



Community Health Implementation Strategy

Addressing Community Health Needs
Fiscal Year 2026-2028

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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 Home Care & Hospice 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 Home Care & Hospice creates healthier communities through the provision of services, resources, and programs.

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 Home Care & Hospice

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice is a non-profit organization providing direct, personalized care throughout Maine - from Kittery to Fort Kent.

Our roots in Maine date back to 1912. Since then, beginning in 2006, we have merged all of our homecare and hospice agencies under one umbrella, completing a full, statewide merger in 2015. We made this move to make our offerings more accessible for you, when and where you need them.

We are committed to making visits to those at home who are recovering from illness and surgery and have added Hospice and other programs to help those who prefer to spend their remaining days in the comfort of their own home. We continue with public health nursing by offering immunization clinics, adult health clinics, and education and awareness events for all ages.

Throughout the homecare system, our clinicians make in excess of 160,000 in-home visits each year caring for an average of 1,400 people on any given day. An additional 4,000 individuals are cared for in health and wellness clinics.

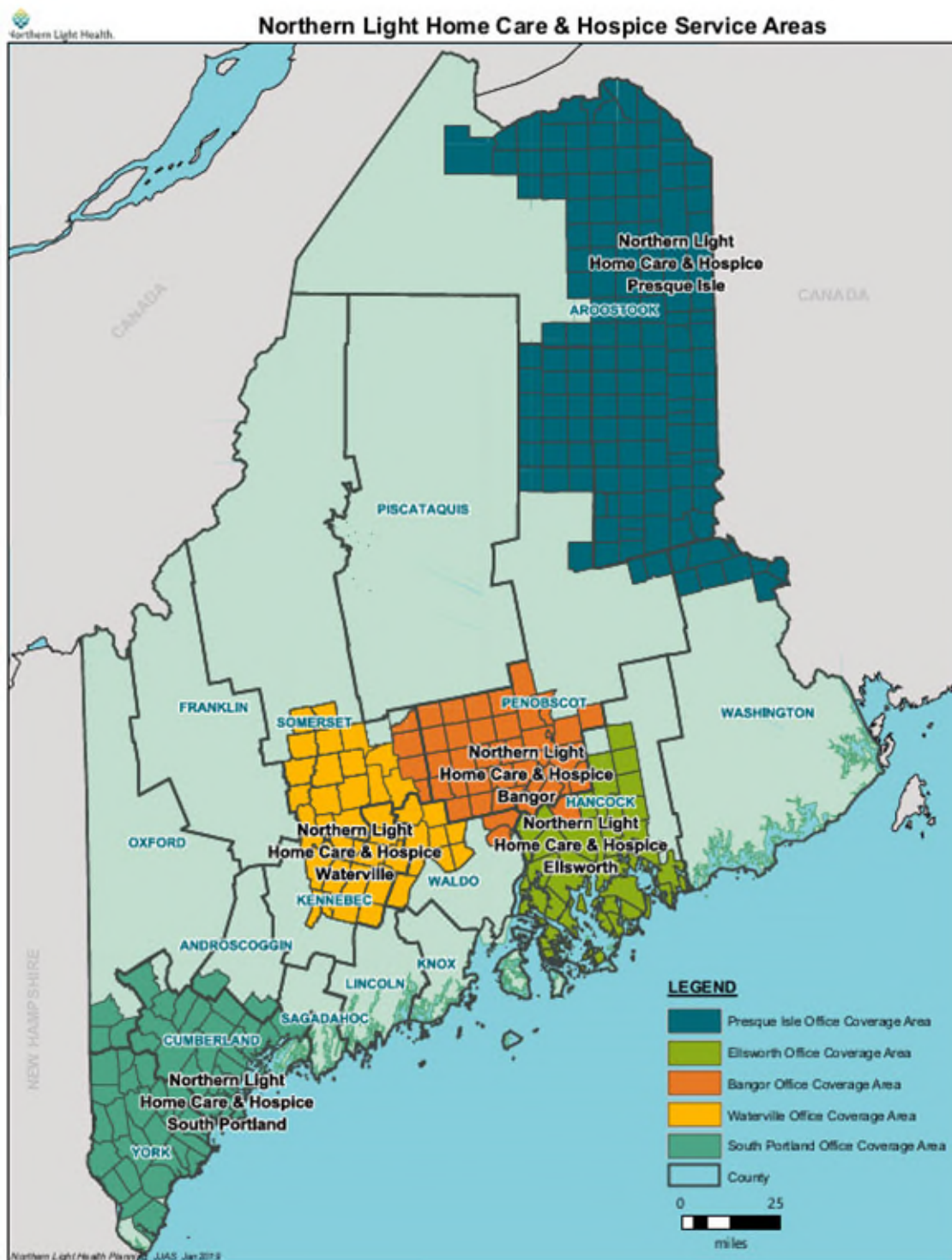
Our dedicated team consists of:

- Nurses
- Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists
- Home Health Aides
- Medical Social Workers

Each homecare site is Medicare Certified and state licensed.

Definition of Community Served

With offices in South Portland, Waterville, Brewer, Ellsworth, and Presque Isle, Northern Light Home Care and Hospice provides homecare, companionship and private duty care, palliative, and hospice services to residents throughout the state of Maine. Patients served are seeking support to stay safe in their own homes, recovering from illness and surgery post hospitalization, dealing with chronic health conditions, or are choosing to remain in their home after discontinuing curative treatment or while facing a terminal diagnosis.



Reference associated [County 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 Home Care & Hospice. 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 Home Care & Hospice.

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice 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 members 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 Home Care & Hospice'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. Home Care & Hospice'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.

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 Home Care & Hospice experts and local partnership experts in various priority areas.
- **Feasibility:** Northern Light Home Care & Hospice 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.

Feedback Opportunity

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

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 Home Care & Hospice'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 Home Care & Hospice's 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 Home Care & Hospice will strengthen communities and care environments to improve awareness of mental health needs and improve health outcomes by working with Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to identify resources for seniors with mental health needs.

Anticipated impact of these actions/expected outcomes

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice anticipates educating staff on the resources available.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will work with AAAs to identify mental health resources already available.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will collaborate with AAAs and other applicable senior resources.

Population of focus

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice has resources and partnerships available to be leveraged in support of this need specific to the following populations: Homebound seniors and their caregivers.

Priority: Substance Use

Intended action to address the need

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will improve access and services to reduce the impact of substance use in our communities through prevention, treatment and recovery by providing education to staff regarding the use of Narcan. This will include distributing Narcan to those educated to administer it.

Anticipated impact of these actions/expected outcomes

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice anticipates this effort will enable staff who are trained in the administration of Narcan, to provide the education and kits to patients or their caregivers, who may be in need of reversing the effects of opioids.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will work with Portland Public Health to obtain training materials and Narcan kits.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will collaborate with Portland Public Health.

Population of focus

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice has resources and partnerships available to be leveraged in support of this need specific to the following populations: Home health patients their families and caregivers. Hospice families and caregivers.

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 Home Care & Hospice'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 Home Care & Hospice 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 Home Care & Hospice will improve chronic condition outcomes for our communities through chronic disease preventions, early detection, and health outcomes by expanding the use of the remote patient monitoring program (RPM) statewide. This program helps to address cardiovascular disease and identifies any vital sign changes. These changes are communicated to medical providers who can then take action as needed. Early identification of heart failure and high blood pressure allow for early treatment helping to keep Maine's residents out of emergency rooms.

Anticipated impact of these actions/expected outcomes

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice anticipates decreased emergency department and hospitalization rates for those cared for by RPM.

Programs and resource allocation

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will utilize grant funding to support growth of the program.

Planned collaborations

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice will collaborate with Northern Light Health hospitals, physician offices and specialty practices to impact the health of those under its care.

Population of focus

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice has resources and partnerships available to be leveraged in support of this need specific to the following populations: Patients at high risk of rehospitalization and experiencing significant cardiovascular disease burden.

Conclusion

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice 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 Home Care & Hospice will engage in another Shared CHNA in 2028 and looks forward to ongoing community participation in these important efforts.