



Community Health Needs Assessment

2022 - 2025



Based on input received from community stakeholders, we have identified the following four priorities in a Community Health Needs Assessment process.

Priorities (approved by the NMMC Board of Trustees at their meeting on September 29, 2021):

1. To address gaps in community resources for **Mental Health** services.
2. To work collaboratively with community organizations to reduce the amount of **Substance Use** in the community.
3. To find ways to alleviate social determinants of health related to **Poverty** in the community.
4. To improve **Elder Care** services in the St. John Valley so people can live quality lives at home for as long as possible and then receive quality care in residential facilities if remaining at home becomes impossible.

Priorities Identification Process

1. Reviewed Data from the following Documents

- *Aroostook County Health Profile 2018 Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment*
- *Aroostook County 2019 Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment Report*
- *Key County Indicators of Child Health and Well-Being, Aroostook County: 2020* by Maine Kids Count
- *Population Health Assessment, Northern Maine Medical Center, August 2021* by The Chartis Group
- *The Maine 2018 Annual Report of Cancer* by the Maine CDC Cancer Registry
- *Quick Reference Guide for Substance Use Prevention in Maine* by The State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup of SAMHSA

Priorities Identification Process

2. Gathered input from a Community Stakeholders forum September 21, 2021 from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

- *Invited external stakeholders from many organizations across the St. John Valley to participate, including all municipal leaders, County of Aroostook, Greater Fort Kent Area Chamber of Commerce, St. John Valley Chamber of Commerce, senior centers in Fort Kent and Madawaska, Northern Maine General, Aroostook Mental Health Center, Life By Design, St. John Valley Associates, other health care centers, UMFK, Valley Unified schools, Aroostook Area Agency on Aging, Aroostook County Action Program, Hope & Justice Project, and Emergency & Rescue leaders from Fort Kent and Madawaska.*
- *Invited internal stakeholders, including NMMC Chief Operating Officer, NMMC Chief Nursing Officer, NMMC Director of Medical Practices, NMMC Clinical Practice Manager, NMMC Director of Communications, NMMC Director of Nursing, NMMC APU/CAPU Nursing Manager*
- **Minutes of the meeting are available upon request.**

Priorities Identification Process

3. Gathered additional input from Surveys post-forum

Survey Results (ranked scoring method): We received 10 completed surveys after the Stakeholders Forum. Each respondent ranked his or her top four health concerns, resulting in the ranked score below for each health concern. The survey results reflected the discussion during the forum. Please note, only Health Concerns earning a score are shown in table to the right.

Health Concern	Score
Substance Use	13
Obesity	1
Mental Health Services	16
Access to Care	6
Cardiovascular Disease	5
Hunger/Food Security/Healthy Food	4
Chronic Disease	4
Depression/Suicide	2
Healthy Aging	7
Cancer	4
Alzheimer's/Dementia	1
Early Childhood Development	2
Immunizations	3
Poverty	12
Oral Health	2
Elder Care	12
Homelessness	1
Healthy Environment	2
Other (write-in): Transportation	3

Both Priority 1 – Mental Health and Priority 2 – Substance Use continue to score high in our Community Health Needs Assessment. Indeed, the pandemic of the last two years of the previous cycle seems to have exacerbated the issues. While Northern Maine Medical Center did substantial work given the unanticipated challenges the pandemic posed in the previous cycle, our organization feels these are areas warranting continued, ongoing effort as there is still much work in each area to be done. A brief summary of the actions NMMC completed in the previous CHNA cycle for each of these priorities is as follows:

Mental Health – Summary of Actions (2018 – 2021)	
<p>Community Partners:</p> <p>AMHC Hope & Justice Life by Design Schools NMMC (Psychiatry Unit Leader, Social Worker) UMFK Frank Netter Medical School</p>	<p>Pharmacy created a calendar of topics including mental health topics to be placed into rotation and shared with customers; Melissa Stoliker, NP, presented at NMMC Guild meeting on mental health wellness and positive attitude; Dr. Overton, Ryan Conley & Melissa Stoliker presented to UMFK students on mental health topics; Hosted Suicide Awareness Walk; Participated in Yellow Tulip Project with SAD 27 schools; Melissa Stoliker presented on Seasonal Adjustment Disorder at UMFK; (2018/2019)</p> <p>Published monthly Mental Health topics in local newspapers and on social media; Offered telehealth appointments so patients could have easier access during pandemic; Frank Netter Medical School fourth year student presented a class at Madawaska high school on teen mental health; assisted UMFK to publicize the program on Facilitating Connections -Integrating Behavioral & Physical Health; Andra Christopher, MHNP, did two stress management segments on WAGM-TV; (2020)</p> <p>Finalized construction of children’s gymnasium as new addition/improvement for Children’s Psychiatric Unit (which celebrated its 20th year in operation in August 2021), this allows children a place for physical outlet even during cooler months; Published monthly mental health topics in local newspapers and on social media; Out of the Darkness suicide awareness walk resumed in-person event w/collaborating partners offering resources on site. (2021)</p>
Substance Use – Summary of Actions (2018 – 2021)	
<p>Community Partners:</p> <p>AMHC Financial Counselor Hope & Justice Life by Design NMMC (Medical Practice, Pharmacy) Person in recovery Power of Prevention UMFK MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence Frank Netter Medical School</p>	<p>Dr. Sidorczuk, Katia Sirois, Licensed substance abuse counselor AMHC, Scott Richards, RPh, Karee Thibeault, RN presented education for student population and clinical providers at UMFK; Pharmacy created a calendar of topics including substance use topics to be placed into rotation and shared with customers; Mr. & Mrs. Yankowski, who lost two children to opioid overdoses, presented to high school, with media coverage; Gordon Smith from State of Maine offered CME on the opioid epidemic. Frank Netter Medical student spoke at Madawaska High School on the dangers of vaping; Opioid Committee/Lisa Eno, FNP, created an informational booklet for patients on the actions of opioids on the body and available resources. Participated in Recovery Event at Riverside Park coinciding with National Recovery Month; (2018/2019)</p> <p>Dr. Kristin Hartt offered sessions at the local schools and university on the dangers of vaping; Meds to Beds offered in-patient prescription delivery and pharmacist counseling prior to discharge; Received recognition for achieving platinum level of excellence for our efforts in tobacco independence (2020/2021)</p>



Community Health Needs Assessment Action Steps & Implementation Plan 2022 - 2025



Priority 1 – Mental Health Existing Resources and Gaps in Resources

Priority # 1: Mental Health
Existing Community Resources:
➤ AMHC
➤ NMMC Behavioral Health
➤ Life By Design
➤ Adult & Children's Psychiatric Units @ NMMC
➤ School Nurses in Every School, along with some counselors
➤ Northern Light Health – telehealth options and currently working on homeless youth project
➤ Fish River Rural Health has mobile unit going to schools for behavioral health appointments
➤ St. John Valley Recovery Services
➤ ACAP has secured funding for a new mobile unit
➤ UMFK Behavioral Health Club
➤ Northern Maine General
Gaps in Community Resources:
➤ Crisis intervention & long waits for crisis placement
➤ Boarding facilities for longer term needs
➤ Intensive outpatient therapy/Home & Community Treatment support services
➤ Too few providers
➤ Long waits for services
➤ Schools need more in-house resources
➤ Schools need more opportunities for social emotional education/learning
➤ Education for community/stigma
➤ Access to care
➤ Transportation to resources
➤ Lack of in-home supports
➤ Caregiver support
➤ Substance Abuse Counseling, including vaping, alcohol, and marijuana
➤ Trauma Informed Care

Priority 1 – Mental Health Action Steps

- Conduct a thorough examination on the evaluation and admission process when an individual presents at the ER in crisis to look for and implement ways to streamline and reduce wait time, and/or assist the family through the process with added communication and comfort measures. This includes exploring the feasibility of creating a tracking method of who has available beds to eliminate lengthy waits for placement or families being sent home without support.
- Identify and participate, where applicable, in mobile unit collaboration opportunities, assist organizations with PR and support with resources and materials.
- NMMC will have a presence in the community in events that focus on stigma reduction and education.
- Participate in education opportunities both internally and externally. Internally focusing on trauma informed care with clinical staff. Externally, education and awareness campaigns to reduce mental health stigma and educate the public on available resources.

Priority 2 – Substance Use Existing Resources and Gaps in Resources

Priority # 2: Substance Use
Existing Community Resources:
➤ AMHC – Relapse Prevention Groups
➤ AMHC – MAT Services
➤ AMHC Substance Use Counseling Services
➤ Suboxone clinics
➤ Recovery support (may be more focused in central Aroostook)
➤ ACAP Recovery Coaches, Homeless Services, Workforce Development
➤ Recent influx of grant funding to support programs through AMHC (RCORP)
Gaps in Community Resources:
➤ Long term recovery programs
➤ Access to care
➤ Transportation to resources
➤ Rehab and Detox Centers
➤ Awareness of existing resource
➤ Community education/stigma reduction
➤ Trauma intervention
➤ Trauma informed care/services
➤ Safe spaces
➤ Harm Reduction
➤ Judgment-free care
➤ Trained providers & Emergency responders
➤ Support for families
➤ Intensive outpatient therapy that works with entire families
➤ Narcan Training and Availability

Priority 2 – Substance Use Action Steps

- Explore opportunities and work with community partners like AMHC to offer internal education aimed at creating a judgment free experience and safe spaces for people who come to our facilities seeking treatment.
- Coordinate communications and education in the community to reduce stigma around the topic of substance use and to raise awareness of existing resources. This includes active participation in community events that promote education and awareness.
- Work with community stakeholders to develop a speaker's bureau on substance use-related topics.
- Investigate the feasibility of offering harm reduction services.

Priority 3 – Poverty Existing Resources and Gaps in Resources

Priority # 3: Poverty	
Existing Community Resources:	
>	ACAP
>	Food Banks/cupboards
>	Limited transportation resources like ARTS
>	SNAP EBT
>	Maine Care/MediCare
>	Churches/Faith-based groups
>	Municipalities
>	School meals
>	Schools
>	Healthy Families of Aroostook
>	Home Care Coordinators
>	Community Rec Programs
>	WIC
>	Aroostook Area Agency on Aging & Meals on Wheels
>	Summer Meal Program
>	Northern Maine Development Commission – Broadband Project
>	ARTS – Aroostook Regional Transportation Program
>	Recently announced healthcare workforce training in Maine
>	Fort Kent after school care program
Gaps in Community Resources:	
>	Transportation
>	Access to care
>	Affordable & safe housing
>	Childcare
>	Education/Workforce training
>	Living wage job opportunities
>	Access to broadband for education/employment/health care options
>	Education/stigma
>	Access to healthy food
>	Access to affordable or free health physical activities

Priority 3 – Poverty Action Steps

- Explore opportunities to reduce food insecurity in the communities we serve, including: creating new community cupboards in communities that may have a need and/or support of existing community cupboards through food drive activities; educate clinical staff on existing community resources so they are able to connect patients to resources; research the feasibility of EBT use in cafeteria; seek out community partnerships for food insecurity related collaborations.
- Research options for efficiently switching appointments to telehealth for patients experiencing temporary transportation challenges, and explore opportunities that might exist through creative partnerships with local organizations to establish and/or mobilize a volunteer driver program.
- Identify ways to connect eligible individuals with training and support for training via government programs and ACAP's workforce development programs.
- Continually monitor barriers for employees, such as childcare and transportation, to find creative ways to help our internal workforce meet their needs.
- Support or create opportunities in the community that connect children and adults with fun physical activities to create lifelong healthy habits.

Priority 4 – Elder Care Existing Resources and Gaps in Resources

Priority # 4: Elder Care
Existing Community Resources:
➤ Nursing care and assisted living facilities
➤ Aroostook Area Agency on Aging
➤ Limited in-home support services
➤ Community senior centers
➤ Churches
➤ Senior College at UMFK
➤ Support groups like the Alzheimer's Support Group
➤ Care Coordinators at the hospital & follow-up visits
➤ Medicare Navigators (but we need more)
➤ Meals on Wheels has nearly doubled since pre-pandemic
Gaps in Community Resources:
➤ Great need for workforce to staff both nursing care and in-home support services
➤ Access to Care
➤ In home supports, both for clinical needs and non-clinical needs (shopping, cooking, cleaning, etc.)
➤ Healthy foods
➤ Transportation
➤ Chronic conditions management
➤ Social isolation, exacerbated by pandemic
➤ Weather-related care – heating, cooling, snow removal, home weatherization
➤ Tech-related assistance – access to and training on technology for increased access to socialization opportunities, education, health care
➤ Volunteer opportunities
➤ Medicare Navigators, and support with paperwork in general

Priority 4 – Elder Care Action Steps

- Partner with Aroostook Area Agency on Aging and other community stakeholders to educate elderly populations and caretakers of elderly populations on available resources and eligibility through a variety of sources, including internal and external communications about services.
- Begin construction of a new nursing care facility and explore options for use of existing Forest Hill building.
- Explore collaboration with partners to create new options for attracting, training, and retaining workforce to elder care career paths in the community.
- Actively participate in events that offer opportunities to reduce social isolation or spread awareness on issues affecting elderly populations – including support groups, healthy activities for people who are elderly, and education opportunities (particularly around technology and safety).



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Northern Maine Medical Center

Community Health Needs Assessment Updates

July 2024



The Northern Maine Medical Center Board of Trustees at their meeting on September 29, 2021 approved the following health need priorities based on input received from community stakeholders:

1. Address gaps in community resources for Mental Health services
2. Work collaboratively with community organizations to reduce the amount of Substance Use in the community
3. To find ways to alleviate social determinants of health related to Poverty in the community
4. To improve Elder Care services in the St John Valley so people can live quality lives at home for as long as possible and then receive quality care in residential facilities if remaining at home becomes possible.

The following report summarizes the work being done to address these priorities.

Priority 1 – Mental Health Action Steps

- Streamlined admission process through the Emergency Room by eliminating the need for AMHC crisis worker to evaluate patients first to make referrals for admissions. NMMC providers and staff are now evaluating Emergency Room patient for admissions, therefore decreasing length of stay in the Emergency Room
- Added a Resource Nurse position to our inpatient units who calls delay referring hospitals and other stakeholders updating them on current bed status and facilitating referrals and admissions
- Added a Community Outreach Coordinator role to increase outreach for outpatient services
- Increased inpatient admissions by 18% since 2021
- NMMC continues to have a presence in the community and facilitates the Out of Darkness Walk supporting suicide prevention annually
- Social media posts on mental health wellness being promoted
- Adding additional resources – such as a new Psychiatrist, a Mental Health Nurse Practitioners and continues to recruit
- Increased Behavioral Health Services to Madawaska by an additional two days per week
- Screening all patients seen in Primary Care Services with appropriate referrals being made as needed
- Implemented telehealth services for Behavioral Health visits
- Participate in education opportunities internally and externally
- Entering into an agreement to provide Intensive Outpatient Programing for older individuals with Mental Health afflictions
- COO remains active member of the Maine Hospital Association Behavioral Health Council

Priority 2 – Substance Use Action Steps

- Coordinates communications and education in the community to reduce stigma around the topic of substance use and to raise awareness of existing resources. This includes active participation in community events that promote education and awareness
- Social media posts on substance use prevention
- Suboxone therapy is offered in our Primary Care network
- Narcotics prescription contracts is implemented in our Provider Practices
- Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT) program implemented in our Emergency Room

Priority 3 – Poverty Action Steps

- Revised Charity Policy and implemented new strategies with the referrals process on support individuals in need of Financial Assistance
- Price transparency posted on the NMMC website
- Provide enrollment assistance for Medicare, Medicaid and Marketplace
- Social Services utilize on all admissions a social determinant of health to better identify at risk population and develop resources to assist them
- Enhance the Tour de la Vallee to increase funds available to individuals requiring travels for Cancer care
- Remained a key employer supporting the local economy and well-being of our employees
- COO remains active as a Board member of the Aroostook Regional Transportation System to ensure access to transportation in our catchment area for individuals in need

Priority 4 – Elder Care Action Steps

- NMMC started the construction of a new nursing with 45 private rooms for all of its residents
- Entering into an agreement to provide Intensive Outpatient Programing for older individuals with Mental Health afflictions
- Entering into an agreement to provide Outpatient Cardiac and Respiratory Rehab programing
- Behavioral Health outreach program to Post-Acute care facilities to provide care within the facilities on a regular basis
- Reinstating outpatient Physical Therapy services
- Actively participate in events that offer opportunities to reduce social isolation
- Facilitates the Alzheimer's Community Support group