Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center

Community Health Implementation Stategy

Addressing Community Health Needs

Fiscal Year 2026-2028

Northern Light Health℠

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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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center serves communities throughout central, eastern, and northern Maine.

Whoever they are, whatever their circumstances, Mainers know they can count on Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center. We are committed to providing the highest level of care in our region. We are committed to our community as well, caring for everyone, even those who can't afford to pay. We stand ready, 24 hours a day. Because the way we see it, nothing should stand in the way of your health.

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center and its staff of more than 450 physicians provide three-quarters of the primary-care services in the Bangor area, specialty and intensive services and is a level II trauma center.

We are a host for Lifeflight of Maine, we provide outreach and support to local hospitals throughout Maine and serve as a resource for physicians, patients, and healthcare students.

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center 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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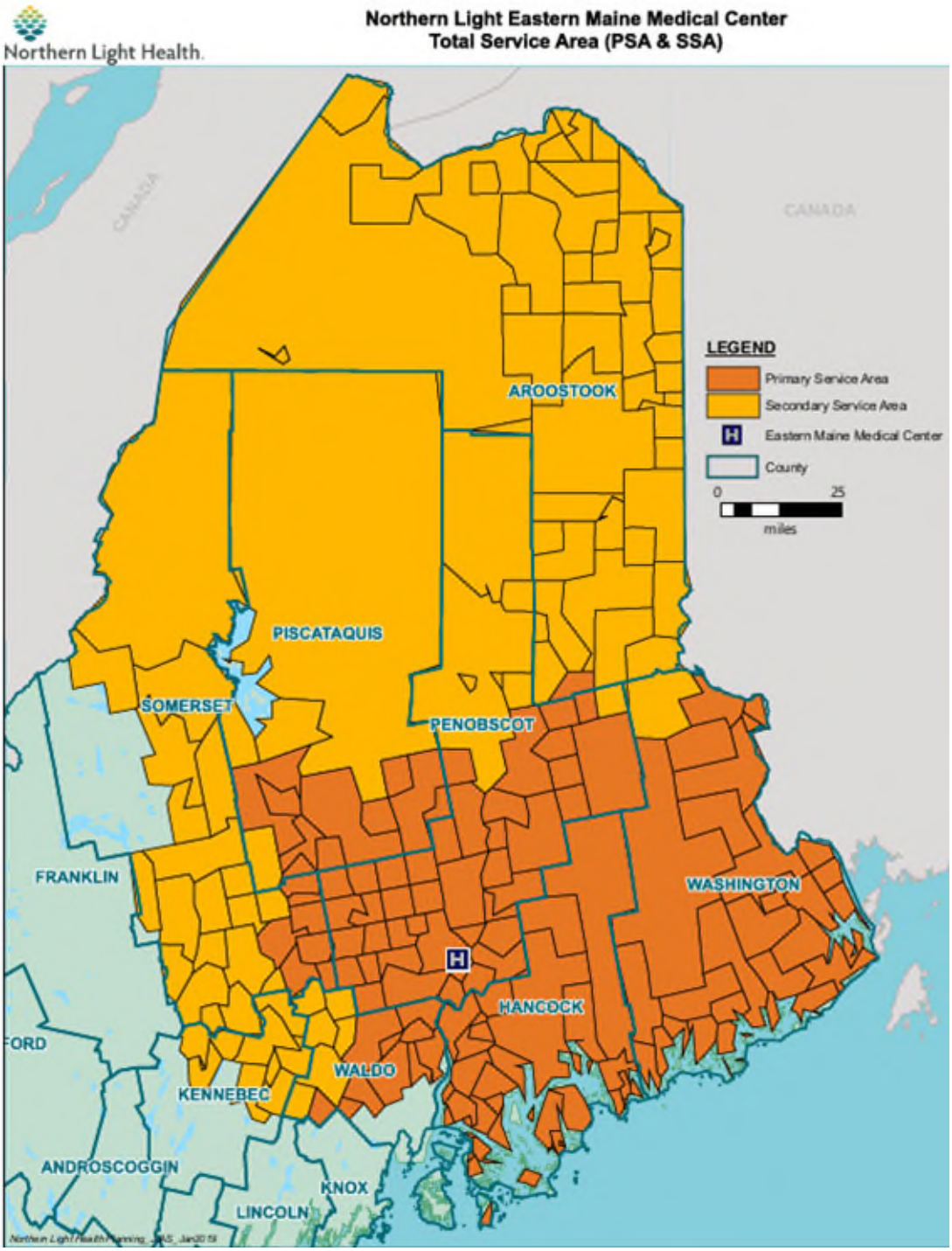
Definition of Community Served

Located in Bangor, Maine, Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Penobscot County and the State's Health Profiles 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center. 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center.

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center'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. Eastern Maine Medical Center'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 Eastern Maine Medical Center's Community Health Implementation Strategy team included individuals representing the following organizations:

- Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Penquis District Public Health Liaison
- Northern Light Acadia Hospital, Community Health Manager
- Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center, AVP - Patient Care Services
- Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center, Community Health Coordinator
- Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center, Director of Community Engagement
- Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center, Director of Quality
- Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center, VP, HR EMMC/East Region
- Penquis Community Action Partnership, Chief Operating Officer

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 Eastern Maine Medical Center experts and local partnership experts in various priority areas.
- **Feasibility**: Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center'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 21, 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center'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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center anticipates that early detection and treatment will lead to improved health outcomes. Reducing stigma, through educational opportunities and community collaboration, will strengthen support networks and increase utilization of services and resources.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center will:

- Dedicate internal staff resources (e.g., community health coordinator, director of community engagement, marketing and communications, primary care office staff, etc.) to address and promote activities related to this priority.
- Host a Youth Mental Health Summit that promotes healthy coping strategies and stigma reduction.
- Partner with local community organizations to promote mental health services through the distribution of marketing materials in patient waiting areas.
- Promote and utilize therapy dog teams throughout Northern Light practices, local community organizations, and schools.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center will collaborate with:

- Northern Light Acadia Hospital who provides behavioral and mental health services and expertise throughout Maine, to help provide trainings to local, youth-serving organizations.
- Local school departments to promote healthy coping strategies and stigma reduction.
- Community-based organizations to increase awareness of and promote available resources.

Population of focus*

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center has resources and partnerships available to be leveraged in support of this need specific to the following populations:

- Youth with mental health needs
  - Over 34% of Penobscot County's middle school students and over 34% of high school students, reported feeling sad and hopeless for two weeks or more in a row, causing them to stop engaging in some of their usual activities. Youth experiencing mental health needs are at a higher risk for substance use, other unsafe behavior, and issues at school.
- People who identify as a protected class
  - Discrimination based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability was identified in the survey as impacting the community and certain groups of protected classes are at a higher risk of experiencing mental health needs and chronic conditions due to discrimination, stigma, and barriers to health care.
- Individuals living in poverty
  - Over 13% of Penobscot County residents, including nearly 15% of children, live in poverty, a proportion higher than state and national rates. Almost 15% of Penobscot County children live in poverty which is higher than the state's rate. Additionally, just over 41% of school-aged children live in households where the total income of the family is less than 185% of the established Federal Poverty Level. Individuals living in poverty are more likely to experience mental health needs than those not living in poverty.

** For the purpose of this strategy, Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center presents data from Penobscot County, where the hospital is physically located. Our patients come from Aroostook, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington. The priorities identified in Penobscot County closely parallels priorities in these counties.*

Priority: Substance Use

Intended action to address the need

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center anticipates improved accessibility, early intervention, and increased awareness of local resources to improve health outcomes.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center will:

- Dedicate internal staff resources (e.g., community health coordinator, director of community engagement, marketing and communications, primary care office staff, etc.) to address and promote activities related to this priority.
- Partner with local community organizations to promote substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery resources through the distribution of marketing materials in patient waiting areas.
- Provide Naloxone kits as needed.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center will collaborate with:

- Local organizations with dedicated recovery coaches, peer supporters, community health workers, and harm reduction service providers to help individuals navigate local services.
- Community-based organizations that focus on substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery work to promote and connect community members to their services.
- Local school departments to provide educational opportunities and information on available services and resources.

Population of focus*

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center has resources and partnerships available to be leveraged in support of this need specific to the following populations:

- Individuals with substance use disorders
  - Penobscot County reports significantly higher proportions of drug-induced deaths compared to the state and nation. Additionally, Penobscot County reports higher rates for overdose emergency medical service responses, including overdoses from drugs, medications, alcohol, and inhalants.
  - Misuse of prescription drugs among high school students (nearly 6%) and middle school students (almost 5%) have increased since the previous assessment.
- Individuals living in poverty
  - Over 13% of Penobscot County residents, including nearly 15% of children, live in poverty, which is significantly higher than the state's rate. Additionally, just over 41% 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.

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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 Eastern Maine Medical Center'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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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, hospital-based food pantries, and fresh produce days 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center anticipates that these efforts will lead to early detection and treatment of chronic conditions, which will enhance the quality of life for individuals in our community.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center will:

- Dedicate internal staff resources (e.g., community health coordinator, director of community engagement, marketing and communications, primary care office staff, etc.) to address and promote activities related to this priority.
- Partner with local community organizations to promote chronic condition prevention and screening resources.
- Provide community education about preventative care services.
- Provide food resources to those who screen positive for food insecurity.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center will collaborate with:

- Local food distributors, food pantries, farms, and retailers to distribute healthy foods to patients and community members.
- Community-based organizations to increase awareness of and promote available resources.
- Local school districts to promote prevention efforts, such as healthy eating and active living.

Population of focus*

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center has resources and partnerships available to be leveraged in support of this need specific to the following populations:

- Individuals living in poverty
  - Over 13% of Penobscot County residents, including nearly 15% of children, live in poverty, a higher proportion than state and national rates. Additionally, just over 41% 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. Across the lifespan, individuals living in poverty are at an increased risk for chronic conditions and lower life expectancy.
- Individuals living with food insecurity
  - Over 14% of adults and over 20% of youth live with food insecurity, which are both higher than the state and national rates.
- Individuals who are uninsured and underinsured
  - 8% of Penobscot County residents are uninsured and over 30% are enrolled in MaineCare. Almost 9% of residents report cost barriers to health care.

** For the purpose of this strategy, Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center presents data from Penobscot County, where the hospital is physically located. Our patients come from Aroostook, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington. The priorities identified in Penobscot County closely parallels priorities in these counties.*

Health Priorities Not Addressed

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center, 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.

Conclusion

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center 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 Eastern Maine Medical Center's last (2022) Community Health Needs Assessment.

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

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

- Mental health
- Social determinants of health
- Substance use

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

Northern Light
Eastern Maine Medical Center

PRIORITY: Mental Health

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

Shared objective:

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

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

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

Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

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

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

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Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Bangor Area Homeless Shelter*
Local school districts
Maine Recovery Advocacy Project
NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center's Volunteers & Concierge Staff, Cardio Rehabilitation, Marketing, and nurse managers*
Together Place Peer Run Recovery Center*
University of Maine, Orono
Yellow Tulip Project

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

Fiscal Year 2025 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

All Souls Church, Bangor
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Bangor Area Recovery Network*
Bangor Public Health and Community Services
Bangor School Department
Hope for Healing
Literacy Volunteers of Bangor*
NAMI Maine
Open training for EMMC staff*
OUT Maine
Partners for Peace
Penquis

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

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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 Eastern Maine Medical Center engaged in meaningful, trusted community partnerships to reach priority populations with equitable access to community resources and social supports and connect individuals with community resources they need to improve their health and well-being through the findhelp.org platform.

- In fiscal years 2023 and 2024, Eastern Maine Medical Center participated in a monthly systemwide workgroup focused on engagement efforts to educate community partners on the availability and uses of findhelp.org. We assisted those community partners with adding their program information to the platform directory and with activating the ability to receive referrals or requests for information through the platform. Systemwide collective impact of our community engagement shared objective, since this effort began in 2023, has resulted in 69 partners offering 148 programs that increased engagement with FindHelp.
- In fiscal year 2025, Northern Light Community Health researched findhelp 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 platform as specific "folders" containing a minimum of five relevant community resource links providing findhelp 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 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, Maine 211, MaineHealth, Community Care Partnership of Maine (CCPM) ACO, and community partners. This group identified food security resources in counties with high prevalence of cardiovascular disease (Somerset, Piscataquis, Aroostook, and Washington) that were not listed within findhelp and Maine 211. Members of this collaborative added these missing resources to their respective platforms and plan to pursue a quality improvement project to increase CPPM staff use of findhelp and Maine 211 to address food security and other patient needs.

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Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

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

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

Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

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

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

- Literacy Volunteers of Bangor: Reading and English Language Tutoring.
- Maine Mental Health Connections: Together Place Housing, Employment Connections, Together Place Soup Kitchen.
- Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center (EMMC): Caring Calls; Volunteer Opportunities.
- Partners for Peace: Family Shelter, Domestic Abuse Hotline, and Legal Services.
- Salvation Army of Bangor: Direct Assistance.

- Creation and opening of an on-campus community cupboard to provide food, blankets, hats, and gloves to patients and staff. This is a zero-barrier cupboard, with 24/7 badge access for staff to assist patients with their needs.
- Launched Community Conversations, a Lunch & Learn style series, with speakers sharing information about the work that they do and how our organization and community can help address the needs in our community.

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

Fiscal Year 2025 Partners and Community Impact

As a result of ongoing community engagement and promotion of Northern Light Health findhelp, use of the platform to find assistance continues to increase. In 2025, there were 18,111 searches by Penobscot County residents compared to 6,939 searches in 2023. Search data trends show that food assistance remains the dominant need in Penobscot County.

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

Food security

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

Housing

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

Transportation

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

Continued on next page

PRIORITY: Substance Use

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

Shared objective:

Improve distribution and preventive access to state sponsored Naloxone kits.

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

Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center participated in the Maine Naloxone Distribution Initiative[1], which provides state-purchased naloxone to community organizations, clinical sites, and end-users throughout Maine to distribute free of charge. Through a collaboration with Bangor Public Health & Community Services, Eastern Maine Medical Center worked in the emergency department and community settings to provide education on the use of these naloxone kits to end-users to facilitate the reversal of private overdoses in the community. Systemwide collective impact of our shared objective, since this effort began in 2023, has resulted in 3,257 naloxone kits distributed throughout Northern Light Health's service area.

Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Bangor Area Recovery Network (BARN)
Bangor Public Health and Community Services
Co-Occurring Collaborative Serving Maine
Health Equity Alliance (HEAL)
Hermon School District
Maine Substance Use Disorders Learning Community
OPTIONS
Project ECHO: Low Barrier MOUD for Maine

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

[1] Distribute Naloxone – Maine Drug Data Hub

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

Fiscal Year 2024 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

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

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

Fiscal Year 2025 Partners and Community Impact

PARTNERS ENGAGED:

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

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