

Fiscal Year 2021

PROGRESS REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

Addressing community health needs



Northern LightSM

Maine Coast Hospital

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John Ronan, MBA, FACHE
President

Northern Light
Maine Coast Hospital

As 2021 nears an end, we approach 2022 with renewed hope, more resilience, and stronger community partnerships. Those partnerships have proven vital as the pandemic encumbered the gains we had made in Maine and nationally to address the opioid epidemic. Unemployment and food insecurity remain higher than pre-pandemic levels too.

The pandemic taught us to become even better at working together. We have renewed commitment to improving the social determinants of health, and we have better ways to reach people than ever before.

In 2019, Northern Light Health partnered with three healthcare systems and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention to create a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). We used that assessment and public input to develop a three-year strategy to improve the health and well-being of the communities that we serve.

This report is an update on the progress of our community health strategy for fiscal year 2021, representing the second year of our three-year health improvement plan. In addition to the extraordinary outreach and collaborative efforts during the coronavirus pandemic, Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital continues to engage in priority areas of work, including:

- Social determinants of health
- Substance use
- Access to care

At Maine Coast, we know that our neighbors are looking for trusted places where they can go for personalized care that is exceptional—and we want them to choose us. We are determined to be the best option for them while continuing to collaborate with our community partners. I look forward to what we can accomplish in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

John Ronan, MBA, FACHE
President, Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital

Progress report update

FY 2021 Progress Report

Priority #1: Social Determinants of Health

Objective: Increase the number of patients screened for food insecurity and referred to community resources from 7,297 to 12,000 by 9/30/21.

Status: In progress

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: In fiscal year 2021 (FY21), Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital utilized a validated two question screening for all patients at Northern Light Pediatrics to assess for food insecurity. To increase impact, pediatric staff were trained upon hire to use the screening and refer those who screened positive to additional resources such as food bags. Throughout the year, our pediatric practice continued to promote screening and access to food for their vulnerable population despite facing a number of challenges that included a growing practice, physical change in location, and a medical record conversion which necessitated workflow adaptations. During this challenging transition period and as a result of the medical records conversion, Maine Coast Hospital was able to expand the two-question screening to all primary care practices enabling more patients to be reached throughout a larger geographical area.

Partners engaged: Maine Coast Hospital partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- Good Shepherd Food Bank
- Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry
- Maine Coast Primary Care Practices

Outcome measure: Maine Coast Hospital screened at least 4,104 patients screened for food insecurity and referred to community resources as appropriate.

Project lead: Vanessa Hawkins, Practice Manager

Next steps: In fiscal year 2022 (FY22), Maine Coast Hospital will increase the number of patients screened for food insecurity and referred to community resources from 4,104 to 12,000 by 9/30/22 through the continued utilization of the validated screening tool and referral process with our community partners.

Priority #2: Substance Use

Objective: Increase the number of patients referred to Medication-Assisted Treatment options in local communities from zero to 25 by 9/30/21.

Status: Foundational work started

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: In FY21, Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital maintained crucial conversations and training for staff regarding medication-assisted treatment (MAT) options for patient referrals into the Down East Treatment Center for services. Through a

collaborative grand rounds offering for both Maine Coast Hospital and Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, providers offered peer support and training focused on substance use and treatment options for our healthcare teams to best serve our community members in need. Nursing champions identified in the emergency departments were provided additional MAT training. Through this foundational work we look to strengthening relationships with MAT providers and referrals to the Down East Treatment Center to continue promoting and engaging both patients and providers.

Partners engaged: Maine Coast Hospital partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- Down East Treatment Center
- Northern Light Beacon Care Management
- Northern Light Emergency Care at Maine Coast and Blue Hill Hospitals
- Northern Light Primary Care Medical Staff
- Northern Light Primary Care Walk-in services in Ellsworth
- TEAM Health Medical Staff

Outcome measure: Maine Coast Hospital increased provider and patient awareness of opioid use disorder, reducing stigma, and increasing readiness for treatment. Educational opportunities were provided to promote MAT and to strengthen the relationship with our community partners. Education and networking is ongoing with additional support and resources for this fiscal year.

Project lead: Sheena Whittaker, MD, Senior Physician Executive

Next steps: In FY22, Maine Coast Hospital will increase provider and patient awareness of opioid use disorder, reducing stigma, and increasing readiness for treatment, recruit and train MAT prescribers at Northern Light primary care sites, and partner with community agencies to establish or expand local treatment programs to increase MAT to three sites for our community by 9/30/22.

Priority #3: Access to Care

Objective: Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital will increase the number of service area residents identified as having no primary care provider and referred to healthcare coverage options from 0 to 1000 by 9/30/21.

Status: Completed

Strategy (approaches taken, and resources used) and highlights from this effort: Maine Coast Hospital engaged internal and external partners to provide primary care referrals for community members seeking services in the Hancock County service area. Established a process for patients with an undesignated primary care provider (PCP) to get a resource center referral to assist with PCP referrals. Utilized telehealth, walk-in care services, and other curbside clinics to allow for capacity in provider schedules, despite the additional resource demands of the pandemic.

Partners engaged: Maine Coast Hospital partnered with the following entities on this priority:

- Convenient MD
- Northern Light Beacon Care Management
- Northern Light Maine Coast Emergency Department
- Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital and Care Management
- Northern Light Primary Care in Ellsworth (including Walk-In services), Gouldsboro, and Southwest Harbor
- The Jackson Laboratory

Outcome measure: Maine Coast Hospital increased the number of service area residents identified as having no PCP and referred to healthcare coverage options from zero to 981.

Project lead: Sheena Whittaker, MD Senior Physician Executive

Next steps: In FY22, Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital will work to schedule PCP appointments for patients who access Northern Light's Primary Care who do not have a primary care provider and increase the quantity as well as availability of face-to-face time with providers through physician recruitment and patient panel optimization. We are optimistic these efforts will increase the number of service area residents identified as having no PCP and referred to healthcare coverage options from 981 to 1200 by 9/30/22.

Conclusion

Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital continues work on identified priorities through the Community Health Strategy and is thankful for the participation and support of our community members and many area organizations for contributing their knowledge of local community health needs related to our priorities of action. Through existing and future partnerships, collaborative efforts are essential in addressing the identified community health strategies prioritized within.

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