

**Central Maine Healthcare**  
Fiscal Year 2024 Community Benefit Report  
May, 2025



*WHERE YOU ARE THE CENTER*

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## Definition of Acronyms

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Adverse Childhood Experiences                                      | ACEs              |
| Central Maine Healthcare   | CMH               |
| Central Maine Medical Center                                       | CMMC              |
| Central Maine Medical Group  | CMMG              |
| Community Action Partnership                                       | CAP               |
| Community Health Improvement Plan                                  | CHIP              |
| Community Health Needs Assessment                                  | CHNA              |
| Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging                          | DEIB              |
| Emergency Department   | ED                |
| Fiscal Year  | FY                |
| Health Promotion Coordinator                                       | HPC               |
| Healthy Androscoggin   | HA                |
| Hunger Vital Signs   | HVS               |
| Intentional Peer Support   | IPS               |
| Local Planning Team  | LPT               |
| Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention                   | Maine CDC         |
| Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment                     | Maine Shared CHNA |
| Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety | OPTIONS           |
| Social Determinants of Health                                      | SDOH              |

## Introduction

Supporting the residents of Maine in becoming healthy, vibrant community members is the responsibility of many organizations and individuals. Central Maine Healthcare (CMH) takes this responsibility seriously by providing exceptional healthcare services in a safe and trusting environment through the expertise, commitment, and compassion of our team of caregivers. In addition to providing direct healthcare services, CMH recognizes that our responsibility also includes connecting with our community and supporting them in improving their own health and the health of others. This means stepping outside of our hospitals and practices to listen, collaborate, and plan with a diverse set of patients, local businesses, municipal leaders, youth, and other populations not typically engaged in healthcare.

The CMH system includes Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC) in Lewiston (Androscoggin County), Bridgton Hospital in Bridgton (Cumberland County), and Rumford Hospital in Rumford (Oxford County). This report details Community Benefit activities that CMH implemented in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. The report also fulfills the IRS 990 reporting requirements for non-profit healthcare systems. This report outlines the following:

- activities conducted in the second year of the 2022-2025 Community Health Improvement Plans derived from the 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment,
- the start of the 2025 Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment, and
- additional Community Benefit activities

## Expansion of the Community Benefit Team

CMH leadership continues to support two full-time Health Promotion Coordinators (HPC) at Healthy Androscoggin (HA) who work directly with all three of the hospitals in the Central Maine Healthcare system. Both HPCs engage in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) process by creating and maintaining a strong network of community partners that guide and support the work in each community, and by executing the Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIP) at the three hospitals. One HPC works with the two rural hospitals of the system, Bridgton Hospital and Rumford Hospital, and the second HPC works with Central Maine Medical Center.

## The Communities We Serve

Central Maine Healthcare is comprised of three hospitals serving three very different communities. Central Maine Medical Center (Androscoggin County) is located in the heart of Lewiston, which is the second largest city in Maine. While both Bridgton Hospital (Cumberland County) and Rumford Hospital (Oxford County) serve more rural populations. Though Cumberland County is one of the most populated counties in the state, Bridgton, which is part of the Lakes Region area, mirrors many of the attributes of a more rural area, as opposed to those of the Greater Portland area of Cumberland County. Bridgton especially, is nestled closely to the southern regions of Oxford County. The data below is from the [2024 Data Health Profiles](#).

Table 1: Demographics of the CMH Service Area

|                                   | Maine     | Androscoggin County | Cumberland County | Oxford County |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Population size                   | 1,366,949 | 111,532             | 303,357           | 58,276        |
| Median household income           | \$68,251  | \$64,500            | \$87,710          | \$54,780      |
| Unemployment rate (%)             | 3.1%      | 2.9%                | 2.3%              | 3.1%          |
| Individuals living in poverty (%) | 10.9%     | 12.4%               | 7.2%              | 14.4%         |
| Children living in poverty (%)    | 13.4%     | 17.8%               | 6.9%              | 21.2%         |

## The 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment

The CHIP process at CMH was informed by work done by the Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment (Maine Shared CHNA), which is a statewide collaboration between the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC), Central Maine Healthcare, MaineGeneral Health, MaineHealth, and Northern Light Health. Maine is the only state to engage in a statewide Community Health Needs Assessment among the four major non-profit healthcare systems and the state’s leading public health entity, Maine CDC. The Maine Shared CHNA provided detailed data profiles for each county that informed local leaders and community members about the assessed health needs in their communities. The 2022 CHNA timeline consisted of data collection such as forums, oral surveys, and community sponsored events that were held in the Fall and Winter of 2021, with the final reports releasing in 2022, followed by plan development for the upcoming three-year cycle.

The CHNA activities within CMH included:

- obtaining input from the community, including providers and communities served, on leading health issues and unmet needs,
- evaluating actions taken to address needs identified in previous assessments,
- choosing, with justification, which health needs should be addressed, and
- creating an informed improvement plan designed to address the identified needs and build on community strengths for each hospital

### Community Health Needs Assessment Forums

The forums for the 2021 Maine Shared CHNA process took place between September and December, 2021. In addition to county-wide forums held in each county, there were also locally-sponsored events, community-sponsored events, and oral surveys. Community-sponsored events were utilized to capture the voices and experiences of those within under-represented groups who may not be present at county forums, such as people who are members of the LGBTQ+ communities, people who are unhoused or formerly unhoused, people with a mental health diagnosis, youth, older adults aged 65+, Black and African Americans, Federally Qualified Health Centers, people with disabilities, and people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Oral surveys were utilized to include immigrant, refugee, and New Mainer voices.

The table below reflects the results of the voting that forum participants did to identify the top health priorities.

Table 2: Top 4 Health Priorities Identified from the 2021 CHNA Forums

| <b><u>Androscoggin County</u></b><br>Central Maine Medical Center |            | <b><u>Cumberland County</u></b><br>Bridgton Hospital |            | <b><u>Oxford County</u></b><br>Rumford Hospital |            |
|---|------------|--|------------|---|------------|
| Priority Area   | % of Votes | Priority Area  | % of Votes | Priority Area                                   | % of Votes |
| Mental Health   | 97%        | Mental Health  | 51%        | Mental Health                                   | 58%        |
| Social Determinants of Health                                     | 62%        | Social Determinants of Health                        | 42%        | Access to Care                                  | 49%        |
| Substance & Alcohol Use   | 51%        | Access to Care                                       | 41%        | Substance & Alcohol Use                         | 42%        |
| Access to Care  | 45%        | Substance & Alcohol Use                              | 34%        | Social Determinants of Health                   | 38%        |

More details about the 2021 Maine Shared CHNA process and results can be found in the FY22 and FY23 Community Benefit Reports: [www.cmhc.org/about-us/community-benefits/](http://www.cmhc.org/about-us/community-benefits/)  
 For final CHNA reports: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/phdata/MaineCHNA/final-CHNA-reports.shtml>

## Community Health Improvement Plans for 2022-2025

Health priorities for each county were identified through community participation and voting at the forums held during the Fall of 2021. The forums were an opportunity for community members to review the County Health Profiles, discuss community needs, and prioritize perceived community needs in small break-out sessions, followed with a vote by participants.

Once the two priorities are chosen for each hospital, the HPC held conversations internally with hospital team members and externally with community partners to create tangible and realistic goals, strategies, and activities to address each priority. The health priorities chosen by each hospital are as follows:

Table 3: Health Priorities for Each CMH Hospital for the 2022-2025 Cycle

| <b><u>Androscoggin County</u></b><br><b>Central Maine Medical Center</b> | <b><u>Cumberland County</u></b><br><b>Bridgton Hospital</b> | <b><u>Oxford County</u></b><br><b>Rumford Hospital</b>                            |
|--|---|---|
| Priority Area  | Priority Area   | Priority Area   |
| Mental Health  | Mental Health   | Social Determinants of Health (Food Insecurity and Adverse Childhood Experiences) |
| Substance & Alcohol Use  | Substance & Alcohol Use                                     | Substance & Alcohol Use   |

To view all three CMH hospital Improvement Plans, see: [www.cmhc.org/about-us/community-benefits/](http://www.cmhc.org/about-us/community-benefits/)

### Implementation Strategies and Completed Activities

The implementation strategies for each hospital are not intended to be a comprehensive catalog of the many ways the needs of the community are addressed by each hospital, but rather a representation of specific actions that the respective hospital commits to undertake and monitor as they relate to the specific identified needs. In comparison to last cycle where each CHIP had a third priority around sustainability and capacity building, the plans this cycle have woven that goal into the strategies and activities under each priority to be more integrated within the three hospitals. Following further discussion with hospital leadership regarding overall system goals, a third system-wide priority was identified to address Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) in all three hospital regions and service areas.

#### **Bridgton Hospital**

##### **Priority 1: Substance Use Disorder**

Goal 1: Increase awareness and education of Substance Use Disorder treatment in the Bridgton Hospital Service area

Strategy 1: Assess team members' attitudes about substance use disorder and harm reduction

- No movement occurred on this strategy due to limited current capacity for assessing team members' attitudes via surveys.

Strategy 2: Increase education of substance use disorder

- Finalized editing an existing Naloxone iCare PowerPoint to include information about stigma and emergency carts in Central Maine Medical Group (CMMG)

settings to use for annual team member education, which was uploaded and assigned in October of 2023.

- The Emergency Department (ED) distributed 29 Naloxone Take Home Kits between July and June, for a total of 58 doses of Intranasal Naloxone.

Goal 2: Improve access and resources for substance use disorder

Strategy 1: Improve accessibility of harm reduction and treatment of substance use disorder

- Worked with the CMMC HPC and the Director of Primary Care to improve connection of primary care to resource guides, and added resource links for regional resources to Patient Visit Summary Paperwork.

Strategy 2: Support existing community partners providing education, resources, and prevention related to substance use disorder

- Tabled with Bridgton Hospital and CMH team members at the Lakes Region Recovery Center's Rally on September 9, 2023.
- There were 2 posts on the Bridgton Hospital Facebook page on substance use disorder, for a total reach of 594. Topics posted included local recovery rallies and International Overdose Awareness Day.
- 3 OnPoint (weekly newsletter for CMH team members) features on substance use disorder, including advertising and highlighting the Lakes Region Recovery Center's Recovery Rally.
- Continued to support community coalitions and groups including:
  - Lakes Region Collective Action Network
  - Bridgton Area Non-Profit Collaborative
  - Lakes Region High School Vaping Advisory Group

## Priority 2: Mental Health

Goal 1: Increase awareness of mental health challenges in the Bridgton Hospital service area

Strategy 1: Increase team member education and awareness of mental health

- There was no movement on this strategy due to limited current capacity to educate clinical team members via trainings.

Strategy 2: Increase education and awareness on mental health

- HPC became certified as a Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructor on October 5, 2023.
- Hosted an Adult Mental Health First Aid Training in partnership with the Maine Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness on November 21, 2023 with 14 participants.
- In partnership with Healthy Oxford Hills and with grant funding by The Opportunity Alliance, the hospital hosted a Youth Mental Health First Aid Training on March 28, 2024 with 10 participants.
- There were 12 posts on the Bridgton Hospital Facebook page on mental health, for a total reach of 6,871. Topics posted included Winter Wellness Tips, a local Mental Health Awareness Walk, and Supporting the Wellbeing of Parents.
- 5 OnPoint features on mental health, including advertising and highlighting the Mental Health Awareness Walk.

Goal 2: Improve access to resources of mental health services, support, and resiliency activities in the Bridgton Hospital service area

Strategy 1: Expand capacity for Bridgton Hospital to meet mental health needs of the community

- 7 team members received crisis intervention training over 2 training dates on February 22, 2024 and June 24, 2024.

- Connected with CMH team members to discuss the Patient and Family Advisory Council and supported their recruitment efforts by sharing the application information with community members during the Lakes Region Collective Action Network meeting on May 21, 2024.

Strategy 2: Support existing community partners providing education, resources, and prevention of mental health

- Attended an OUT Maine training for Bridgton organizations that discussed supporting the mental wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth with Bridgton Hospital leadership on September 19, 2023.
- Attended a book launch party for a book written by Lake Region High School students about the themes of resiliency and place on September 18, 2023; a copy of this book was given to the hospital to be placed in the quiet room for team members.
- Facilitated a connection between the hospital dietetic team members and the Healthy Eating, Active Living coordinator for Portland Public Health to discuss initiatives to improve wellness of hospital and community.
- Supported and attended the Mental Health Awareness Walk through downtown Bridgton on May 23, 2024 with Bridgton Hospital and CMH team members and donated 48 water bottles.

## **Central Maine Medical Center**

### Priority 1: Mental Health

Goal: Expand capacity to address mental health needs

Strategy 1: Develop a vision and strategic plan that addresses gaps and opportunities with a focus on marginalized communities (racial and ethnic minorities, veterans, LGBTQ+, low income, rural, etc.)

- 6 CMH Behavioral Health Committee meetings held in Year 2.

Strategy 2: Increase awareness of the importance of mental health and the disproportionate impact on marginalized communities (racial and ethnic minorities, veterans, LGBTQ+, low income, rural, etc.)

- Researched best practices for educating hospital team members on mental health, substance use disorder, and the stigma associated with both.
- In collaboration with the Community Health Stakeholder Coalition, held two 3-part Trauma Informed Trainings, offered by Maine Resilience Building Network in November – December, 2023, with 50 participants, and May – June, 2024, with 25 participants.
- As part of the Community Health Stakeholder Coalition, developed a brochure to be utilized at job fair events with high school aged, college aged, and young adults or those considering a career change highlighting the benefits of working in a mental health field, and the experiences of those in the field.
- Continued to support and attend community coalitions and groups including:
  - Androscoggin Community Health Stakeholder Coalition
  - Tri-County Mental Health Services Planning Committees for their Annual Gala and stigma-busting event, Inspired Voices
  - Bridges Out of Poverty Steering Committee
  - Androscoggin Resiliency Collaborative
  - Sewall Foundation – Health and Wellness Collaborative
- 15 features in OnPoint on mental health.
- There were 3 posts on the CMMC Facebook page on mental health, for a total reach of 19,500. Posts were on topics such as benefits of pet therapy, and



recognizing the impact of the mass casualty event that took place on October 25, 2023 in the community.

- There were 49 posts on the Healthy Androscoggin Facebook page on mental health, for a total reach of 9,714. Posts included topics such as the suicide and National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, Random Acts of Kindness, local and national mental health support resources, the Dimensions of Wellness, and the mental wellness benefits of the outdoors.

Strategy 3: Increase the use of Peer Support Specialists (IPS) in the Emergency Department focused on supports for members of populations disproportionately impacted by mental health issues

- Due to a change with IPS staff and management at the contracted organization to provide IPS in the ED, Sweetser, there was a period of 4-5 months without an IPS staff person in the ED. However, there were still 380 contacts made by IPS staff with patients.
- Established a connection with the 2 new IPS staff assigned to the CMMC ED as they started in their new roles in February 2024.
- Presented at a Charge Nurse Team Meeting on March 6, 2024 about IPS, and increasing program awareness.
- Facilitated a series of meetings between Sweetser, the CMMC ED leadership, and Behavioral Health Director to discuss challenges, barriers, opportunities for improvement, and methods of education and awareness tactics for CMMC team members.
- Created training and awareness materials for CMMC team members on the IPS program and the IPS Specialist within CMMC ED, including a workflow chart and “All About IPS” flyer that was added to orientation folders for new ED team members.
- Assisted in creating a workflow for IPS within the Inpatient Department.
- Met with the Director of Care Management about expanding IPS into their team on July 5, 2023.

## Priority 2: Substance Use

Goal: Improve access to resources for substance use disorder services

Strategy 1: Assess the use of and education about screening tools

- Met with the Director of Behavioral Science at the Family Medicine Residency to discuss what work has been done to date on substance use screening tools, and how to best support those efforts.

Strategy 2: Increase awareness of and education about the availability of Naloxone in all CMMG practices

- There were 50 Lewiston/Auburn Area Substance Use Resource Guides given to patients by area practices.
- Supported the System Director of Behavioral Health from August 2023 through the end of the fiscal year to develop and implement a system-wide Naloxone Distribution Plan, and held meetings with various departments including Legal and Pharmacy, and with the Tier I Distributor for the area, MaineGeneral.
- Alongside the Bridgton and Rumford HPC, worked with the Director of Primary Care to improve connection of primary care to resource guides, and added resource links for regional resources to Patient Visit Summary Paperwork. There were 514 visits to the website during this reporting period.
- With the Bridgton and Rumford HPC, developed a virtual resource guide for all CMH team members to have access to, which was later moved to the Team Member Portal for easier access. Resources include: behavioral health, mental

health, substance use, housing, food pantries and programs, veteran, LGBTQ+, older adults, and others in all three major hospital service areas of CMH (Androscoggin County, Oxford County, and Lakes Region within Cumberland County), and the Topsham area.

- More data and information on the community resource database activity can be found on page 15, under the *Addressing Social Determinants of Health* section.
- Finalized edits for an existing Naloxone iCare PowerPoint to include information about stigma and emergency carts in CMMG settings to use for annual team member education; uploaded and assigned to CMMG team members in October 2023.

Strategy 3: Support community partners providing education, resources, and prevention of substance use disorder

- Facilitated a series of meetings between Androscoggin County Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety (OPTIONS) Liaison, ED and CMH System Director of Behavioral Health to explore current barriers, challenges, opportunities for improvement, and team member education.
- Met with the Director of Care Management about expanding OPTIONS into their team on July 5, 2023.
- Participated in and supported planning of the Medication Take Back Day at both the Lewiston and Auburn locations on April 27, 2024, where 26 boxes and 535 pounds of medication was collected. The October 2023 date was cancelled.
- Participated in the planning of and attended the Lewiston Rally for Recovery on September 30, 2023.
- Continued to support and attend community coalitions and groups including:
  - An Angel's Wing Annual Gala Planning Committee
  - Lewiston Auburn Area Recovery Collaborative
  - Project Unite
- 6 features in OnPoint on substance use, including features on the Rally for Recovery, Medication Take Back Days, and how to use the virtual resource guide on the team member portal.
- There were 2 posts on the CMMC Facebook page on substance use disorder, for a total reach of 1,914. Topics posted were about the Lewiston Rally for Recovery and International Overdose Awareness Day.
- There were 52 posts on the Healthy Androscoggin Facebook page on substance use disorder for a total reach of 4,694.

## **Rumford Hospital**

### **Priority 1: Social Determinants of Health**

Goal 1: Improve the integration of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) supports in the Rumford Hospital service area

Strategy 1: Embed ACEs screening tool into Primary Care and the Emergency Department

- Began researching a training about ACEs that offers continuing education credits for medical providers that is provided online by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through their VetoViolence platform; created an informational report on this training to share with the CMH Professional Education department.

Strategy 2: Educate patients and community on ACEs, resiliency, protective and risk factors

- Created a Rumford Community Events Calendar and onboarded 4 community organizations to share their events; linked to the CMH website in March of 2024.
- Rumford Hospital team members attended the Meroby Elementary School Ice Cream Social on August 31, 2023.
- Attended a meeting between the Maine CDC's Western Public Health District, River Valley Healthy Communities Coalition, and Rumford Hospital leadership to discuss perceived community needs on March 21, 2024.
- Rumford Hospital team members attended the Pumpkin Festival to give flu shots and car seat safety demos on October 14, 2023.
- Supported and attended the Oxford County Wellness Collaborative's Fall Gathering focusing on adult volunteers supporting youth wellbeing on November 15, 2023.
- There were 5 posts on the Rumford Hospital Facebook page on social determinants of health, for a total reach of 7,745. Topics posted included a yellow tulip "Hope Garden" at the hospital, an ice cream social at a local elementary school, and donating turkeys to a local food pantry.
- Continued to support community coalitions and groups focused on ACEs and resiliency including:
  - Oxford County Wellness Collaborative Steering Committee

Goal 2: Improve the integration of food insecurity supports within the Rumford Hospital service area

Strategy 1: Increase the number of food insecure patients served through the Hunger Vital Signs (HVS) program at Rumford Hospital and Primary Care Practices

- Maintained connection with the Hunger Vital Signs Program Coordinator to support expansion in the Rumford Hospital service area.

Strategy 2: Support existing community organizations providing education, resources, and prevention related to food insecurity

- Attended 1 Foothills Food Forum meetings with local food pantries and others working on food security efforts, and then group disbanded.
- Attended 2 Food is Medicine Network Advisory Council Meetings hosted by Healthy Oxford Hills.
- Hosted a Breakfast Food Drive for the Old School Food Pantry within the hospital in March 2024, and collected a total of 36 items of food.
- 4 OnPoint features on social determinants of health. Topics posted included highlighting the blossoming of the Yellow Tulip Hope Garden at the hospital, and hospital support and involvement at the Annual Pumpkin Festival.

### Priority 2: Substance Use Disorder

Goal 1: Increase awareness and education of substance use disorder treatment in the Rumford Hospital service area

Strategy 1: Assess team members' attitudes around substance use disorder and harm reduction

- No movement occurred for this strategy due to limited current capacity to assess team members' attitudes via surveys.

Strategy 2: Increase education and prevention of substance use disorder

- Finalized edits for an existing Naloxone iCare PowerPoint to include information about stigma and emergency carts in CMMG settings to use for annual team member education; uploaded and assigned to CMMG team members in October 2023.

Goal 2: Improve access and resources for substance use disorder

Strategy 1: Improve accessibility of harm reduction and treatment of substance use disorder

- Worked with the CMMC HPC and the Director of Primary Care to improve connection of primary care to resource guides, and added resource links for regional resources to Patient Visit Summary Paperwork.

Strategy 2: Support existing community partners providing education, resources, and prevention related to substance use disorder

- Attended Western Maine Addiction Recovery Initiative's Recovery Rally on September 17, 2023 and then started attending planning meetings for 2024's rally.
- Attended a screening of the film, "Compassion Cures" which discusses reducing stigma of Substance Use Disorder, on October 17, 2023 that was organized by River Valley Healthy Communities Coalition and Healthy Oxford Hills.
- Attended the Maine Prevention Network's Western District Substance Use Prevention Annual Community Partners Meeting with Rumford Hospital team members on October 17, 2023.
- Continued to support community coalitions and groups focused around substance use disorder including:
  - River Valley Rising Coalition
  - Western Maine Addition Recovery Initiative community meeting
  - Planning Committee for the Western Maine Recovery Rally
  - Planning Committee for Western Maine Addiction Recovery Initiative's Basics of Substance Use Disorder Conference
  - Planning Committee for River Valley Recovers Strong Community Block Party
- There was 1 post on the Rumford Hospital Facebook page on substance use disorder, for a total reach of 315. Topic was about International Overdose Awareness Day.

### **System-wide Priority: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging**

Goal: Improve the health outcomes for populations experiencing health disparities

Strategy 1: Convene a team to develop a plan to address diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging

- The Director of Learning and Development was identified and added as a co-lead for the DEIB Advisory Committee, alongside the Chief People Officer who was identified in Year 1.
- 204 team members participated in a DEIB-focused training.
- The DEIB Committee met once on May 23, 2024, where they reviewed the action plan developed in Year 1 for relevance and places for improvement. The committee set a schedule to meet monthly moving forward.

Strategy 2: Solidify partnerships with community allies to support the DEIB action plan

- Partners to date include: Inclusion Maine, Diversity Hiring Coalition, Strengthen LA, AK Collaborative, New Mainer Public Health Initiative, Maine Community Integration, Equality Maine, Generational Noor, State Refugee Advisory Council, and New Beginnings.
- Healthy Androscoggin received the 2023 Outspoken Allies of the Immigrant and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Communities Award from the AK Collaborative.
- CMH sponsored, assisted in planning, and participated in the Juneteenth Celebration through the Community Organization Alliance on June 20, 2024, as

well as sponsored and attended the Inclusion Maine Conference on May 1-3, 2024.

- Conducted an online community survey in January, 2024 with the support of partner organizations. Questions included barriers from accessing healthcare in your community and what helps individuals to access healthcare.
- In the system-wide team member survey in Spring 2024, a question was added around inclusivity: “our organization has made positive strides toward creating an inclusive environment”. On a scale of 1-5, the weighted average was 3.73.

Strategy 3: Increase awareness of DEIB activities and progress

- Created a “Days that Matter” calendar and internal portal page that provides education on various DEIB related matters and holidays.
- The weekly team member newsletter, OnPoint, added a dedicated space for health equity topics.

## **Planning the 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment**

Through the evolution of the Maine Shared CHNA process, the Maine Community Action Partnership (CAP) joined the collaborative in 2023. Maine CAP agencies conduct their own needs assessment on a three-year cycle, so to expand the reach of both assessments and avoid duplication of efforts, the decision was made to bring them onto the statewide CHNA process with the four major healthcare systems and the Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Crescendo Consulting Group, a contracted organization for the CHNA process, provided technical support and led data collection that was utilized and included in the county-wide stakeholder forums, focus groups, key informant interviews, and the community survey.

Throughout the Maine Shared CHNA process, there were several committees with different purposes. The Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from each of the four partnering healthcare systems, Maine CAP, and the Maine CDC. This group oversees the work of the Maine Shared CHNA Program Manager, and communicates with Chief Executive Officers and leadership from their organizations on the status of activities. The focus of the Metrics Committee was updating the set of health and well-being indicators, developing the preliminary data analysis plan, and reviewing best practices to ensure the proper indicators were identified as needed. The Health Equity/Community Engagement Committee was charged with developing the framework to engage and build relationships with target populations and communities in order to gain a better understanding of their needs, strengths, health issue causes, behaviors, and outcomes.

Finally, each county had a Local Planning Team (LPT) that was tasked with logistical planning for their county stakeholder forum, including determining the location, building a well-balanced and representative invitation list, and supporting the forum day of. The LPTs included representative(s) from the healthcare system(s) and the CAP agency that serve each county, as well as each county’s respective District Liaison and the District Education Coordinator from the Maine CDC. Members of the CMH Community Engagement Team participated in all of these committees.

As in previous CHNAs, data collection included county-wide forums, focus groups, and key informant interviews. With the new partnership with local CAPs, additional requirements came as well. For their Community Services Block Grant reporting, CAPs are required to engage directly with the communities they serve, which is primarily low-income individuals. Therefore, to work with the CAP agency reporting requirement, this cycle’s focus groups included not just

statewide groups, but also county-wide groups facilitated by the CAPs with low-income individuals within their service areas. This cycle also saw the addition of a statewide community survey. This community survey led the data collection process in Spring of 2024, followed by focus groups and key informant interviews in late spring and early Summer of 2024. The county-wide stakeholder forums are planned and held in the following fiscal year.

### **Statewide Community Survey**

The statewide community survey was developed by a small workgroup made up of members from the Community Engagement Committee, the Metrics Committee, the Maine Shared CHNA Program Manager, and Crescendo Consulting Group, with the Steering Committee giving final approval. The 40-question survey was open from June 6<sup>th</sup> – July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and was translated into 8 different languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Lingala, Portuguese, Somali, and Spanish. The questions posed to respondents addressed local resources, strengths of their communities, individuals' health and well-being and the health of those in their community. The survey closed with 3,967 valid responses, with a 6.2% response rate for Androscoggin County, 5.5% for Oxford County, and 11.3% for Cumberland County.

### **Key Informant Interviews**

Between April and May of 2024, there were 25 key informant interviews conducted. The populations and sectors that were selected were based on: those who did not lend themselves as easily to a focus group; provided a systems and/or programmatic perspective; and/or represented a sector-specific topic. The populations and sectors that had interviews, were:

- Unhoused/Homeless
- Migrant/Agricultural Workers
- Disability Community
- Incarcerated/Formerly Incarcerated
- Child Welfare
- Emergency Management
- Environment/Climate
- Substance Use (including prevention, treatment, and recovery)
- Transportation
- Food Security
- Older Adults
- Mental/Behavioral Health
- Oral Health
- Immigrants
- Veterans

Interviewees included community stakeholders, healthcare providers, community leaders, and representatives from community-based organizations. During the interviews, participants were asked about their perspectives on local health and well-being needs, existing barriers to achieve prime and ideal health, and possible solutions to address these issues.

### **Focus Groups**

Focus groups were split into two sections: statewide and county-wide. The use of focus groups provided valuable insights and information on the experiences of people across the state as well as at a county level. Many people are affected by a multitude of different factors of both their identity and experiences, or their intersectionality. Therefore, during the focus groups, participants were asked to voluntarily share any other identities they may have.

Statewide focus groups were conducted in the Spring of 2024 with the following populations:

- Veterans: April 18, 2024 with 7 participants
- Young Adults: April 22, 2024 with 3 participants
- Youth: April 29, 2024 with 3 participants
- LGBTQ+: May 15, 2024 with 5 participants
- Women: May 29, 2024 with 1 participant
- Black and African American: to be held in the Summer of 2024.

County-wide focus groups were led by the CAP agencies. Each county had one focus group, with the exception of Aroostook, Penobscot, and Cumberland Counties, which each had three focus groups. They took place between April and June, 2024, with a total of 93 participants. Both Androscoggin and Oxford Counties are served by the same CAP agency, Community Concepts Inc., and Cumberland County is served by The Opportunity Alliance; their focus groups were held:

- Androscoggin County: in-person on May 2, 2024 with 5 participants
- Cumberland County (Bridgton area): virtually on March 30, 2024 with 4 participants
- Oxford County: in-person on May 30, 2024 with 15 participants

## **Addressing the Social Determinants of Health**

“The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) are the conditions and environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age. SDOH affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks. SDOH represent nonmedical factors – like housing, transportation and poverty – that affect health. Differences in these conditions may put people at risk for poor health outcomes. The concept of ‘place’ is used to help understand how these determinants impact health. The social, economic, and physical conditions in different places not only impact health status, risks, health behaviors, and opportunities – they also affect the patterns of social interaction and overall well-being” [Healthy People 2030](#).

CMH understands the importance of addressing the social determinants of health in our communities if we are to truly become a place where everyone has a chance to thrive. The impacts of unstable housing, not having access to nutritious foods, living in poverty, and lack of transportation, are consistently found to be top concerns for our patients, communities, and partners. We see every day how difficult it can be for patients to focus on health when their most basic needs are not being met and there are multiple barriers to care. If we want to move the needle on health inequity and improve health outcomes, we need to address what’s driving the longstanding disparities in health and health care, and be intentional about making changes to our system as a whole.

## **Community Resource Database**

In response to a need expressed by CMH’s Care Management Department, both HPCs worked in partnership with a Healthy Androscoggin team member, community partners, and the CMH Information Services Department to create a database of community resources within all three major hospital service area regions, the Topsham area, and statewide resources to be used internally by team members when supporting patients with various social determinants of health needs. This database went live in March of 2024 and has since been promoted to all team members through an OnPoint feature and a Noon Knowledge presentation. The HPCs plan to continue to update this resource database every six months, and regularly promote it to team members from various internal communication channels.

Table 4: Fiscal Year 2024 Community Resource Database Usage

| # Community Resources | # Resource Categories | # Regions Covered | # Page Visits (March 2024 – June 2024) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--|
| 161                   | 10                    | 4                 | 194                                    |

### Hunger Vital Signs

In collaboration with Good Shepherd Food Bank, CMH implemented an innovative evidence-based program Hunger Vital Signs tool to improve the health of food insecure Mainers. The Hunger Vital Signs™ is a nationally validated two-question screening tool, developed by Children’s Health Watch, which identifies individuals as food insecure if they respond positively to either of the following statements:

1. “Within the past 12 months, we were worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more” (often true, sometimes true, never true, don’t know or refused.)
2. “Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn’t last and we didn’t have money to get more” (often true, sometimes true, never true, don’t know or refused.)

If a patient answers “sometimes true” or “often true” to one or both of the questions, they are marked positive to being food insecure and are offered a food bag consisting of 10 pounds of non-perishable foods and a community resource guide containing information about food pantries and other resources that address social determinants of health in their area.

What started as just a pilot program in the Bridgton Hospital Emergency Department, has expanded to be embedded in 10 sites (hospital departments and practices) throughout the system. In the Lewiston/Auburn area, there are six sites: Central Maine Family Medicine Residency, Central Maine Pediatrics, Minot Ave Family Medicine, and Poland Community Health Center, with the newest additions being Central Maine Bariatrics and Central Maine Inpatient Department. In the regions, there are four sites: the Bridgton Hospital Inpatient Department, Elsworth-Dixfield Family Medicine, Swift River Family Medicine, and the Rumford Hospital Inpatient Department. Between FY23 and FY24, more pantry lists and food bags have been distributed to food insecure patients. The program saw an 129% increase of food pantry lists distributed and a 146% increase in food bags distributed from FY23 to FY24.

Table 5: Fiscal Year 2024 Hunger Vital Signs Program Usage

| # Food Insecurity Screenings Performed | # Food Insecure Patients (# Positive Screens) | # Community Food Pantry Lists Provided | # Food Bags Distributed |
|--|---|--|-------------------------|
| 7,154                                  | 917   | 630                                    | 774                     |

### Cribs for Kids

It is essential that all newborns have access to a safe sleep environment as it prevents suffocation and airway obstruction which can lead to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and other sleep-related deaths. In recognition of this, the CMMC Maternity Department, participates in the Cribs for Kids Program, coordinated by the State of Maine. If possible, patients are encouraged to obtain a crib prenatally, but for those who cannot afford it, they are eligible for the Cribs for Kids Program once they are admitted to the Maternity floor. The social worker will meet with the patients postpartum to review local resources and identify any residual needs. Eligible patients receive a Safe Sleep training provided by the social worker, and a portable crib. In FY24, there were 90 cribs given.



### **Car Seat Safety Inspections**

Each month, CMMC partners with local organizations to provide free car seat safety inspections to families, and low-income families are eligible to receive free car seats. This program is supported by the Maine Bureau of Highway Safety, and through a grant from Toyota and the BuckleUp for Life Program.

Table 6: Fiscal Year 2024 Car Seat Safety Inspection Program Usage

| <b>July</b>    | <b>August</b>   | <b>September</b> | <b>October</b> | <b>November</b> | <b>December</b> |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 15             | 10              | 16               | 16             | 13              | 11              |
| <b>January</b> | <b>February</b> | <b>March</b>     | <b>April</b>   | <b>May</b>      | <b>June</b>     |
| 21             | 3               | 8                | 19             | 21              | 11              |

### **Tai Chi for Health and Balance**

Tai Chi is a low-impact exercise, aimed towards older adults due to the slow, fluid movements that put minimal stress on joints and bones. It can be done seated or standing, allowing more people to access and participate at their individual levels. It also prevents falls by improving balance, mobility and psychological health, increasing leg strength and flexibility, and by reducing the fear of falling. This is a 10-week class with participants meeting two days per week for an hour each class. In FY24, there were 21 participants in Tai Chi class series.

### **Matter of Balance**

Matter of Balance is an evidence-based class, geared towards older adults, that focuses on promoting and teaching participants strategies to reduce the fear of falling, while increasing their physical activity. The class includes group discussions, problem solving, role-playing activities, and exercise training around strength, coordination, and balance. Topics covered include home safety, assertiveness to boundaries and needs, reducing exercise barriers, identifying risk factors for falls, and developing personal action plans. Matter of Balance is an 8-week class that meets once a week for two hours for the duration of the class. In FY24, there were 24 participants in Matter of Balance class series.

### **Supporting Community Engagement**

Central Maine Healthcare continues to be devoted to creating and maintaining various partnerships and collaborations across their vast service area. As a system, CMH is focused on highlighting and sharing community events hosted by partner organizations and groups in each region, and becoming more involved in various events when possible.

CMH continues to sponsor the annual fundraiser, The Dempsey Challenge, which supports the cancer care and support center. This year, the event took place on September 23, 2023, with three races for walking, biking, and running. Team CMH made up the largest corporate team, comprised of more than 130 team members, and was in the Top 5 fundraising teams, raising over \$51,000 for The Dempsey Center.

Central Maine Healthcare supports and engages with its communities in a variety of ways. In addition to creating a team to participate in a run, walk, or bike race, such as The Dempsey Challenge, the Walk to End Alzheimer's, the Save Your Breath 5K, or the Santa Shuffle 5K, support can come in by way of sponsorship or raising money, promotion of events, and attendance. This year, CMH supported 42 events in Lewiston/Auburn, Lakes Region, Rumford, and beyond. Total financial support across the system reached over \$48,000. Events this year included the LA Metro Chamber's Taste the Harvest, River Valley's Chamber of Commerce Annual Golf Tournament, Safe Voices Adopt-A-Family, Bridgton's Music on Main, Free Ski

Night at Black Mountain, and the Juneteenth Celebration organized by Community Organizing Alliance.

## **Summary**

The reach and impact of the Community Benefit work within the entire CMH system greatly improved due to the continued focalization and collaboration of the Community Benefit Team in FY24. Following the familiarization and capacity-building process both HPCs experienced entering their new roles during FY23, FY24 was the first full year where an enhanced system-wide approach could be taken with each of the Community Health Improvement Plans. This year saw more cross-over between activities, strategies, and priorities across all three plans, as well as an increase in opportunities for both HPCs to raise awareness about their work within the CMH system.

Due to this continued growth and individuation of roles, both Health Promotion Coordinators are able to focus on their region(s) and engage more fully in various public health issues in their communities, resulting in greater awareness and knowledge of best practices in public health. They are also able to be better representatives and liaisons between the hospitals and the surrounding communities in their respective regions, and offer unique regional perspectives when working together on common projects.

Increased focalization also occurred in relation to the plans themselves, as shifting focus to a set of well-defined priorities and objectives has made the resulting work deeper and more effective in addressing community health needs. Additionally, an improved understanding of, and attention paid to, the social determinants of health has provided a context for creating impactful, sustainable public health improvements in our communities.