Fiscal Year 2026

Progress Report to our Community

Addressing community health needs.

Northern Light Mercy 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, Mercy Hospital creates healthier communities through the provision of services, resources, and programs beyond our hospital's walls.

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



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

Northern Light℠
Mercy Hospital

Addressing Community Health Needs: FY26 Update



Mental Health

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

Goal: Improve mental health by strengthening care environments and communities

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

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

Community based trainings and impact

Partners: In Her Presence, Maine DHHS Help Me Grow, Portland Public Health Nurses, The Opportunity Alliance

FY26: Northern Light Mercy Hospital:

- Collaborated with Maine DHHS Help Me Grow to provide two culturally responsive mental health education sessions for residents and guests of Frances Warde House, serving pregnant immigrant women and their families experiencing housing instability. Participants received education on recognizing signs and symptoms of a mental health crisis and chronic mental health concerns, understanding available resources, and navigating access to care. The sessions supported efforts to reduce stigma surrounding mental health treatment and encouraged moms and children to engage with support services. As a result, several families were successfully connected to long-term mental health support and resources. The two sessions reached 25 women and family members.
- Mercy's McAuley Winter Street Residence delivered weekly parenting education sessions from January 2026 through the end of the fiscal year, drawing on adapted curricula from "Nurturing Parents" and 'Parent Effectiveness in Resolving Conflict with Teens". The classes served women with substance use disorders who are parenting teenage children with complex trauma histories. Through evidence-informed education and skill-building activities, participants strengthened positive parenting skills and habits aimed at enhancing both parent and child wellness. An average of 12 women attended each weekly session.

Clinical actions supporting mental health

Depression screening:

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

- FY26: Depression screening was completed for 71.25% of eligible Mercy Hospital patients.

Systemwide collective impact

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

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



Substance Use

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

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

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

Population(s) of focus: Individuals with substance use disorders.

Community based engagements and impact

Partners: Community Housing of Maine, Northern Light Pharmacy, Portland Recovery Community Center, Southern Maine Community College, State of Maine Office of Behavioral Health, The Opportunity Alliance

FY26: Northern Light Mercy Hospital:

- Expanded McAuley Winter Street (opened in FY25) by adding capacity to serve four additional women for a total of 12 women and their combined 27 children. Daily programming is focused around maintaining recovery from substance use disorders. Women were connected to substance use treatment and case management. Additional programming takes place weekly to increase capacity building, using programs like the Works System to break cycles of addiction and poverty. The next phase of programming includes social support network building for the teenagers served in the residence so as to mitigate their risk factors for substance use disorder and promote healthy behaviors.
- Recovery Coach & Rapid Access Coordinator provided individual education and resource mapping for patients as well as general education and connection with local recovery resources in Greater Portland and the Lakes Region.

FY26 Drug Take Back: Northern Light Mercy Hospital, in partnership with Northern Light Pharmacy, offers convenient consumer drug take-back resources as part of Northern Light Health's safe disposal initiative. Community members were encouraged to discard unwanted/unused medications in secure drop-off receptacles for safe disposal that were then measured by total weight equaling 88 lbs.

Systemwide collective impact

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

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



Chronic Conditions

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

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

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

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

Community based engagements and impact

Partners: Bombas, Good Shepherd Food Bank, In Her Presence, Local Elks Club

FY26: Northern Light Mercy Hospital:

- Opened a micro food pantry with the support of local charitable group, and employee-directed food drives. The food pantry is available and easily accessible for both patients and employees in need. Dozens of families were served by the food pantry.
- In response to an increase in frostbite cases during the winter of 2026, Mercy engaged Bombas, a clothing producer, to provide socks for unhoused patients entering our emergency department and primary care practices. More than 500 pairs of socks were distributed.
- In response to high rates of poor maternal outcomes, including eclampsia and related hypertensive emergencies, our Community Health Worker (CHW) was engaged to assist perinatal women navigate healthcare access needs. More than 24 women were engaged monthly to ensure routine care was received including education on screenings and chronic disease self-management.

Clinical actions supporting chronic conditions

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

Breast cancer screening

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

- FY26: Breast cancer screening was completed for 76.43 % of eligible Mercy Hospital patients, a rate that aligns with national benchmarks.

Colorectal cancer screening

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

- FY26: Colorectal cancer screening was completed for 72.07 % of eligible Mercy Hospital patients, a rate that aligns with national benchmarks.

Food bag distribution

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

- FY26: Food security screening rates resulted in 57,892 patients screened, 660 patients identified as positive for food insecurity, and 115 food bags given.

Additional actions supporting the chronic conditions priority

Community education

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

- FY26: Shared 33 social media posts promoting education on and care for chronic health conditions, including cancer, cardiology, diabetes, food insecurity, and respiratory health, reaching an average of 1,605 individuals per post.

Systemwide collective impact

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

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

Enhancing Community Resource Accessibility

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

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