

# Progress Report to our Community

Fiscal Year  
**2023**

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.

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, Mercy 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 Mercy Hospital's progress on our community health strategy for fiscal year 2023 (October 2022 – September 2023), representing the first year of our three-year health improvement plan.



# 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 Mercy Hospital has trained staff in various evidence-informed mental health interventions to help anyone — children, adolescents, adults, and families — in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic experience to assist someone who may be experiencing a mental health crisis at any time.

Mercy Hospital staff engaged trusted partnerships with schools, afterschool programs, and youth serving organizations to educate and empower individuals to respond to mental and behavioral health needs of youth using evidence informed models. A video, *Compassion Cures* was created in partnership with Be the Influence, a collaborative in the Lakes Region area. Mercy’s leadership and behavioral health staff used the video, participated in panel discussions, and offered subsequent trainings at schools, churches, and community settings.

Systemwide collective impact of our shared objective resulted in 35 training sessions with 584 individuals trained.

## Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

### PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Yarmouth Schools  
Windham Schools

- Five Compassion Cures trainings.
- 64 people trained in Compassion Cures.
- New partnership with Yarmouth Schools - participates in Be the Influence Coalition, which includes schools, town leaders, and faith communities.
- Panel discussions, school trainings, faith leader presentations, and community events are underway.

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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 Mercy Hospital 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. Mercy Hospital 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 community engagement efforts resulted in 28 partners offering 89 programs that increased engagement with findhelp.

## Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

### PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Ethnic based community organizations	Northern Light Mercy Hospital*
Food resource organizations	Portland Adult Education*
Good Shephard Food Bank	Salvation Army of Portland *
Housing developers	Social service providers
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project*	YMCA of Southern Maine*
New Mainers	

- Five community partners\* added six programs to the findhelp directory:
  - Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project: Immigration Legal Clinic
  - Northern Light Mercy Hospital: McAuley Residence and Gary's House
  - Portland Adult Education: Adult education
  - Salvation Army of Portland: Sallie's Choice Food Pantry
  - YMCA of Southern Maine: Men's dormitory
- Partnered with multiple ethnic based community organizations, housing developers, food resource organizations, and social service providers.
- Continued work with Good Shepherd Food Back for food insecurity needs.

## 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 Mercy Hospital 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 Mercy Hospital participated in the Maine Naloxone Distribution Initiative<sup>1</sup>, which provides state-purchased naloxone to community organizations, clinical sites, and end-users throughout Maine to distribute free of charge. Through a collaboration with Portland Public Health, Mercy Hospital worked in the emergency department and primary care 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 resulted in 1,453 Naloxone kits distributed throughout Northern Light Health’s service area.

### Fiscal Year 2023 Partners and Community Impact

#### PARTNERS ENGAGED:

Contingency Management pilot  
 Greater Portland Addiction Collaborative (GPAC)  
 Local public schools in Yarmouth

- 63 state-sponsored naloxone kits distributed.
- GPAC includes multiple stakeholders such as City of Portland, social service providers, treatment providers, housing developers, and state leaders.
- Contingency Management pilot developed to measure the impact on this proven tactic for persons experiencing polysubstance use disorder and stimulant use disorder.
- Meetings to expand Naloxone distribution in local public schools in Yarmouth.
- Primary care staff trained in Trauma Informed Care.

<sup>1</sup> [Distribute Naloxone – Maine Drug Data Hub](#)