

# Community Health Needs Assessment Action Plan

The FY24 CHNA developed by NMC and the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont was an inclusive process that focused on gathering information about the health needs of our community by employing different methodologies, including focus groups, key informant interviews, and a broad community survey. The data was collected and analyzed using the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Framework. The top 5 Community Health Needs that were identified as a result are:

- Access to Care
- Affordability
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Safety and Belonging
- Community Connectedness

**Access to Care:** Equitable access to care by being able to access the right care, including social services, at the right time in a culturally appropriate and person-centered way, *no matter who you are.*

Organization	Identified Strategies 2024-27
ACO	provide improved data on diversity to help facilitate quality improvement processes around healthcare outcomes.
Age Well	Ensures that older adults have equitable access to healthcare and social services at no cost through a vast array of community-based services and resources. We offer transportation services to medical appointments and essential services, as well as nutritious meal programs such as Meals on Wheels for homebound seniors. Additionally, we provide support, resources, and guidance in navigating healthcare options, including Medicare counseling, access to preventive care, mental health services, and other community resources.
Department of Substance Use	rapid access to treatment for both opioid use and alcohol use disorder, as well as funding to support the Recovery Coaches at the ED.
Howard Center	open office hours in the morning for anyone who would like to explore substance use treatment options that is judgement free, as well as a mobile unit to support people in the community. Mobile Unit being deployed to increase accessibility
Monarch Maples	Embedded Community Health Workers through Blueprint.
NCSS	Team to increase number of same day outpatient appointments
NOTCH	offices in multiple communities throughout the region
Primary Care	with the support from Blueprint and NCSS has embedded RN Care Coordinators, Behavioral Health Workers, and Community Health Workers in Primary Care Practices across the region.
SASH	Funding to embed a Mental Health Clinician in St. Albans at the housing site. Increase access to services/care.
SaVida	Walk in appointments M-F – MAT and alcohol
St. Albans Primary Care	Same day appointments and providing evening appointments 3 nights/week

Turning Point	Free of charge. Multiple groups have workshops/groups that are free of charge. Recovery coaches available to determine needs and refer to resources.
Vermont Department of Health	community-based immunization clinics to migrant farm workers and at the Abenaki Tribal Council in Swanton.
Vermont National Guard	working to increase access to care and reduce barriers (Tricare) for Service Members, Veterans, and their families; educating providers; connect VTNG organizations with community resources; plans to host Primary Prevention Symposium.
Northwestern Medical Center	<p>In Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in our workforce to attract and retain employees that deliver care in our community. ie. LNA to RN Program, retention bonuses, education incentives.</li> <li>• Emphasizing patient flow and proper placement in long term care and inpatient mental health, leading to greater access to acute hospital beds.</li> <li>• Improve access to mammograms by expanding hours of operation to include evening and weekends.</li> <li>• Onboarding providers in cardiology, urology, orthopedics, general surgery, pulmonology and ENT, expanded rehab services, pediatric inpatient, tele-ICU.</li> <li>• Established a pediatric developmental clinic.</li> </ul> <p>Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support our patients in finding a Primary Care Provider.</li> <li>• Continue to increase access to local specialty care service lines in our community, including OBGYN, oncology and ophthalmology.</li> <li>• Provide access to care that is culturally appropriate, and person centered. Providing health care services that meet the needs of all people.</li> <li>• Collecting and utilizing SOGI data to create a more inclusive and patient centered experience.</li> <li>• Expand interpreter services to include more in-person support and options.</li> <li>• Modernizing NMC's CT and Nuclear Medicine to allow more care to be accessible locally.</li> </ul>

**Affordability:** Rising prices including gas, groceries, day care, housing, health care insurance premiums, and the cost of healthcare are forcing people to make choices between basic needs and accessing healthcare

Organization	Identified Strategies 2024-27
Age Well	Alleviates the financial burden on older Vermonters by offering a wide range of services, including at-home meal delivery, transportation, and wellness programs. We also connect older adults to financial assistance programs and resources to help manage the rising costs of healthcare, housing, and other essential needs, ensuring they don't have to choose between necessities and essential needs.
CVOEO	addresses food insecurity
Franklin Grand Isle Community Action	weatherization, housing navigation, financial futures, homelessness prevention, and benefits navigation.
Healthy Roots Collaborative	Increased storage capacity
HomeShare Vermont	A screening and matching service that pairs older Vermonters with space in their homes (hosts) with people looking for a place to live (guests). Guests pay below market rent in exchange for some supportive service for the hosts.
NOTCH	sliding scale payment system
OneCare	exploring payment reform for primary care model to support value-based care and make it more affordable for patients.
Primary Care Practices	SDOH screening and implementation to connect community with services
United Way	Working Bridges Program that works directly with employers to support employees experiencing financial, medical, or social needs
University of Vermont Extension Program	Provides support to migrant families applying for health insurance and financial aid.
WIC	Provides formula and food to families in need. They are working on increasing access to culturally relevant nutritional foods in our region.
Northwestern Medical Center	<p>In process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working to maintain our status as the lowest cost outpatient hospital and the second lowest cost inpatient hospital in the state.</li> <li>• NMC provides pricing transparency and a cost estimator for services on our website.</li> <li>• NMC adopted a new financial assistance policy in response to the new law regarding charity care and financial assistance.</li> <li>• We have certified assisters through VT Health Connect to support patients who are eligible for insurance by helping them enroll in Dr. Dinosaur and Medicaid.</li> <li>• Identify in Meditech if patient's preferred language is non-English so we can we translate the bill into their preferred language.</li> <li>• NMC has a Community Fund to help patients access resources for medically necessary items to support their health.</li> <li>• Participating in the New England Collaborative Health Network to reduce avoidable costs.</li> </ul> <p>Goals:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicate the new financial assistance policy to the community in ways that reach the affected population.</li><li>• Explore the proposed AHEAD model to be able to reduce health care costs, improve patient experience, increase equity, and improve population health.</li></ul>
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**Mental Health and Substance Abuse:** Focus on the prevention, screening, assessment, and treatment of mental disorders and behavioral conditions. Strategies to prevent drug and alcohol use at the school, family, and community level and helping people with these disorders get treatment.

Organization	Identified Strategies 2024-27
Age Well	Understands the importance of mental health for older Vermonters and offers support and resources to address these needs. We provide regular wellness checks, peer support groups, and connections to mental health professionals. In addition, we partner with local agencies to offer education, support, and resources related to substance abuse prevention and recovery, ensuring that older adults have access to comprehensive care and the support they need.
BAART Clinic	Hub level of care
FGI Tobacco Coalition	Youth outreach in schools, promotion of tobacco cessation resources in and out of NMC
Howard Center	See Above in Access to Care
NCSS	See above in Access to Care - increasing number of available appointments and hiring. Plus, adolescence substance use program.
Primary Care	Increased screening around MH and substance use
Recovery Coaching in ED	On Call access to recovery Coaches in the Emergency Department
SaVida	See above in Access to Care
Spectrum	youth and young adults, especially LGBTQIA+ young folks belong and receive access to support in gaining employment, housing, etc.
Turning Point	See above in Access to Care and outreach to Martha’s Kitchen, unsheltered outreach, hotels and shelters
United Way	Mental Health initiative and Prevention Network - funding local organizations in prevention work
VT Cares	Mobile Unit, wound care task force
Youth Centers (Enosburgh/Swanton)	Focused on Youth Protective Factors, offering places where teens feel they belong, and are often driven by what youth say they want – from space to programming. (Safety and Belonging)
Northwestern Medical Center	<p>In Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting an embedded Recovery Coach in the Emergency Department.</li> <li>• Renovation of Emergency Department installed safe suite for patients experiencing a mental health crisis or substance use disorder.</li> <li>• We partner with NCSS for crisis support in the Emergency Department and the inpatient units.</li> <li>• Donations to community organizations who are actively working in mental health and substance use disorders.</li> <li>• Actively advocating for an expansion of mental health beds in the state.</li> </ul> <p>Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen partnership with NCSS for crisis support in the Emergency Department and the inpatient units.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Actively seeking to build employment opportunities for people in recovery at NMC.</li></ul>
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**Safety and Belonging:** Physical and emotional safety in the community, including neighborhoods, schools, institutions, and family structures. Accepting and celebrating differences and embracing belonging.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Identified Strategies &amp; Partners 2024-27</b>
Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi	Circles of Courage after school group; support group for interpersonal violence
Age Well	We promote a sense of community and safety by fostering inclusive environments where older adults feel valued and secure. Through programs that combat social isolation, such as community meals, social gatherings, and volunteer opportunities, Age Well ensures that older adults receive emotional and physical support, enabling them to feel a strong sense of belonging and connection.
Franklin Grand Isle Community Action	community closet, free store, and an accessible food shelf
Franklin West Supervisory Union	Racial Justice Alliance
HomeShare Vermont	HomeShare is a screening and matching service that pairs older Vermonters with space in their homes (hosts) with people looking for a place to live (guests). Hosts report feeling less lonely, having more confidence in their living situation and are able to age in place with more social interaction and support.
Local Libraries	Adult and youth programming – teen night, baking, book clubs, movies
Maple Run USD	Community meetings, Development of Equity policy
Movies that matter	Plans to show and discuss impactful movies that address community issues.
NCSS	integrated the use of pronouns into their culture to improve a sense of belonging for all individuals
Northwest Regional Planning	Working to support municipalities to become safer for all road users (vehicles, pedestrians, folks using wheeled devices...)
Recreation Programming	Classes, workshops, spaces and community events for all ages.
Rotary	Service organization continually volunteering and supporting the community.
Schools	Focus on social and emotional learning, building community, providing extracurricular activities for youth.
Spectrum Youth Center	Provides a safe, judgement-free zone for youth with resources for both education and basic needs. provide basic needs (food, shower, laundry, clothing, support, connection to services, referrals, Recovery Coaching, and basic resource coordination etc) to youth ages 12-24. A safe space for LGBTQ+ and BIPOC youth as well as all youth. We accept, embrace and celebrate their differences and believe every youth that comes through our doors should be respected, treated with kindness and respect and fairly.
St. Albans Downtown	Events throughout the year - festival of trees, tree lighting, Kingman Street fest, farmers market, car shows, etc.
St. Albans Pride Corps	Adult and youth engagement for LGBTQA+
St. Albans Primary Care	Facebook page for diabetic support group and is pursuing other health groups and supports patients with Health Bank News and Portal.

VDH Community Group	Addresses pressing topics. Provides education and action. I.e. St. Albans Police, neighborhood watch groups
Voices Against Violence	Drop-in center and provides a safe shelter from domestic and sexual violence.
WIC	supporting and expanding community-based nutrition education and training.
Northwestern Medical Center	<p>In process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued work on annual plans for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging as both a care provider and an employer.</li> <li>• Use Health Related Social Needs (HRSN) screenings in the PCU to address our patient’s needs through programs like the Food Bags.</li> <li>• Implement AVADE staff training to keep staff members and patients safer.</li> <li>• Installing zero tolerance for workplace violence signage throughout the organization.</li> </ul> <p>Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collecting and utilizing SOGI data to create a more inclusive and patient centered experience.</li> <li>• Sharing the results of the NMC Workplace Violence Survey.</li> <li>• Create safe spaces by having opportunities for modeling our differences as staff, medical staff, and administration, ie. Encourage pronoun usage in our communications, consider opportunities for showing our support of difference by flying certain flags, displaying art from other cultures, or posting “welcome” in different languages.</li> <li>• Enhance the patient comfort kits to provide a wider array or culturally significant items (i.e. bonnet, Abenaki prayer ties, lotion, etc.)</li> </ul>



**Community Gathering and Connectedness:** Feeling connected to place and community through the arts, cultural events, accessible transportation, community input and gathering, and public recreation spaces.

Organization	Identified Strategies 2024-27
Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi	Circle of Courage – a place for youth to feel connected – space and programming
Afterglow Event	Non-profit focused on suicide prevention
Age Well	Actively promotes social engagement by organizing community meetups, educational seminars, wellness activities, and wellness programs like Tai Chi. We collaborate with local organizations to enhance access to transportation, recreational spaces, and cultural events, ensuring that older adults can participate fully and feel connected to their communities.
Caring Communities	leading efforts with Vermont Teen Institute and Junior Teen Institute.
Community Partnership	active and resilient community group that convenes monthly and provides insights, information, collaboration opportunities, etc.
Faith Community	Provide religious services and other opportunities to gather.
FGI Youth Communications Workgroup	Plan to develop resources to see neighboring activities/events. is a sub-group of the ACH. This workgroup has representation from NOTCH, Swanton Rec., NCSS, MVSD, FNESU, local libraries, Spectrum drop in.
HomeShare Vermont	Guests pay below market rent in exchange for some supportive service for the hosts e.g, household chores, meal support, transportation, home maintenance etc. Hosts report feeling less lonely, having more confidence in their living situation and are able to age in place with more social interaction and support.
Local Libraries	Multiple events and groups that meet regularly or for one-time events. Uniting common interests.
Municipalities	Music in the parks, farmers markets, holiday festivities
Northwest Vermont Regional Prevention Collaborative	Provides opportunities for people and organizations to come together to share information, make connections, collaborate, and explore opportunities related to prevention of substance misuse and promotion of wellbeing.
Recreation Departments	Robust programming and activities for all ages.
St. Albans Rotary Interact Youth Group	Volunteerism for local youth
St. Albans Walk and Bike Committee	Advocacy to build safe/connected community in greater St. Albans
Swanton Arts Council	Provides classes and events in the community, focused on the arts.
Northwestern Medical Center	<p>In process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded NMC events for staff and community – holiday events, celebrations, sporting events, etc.</li> <li>• Evolving the Patient Family Advisory Council PFAC to have more opportunity to shape our care delivery system.</li> <li>• Provide Grand Rounds for providers on current topics on healthcare.</li> <li>• The Population Health Department work with the Accountable Community for Health CAIRES Circle.</li> <li>• Opened the Conference Center back up to the community for meetings.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The first annual Long Term Health Care Summit established and hosted.</li><li>• NMC donates to target organizations who are actively working in these areas.</li></ul> <p>Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reinvent the fall meeting of the NMC Incorporators to serve as an annual meeting with the community.</li></ul>
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