation drive for Hancock County Food Security Network was held in partnership with Healthy Acadia. More than 1600 personal hygiene and food items were donated by Northern Light Maine Coast and Northern Light Blue Hill Hospitals.
- In partnership with Healthy Peninsula, distributed 50+ "Welcome Baby" bags to new families for a healthy start.
- Participated in Healthy Hibernation Fair, Downeast Housing Collaborative, Blue Hill Clean Up days, Hancock County Food Drive (collected over 1600 personal hygiene products for distribution across Hancock County), Downeast Family YMCA Healthy Kid's Day Health Fair, Pridefest, Blue Hill Consolidated Fair Health & Safety Fair, WIC Community Baby Shower.
- Convened the Medical Neighborhood Team monthly meetings which focused on highly complex patients/community members to address issues such as behavioral health, substance use, homelessness, domestic violence.
- Served as supportive, consulting partner with Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety project: "In the Wheelhouse" to develop a fishermen's health and wellness pilot program focused on fishermen and intertidal fishermen in Stonington and Vinalhaven.
- Held Baby's First Library Card initiative with Ellsworth Public Library and Dixon Birthing Center; registered 30 cards.
- Shared Community Health Needs Assessment local planning for Hancock County, served as co-lead.

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 Blue Hill 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 Blue Hill 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, Blue Hill Hospital worked in the emergency department and primary care 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 2,560 naloxone kits distributed throughout Northern Light Health's service area.

Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Deer Isle-Stonington Community Coalition on Substance Use	Hub and Spoke Clinical Advisory Council
Downeast Substance Treatment Network	Inspire Warming Center
Downeast Substance Use Prevention Council	Nichols Day Camp
Hancock County Sherriff's Office	Opiate Free Island Project
Healthy Acadia	Prosper Consortium
Stonington Lobster Boat races	Restored Hope for Recovering Addicts
	Blue Hill Fair

- 23 state-sponsored naloxone kits distributed
- Engaged in collaborative efforts with listed partners.
- Installed a locked kiosk in the waiting room of Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital's main entrance for disposal of unwanted or expired medication.
- Collected 125+ lbs. of expired unwanted, unused medications.

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

- Stocked Primary Care Practices with Detera medication waste bags in, a program in partnership with the Hancock County Sherriff's Office and Healthy Acadia.
- Assisted in the distribution of 452 kits of Narcan, 350 fentanyl test strips and 46 Xylazine test strips at the Blue Hill Fair in partnership with Opiate Free Island Project and others.
- Distributed and provided education for 36 kits of Narcan at Ellsworth Pridefest with Healthy Acadia
- Distributed and provided education for 20 kits of Narcan at the Stonington Lobster Boat races.
- Sponsorship of the Opiate Free Island Partnership Recovery Celebration at the Island Community Center in partnership with OFIP and where Dr. Cobb was the guest speaker.
- Sponsorship of Opiate Free Island Partnership Jacinta presentation focused on recovery.

Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

AMHC
Community Recovery Celebration
Hancock County Sherriff's Office
Healthy Acadia

Mount Desert Island Hospital
Opiate Free Island Project
OPTIONS
Primary Care Stonington

- 57 state-sponsored naloxone kits distributed.
- Detera medical waste disposal bags were stocked and distributed at all primary care practices in partnership with Healthy Acadia and Hancock County Sherriff's Office and also distributed at various community health fairs.
 - Opiate Free Island Project & Primary Care Stonington partnership distributed 50 Detera drug waste bags.
 - Distributed Detera bags supplied by partners Healthy Acadia to all other primary care offices in observation of Drug Take Back Day.
- Participated in Narcan distribution at the Stonington Lobster Boat races in partnership with Opiate Free Island Project.
- Collected 180 lbs. of materials and returned for disposal via the drug take-back Kiosk at Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital.
- Participated in Narcan distribution at the Stonington Lobster Boat races in partnership with Opiate Free Island Project.
- Dr. Michael Murnik discussed Narcan distribution for the Healthy Living Segment on WABI TV.
- Collaborated with Mount Desert Island Hospital on the development of a resource list of community access to Narcan.
- Healthy Acadia presented about Tobacco Prevention Programs for Youth at January Hancock County Providers Meeting.