

Fiscal Year 2022

PROGRESS REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

Addressing community health needs



Northern LightSM

Maine Coast Hospital

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John Ronan, FACHE

President,
Northern Light
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Senior Vice President,
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This past year, we not only continued our ongoing work to safeguard our communities from the COVID-19 pandemic, but we set our sights towards the future. We looked to build and improve upon the delivery of healthcare in Maine, and partnership is essential to this work; coming together to ensure our families, friends, and neighbors have access to the very best resources for generations to come.

While the pandemic still looms and may for quite a while, we will never stop looking forward and thinking strategically about addressing the most critical community health needs. 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 2022, representing the third year of our three-year health improvement plan. In addition to the extraordinary ongoing 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

I hope you find the update contained in this report informative. If you ever have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to communitybenefits@northernlight.org. Lastly, we know our community trusts us to provide exceptional healthcare and resources that complement a healthy, enriched life, and we are dedicated to maintaining that trust through hard work and commitment to doing what's right for Maine. We look forward to our continued services in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

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

Progress report update

FY 2022 Progress Report

Priority #1: Social Determinants of Health

Objective: Increase the number of patients screened for food insecurity and referred to community resources from 5500 to 12000 by 9/30/22.

Status: Completed

Strategy: In fiscal year 2022 (FY22), Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital successfully exceeded their objective of increasing the number of patients screened for food insecurity and referred to community resources from 5,500 to 12,000 by 9/30/22 thanks to the buy-in, hard work, and commitment of the primary care practice teams.

12,246 total patients were screened for food insecurity and referred to community resources in FY22. A validated two-question screening tool was used initially for all patients beginning at Northern Light Pediatrics to assess for food insecurity. In May 2022, all Northern Light Primary Care practices were invited to participate in this project and our contract with Good Shepherd Food Bank was expanded to meet increased demand. To build competency in use of the screening tool, staff were trained upon hire how to use it correctly, and how to initiate getting patients access to a food bag or additional resources, including newly produced local food security resource lists if patients screened positive.

Throughout the year, practices continued to promote screening and access to food insecurity for their vulnerable population, despite multiple challenges including an entire electronic medical record conversion and significant staff shortages and turnover. Workflows were adapted, and documentation moved from a paper process to an electronic screening and reporting system embedded in Cerner, our electronic medical record. While this made for a bit of a transition period in data collection specific to “patients reached and positive screens”, it allowed for the food insecurity screening opportunity to expand to all primary care practices, deepening the reach to many more patients and a much larger geographical area. Confidence in the project grew throughout the final year of the project as a review of goals and performance became a standard agenda item at Maine Coast manager’s meetings.

Partners engaged: Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital partnered with the following entities on this priority:
Northern Light Maine Coast Primary Care Practices (seven)
Good Shepherd Food Bank

Outcome measure: In FY22, Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital screened 12,246 patients for food insecurity and provided food security resource information. 169 patients screened positive for food insecurity and 72 patients were given supplemental food bags and resources.

Project leads: Practice managers Vanessa Hawkins, Cody Garcia, and Caley Morse; Tammy Dickey, Director of Physician Practices; Nikki Gebreselassie, Quality Lead

Next steps: In fiscal year 2023 (FY23), Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital’s Social Determinants of Health priority will focus on findhelp.org. To that end, we will continue to screen and track for food insecurity at

annual wellness checks at a minimum and provide food security bags to our vulnerable patients in partnership with Good Shepherd Food Bank.

Priority #2: Substance Use

Objective: Increase the number of Medication-Assisted Treatment patient referrals opioid use readily available in local communities from zero to three by 9/30/22.

Status: In progress

Strategy: In FY22, Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital prioritized ongoing conversations and provided support for staff including training on referrals of patients for Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) into the Down East Treatment Center for services. Positive progress was made in 2022 developing strong relationships with MAT/MOUD providers, increasing the number of MAT referrals from zero in 2021 to two in 2022. Continued collaboration with Down East Treatment Center to promote the program and engage patients and providers.

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

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

Community partners

- Down East Treatment Center managed by AMHC and Healthy Acadia

Outcome measure: In FY22, Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital successfully engaged two primary care practices to make MAT/MOUD referrals in the effort to increase provider and patient awareness of opioid use disorder, reducing stigma, and increasing readiness for treatment. Educational opportunities were provided to promote MAT/MOUD. Getting patients in the community who would benefit from the services and support provided by MAT/MOUD to take advantage of the program is an ongoing concern that has affected Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital's ability to reach the target outcome number of unique individuals exposed to the intervention.

To strengthen the relationship with our community partners, ongoing education and networking with primary community partner Downeast Treatment Center continues. Michael Murnik, MD provides monthly clinical supervision for the Downeast Treatment Center's "Hub and Spoke" treatment model that was developed by Downeast Substance Treatment Network Partners. He also attends monthly meetings of the Downeast Substance Treatment Network which is a monthly collaborative effort hosted by community partner Healthy Acadia to address the gaps and increase access to substance treatment and recovery.

Project leads: Practice managers Vanessa Hawkins, Cody Garcia, and Caley Morse; Tammy Dickey, Director of Physician Practices; Nikki Gebreselassie, Quality Lead

Next steps: In FY23, Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital will continue to focus on increasing provider and patient awareness of opioid use disorder and reducing stigma. Priority will be given to finding new ways of attracting and directing community members in need to taking advantage of the support available to them. Maine Coast Hospital will encourage all interested providers to increase readiness for treatment and receive training to become MAT/MOUD prescribers at Northern Light Health primary care sites. Maine Coast Hospital will continue to partner with community agencies to establish or expand local treatment programs to increase MAT/MOUD to five. Dr. Murnik will continue to partner with and provide clinical oversight for the ongoing work at the Downeast Treatment Center, as well as continue to participate as a core member in monthly Downeast Substance Treatment Network meetings.

In addition to continuing to increase the number of MAT/MOUD and in response to the new substance use community health improvement plan in FY23, Maine Coast Hospital will be offering a minimum of two trauma-informed care educational trainings to providers and staff and will be distributing state-sponsored Naloxone kits through our primary care practices and the emergency departments.

Priority #3: Access to Care

Objective: Maine Coast Hospital will increase the number of service area residents identified as having no primary care provider (PCP) and referred to healthcare coverage options from 759 to 1200 by 9/30/22.

Status: In progress

Strategy: In FY22, Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital increased the number of service area residents identified as having no PCP and referred to healthcare coverage options by an additional 109 patients for a total of 868 patients overall. Maine Coast Hospital engaged internal and external partners to provide primary care referrals for community members seeking services in the Hancock County service area. Challenges related to this reaching the intended goal of increasing the number from 759 to 1200 patients in FY22 include access being significantly affected by provider FMLA, staff turnover vacancies, manager vacancies for practices, and lack of a standardized process for new patient intake and prioritization of appointments. Tracking new PCP visits in a standardized format hasn't been established; it is possible data may be underreported.

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

Northern Light partners

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

Community partners

- Convenient MD

Outcome measure: In FY22, Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital increased the number of service area residents identified as having no PCP and referred to healthcare coverage options from 759 to 868.

Project leads: Practice managers Vanessa Hawkins, Cody Garcia, and Caley Morse; Tammy Dickey, Director of Physician Practices; Nikki Gebreselassie, Quality Lead

Next steps: Access to care was not selected as an independent priority of focus in our next three-year Community Health Strategy cycle (starting in FY23) as many of our efforts identified in our 2022 strategy are connected to access issues. In addition, our hospital has current initiatives that are ongoing and part of our continual mission to improve access to care such as provider recruitment, engagement of navigators or the equivalent, and other efforts that support this priority.

Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital continues to strive to meet the needs of the communities served, through continued screening, ongoing assessment, and efforts to expand services and shifts resources as necessary. Although this priority is sunsetting, efforts are ongoing, with focus on panel management, goals to equally stratify provider's panels to allow for more easily accessible providers and more open schedules; improved efforts on pre-visit planning to keep appointments more efficient and reduce the need for unnecessary return visits and allow more appts for additional patients, maximize visits with RN/pharm when appropriate to increase access to providers.

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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