



*emerging*

!! **STRONGER** !!



## Note from Lauren Pearson and Michael Lee

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to the North Country Health Consortium's 2023 Annual Report. The North Country Health Consortium (NCHC) was established in 1997 as a vehicle for addressing common issues through collaboration among health and human service providers serving Northern New Hampshire. As we reflect on the legacy of NCHC, we are proud of the continued commitment to the mission and vision, as demonstrated in the tremendous achievements of the past year. 2023 has been another year of growth, opportunity, recognition, partnerships, and nationally recognized programming. As the emergent COVID-19 response has waned, NCHC has broadened the focus of our services to address other identified health priority areas.

The theme of this year's Annual Report is "Emerging Stronger" – a phrase that embodies the North Country's resilience and NCHC's commitment to addressing the pressing health needs of the region. In partnership with community members and stakeholders, the Consortium expanded its focus to the highest health priority areas identified in the latest Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) iteration. The five health priority areas include preventing and managing chronic disease, oral health, wellness and emergency preparedness, mental health and substance abuse, and Social Determinants of Health. All NCHC's programs will be assessed through the lens of these health priorities. Based on the identified gaps, many of NCHC's programs have expanded this year to address the region's health needs.

We present this Annual Report with deep appreciation and gratitude for our dedicated team members, board, funders, and partners. With your continued support, we will continue striving to improve the North Country's health status!

Sincerely,

Lauren Pearson, Executive Director & Michael Lee, Board President





## Prevention and Management of Chronic Disease

The leading causes of disability and death in the United States and in the North Country are chronic diseases, which include heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, and arthritis.



## Wellness and Emergency Preparedness

Preparedness and response proficiency are essential to supporting mobilization of staff and volunteers during an emergency.



## Social Determinants of Health

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Social Determinants of Health are “the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life, including economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies, and political systems.”

*\*Look for these icons throughout the report to see how our work impacts the Health Priority Areas identified in the CHTIP.*

# Health Priority Areas



## Oral Health

Oral health is multifaceted and essential to and a key indicator of overall health and well-being.



## Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Mental illness is strongly linked to substance misuse as a co-occurring disorder and continues to be part of the conversation in the North Country.



# Health Priority Area Impact in Fiscal Year 2023



In October, NCHC began a care coordination pilot with New Hampshire Healthy Families to provide targeted case management services to **20** Managed Care Organization members per month.

With NH Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) funding, NCHC launched a statewide Community Health Worker (CHW) awareness campaign that included bus signs, radio, and digital marketing.



Through various funding opportunities, NCHC offered two Community Health Worker trainings, producing **47** fully trained CHWs .



## 110 CHWs and stakeholders

attended the statewide annual CHW conference at Grappone Conference Center in Concord, NH in June.



NCHC staff provided oral health education to Head Start staff and families in Groveton, Colebrook, Pittsburg, and Berlin.



NCHC hosted an interactive oral health session for residents at the Maple Lodge, a residential home for adults with mental illness who are transitioning to independent living.

Public health and AHEC staff members participated in NH Oral Health Coalition listening sessions with a primary focus to increase and enhance school-based oral health services.



The Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Coordinator participated in

## 220 trainings and community events

aimed at improving Public Health Emergency Preparedness.



Over **240** students in North Country schools received education about the dangers of vaping through presentations by Regional Prevention Network staff.



Prevention and Management of Chronic Disease



Oral Health



Wellness and Emergency Preparedness



Mental Health and Substance Abuse



Social Determinants of Health



NCHC was honored to receive more than **\$220,000** in Opioid Abatement Funding to assist North Country youth recover from the opioid epidemic through school and community based supports.

NNH AHEC hosted **19** students for the North Country Scholars Weekend. Students explored the world of practicing providers living in rural communities through job shadows and didactic sessions at NCHC member and partner organizations.

**3,000**

COVID-19 test kits were distributed by the Public Health Team to North Country residents through strategic placement at places where residents live, work and recreate.

The Northern NH Area Health Education Center (AHEC) formed an Advisory Council of **14** members, including current and retired healthcare providers and community professionals from the public health and education sectors.



Leveraging regional workforce development connections, the NNH AHEC team provided opportunities for health career exploration to **182** students in North Country high schools.

Prevention and  
Management of  
Chronic DiseaseOral  
HealthWellness and  
Emergency  
PreparednessMental Health  
and Substance  
AbuseSocial  
Determinants  
of Health



During **2** Drug Takeback Day events, the Substance Misuse Prevention and AskPETRA teams helped to facilitate the collection of approximately **916** pounds of unused medications.



The Public Health Network (PHN) deployed supplies from the Emergency Preparedness trailers to support the warming shelter at the Robert E. Clifford Memorial Building.

In partnership with NH DHHS, the PHN team hosted a forum to identify and set preparedness priorities for the region's multi-year Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP).



State and national media outlets provided coverage highlighting NCHC's work in the SUD space, including stories on recovery-friendly workplaces and recovery oriented community supports.

The NNH AHEC's continued partnership with the University of New Hampshire's Advance Nursing Education Workforce (ANEW) program provided awareness and support to our rural nurses about the opportunity to earn advanced degrees as Family Nurse Practitioners, and recruited North Country providers to serve as preceptors to program participants.

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This year NCHC's Drug Treatment Court team welcomed **32** participants to the program and graduated **6** participants. NCHC also provided Case Management services as part of the Family Treatment Court Pilot program in Sullivan County.




# 1,700

NNH AHEC provided over 1,700 attendees continuing education credits through their professional development opportunities.

Throughout the year, NCHC engaged representatives from state and federal government in multiple discussions highlighting the importance of public health initiatives, the impact of work done by NCHC, and the impact of legislative policies on the lives of North Country Residents.



 Over **318** attendees participated in substance use disorder training events.

**50** attendees and over **250** virtual attendees showed their support for the new Berlin Recovery Community Organization (RCO) by attending a community information night facilitated by NCHC staff.







# 450

In the spring, the North Country Youth Advisory Council finalized the streamed UP! Conference, which engaged 450 virtual attendees.

The AskPETRA Program made **221** unique connections over the course of the year.



As a result of NCHC's Recovery Friendly Workforce Initiatives, **6** North Country businesses became Recovery Friendly Workplaces.

In September, NCHC held the first free Annulment Clinic in partnership with Legal603. **9** participants received free attorney support to annul criminal records - a step that will assist them in qualifying for housing and other services.



The AskPETRA team created over **250** SaveOneLife kits with two doses of Naloxone and other harm reduction supplies that were distributed throughout the region by NCHC. Additionally, **55** Naloxboxes were placed in various locations throughout North Country communities.



Prevention and Management of Chronic Disease



Oral Health



Wellness and Emergency Preparedness



Mental Health and Substance Abuse



Social Determinants of Health

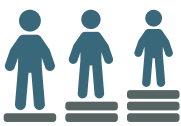
## Looking Ahead

Public Health concerns emerging at the international level resonate at the national, regional and local level as well. In the coming year, NCHC will explore opportunities to address the local implications of these emerging threats and trends:



Climate change is leading to increases in severe weather events, pollution, and the emergence of previously unknown zoonotic diseases that pose threats to health and economic stability.

Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation have the potential to improve data analysis, the identification of patterns in disease prevalence, help predict patient outcomes, and improve access to health and human service supports.



Closing opportunity gaps and placing health equity at the center of public health work is essential to ensuring that the health needs of our region's most vulnerable residents are met.

The median age of North Country residents is rapidly increasing. Through intentional planning and collaboration, our communities can take steps to become Age Friendly Communities where older residents can live robust, safe lives.

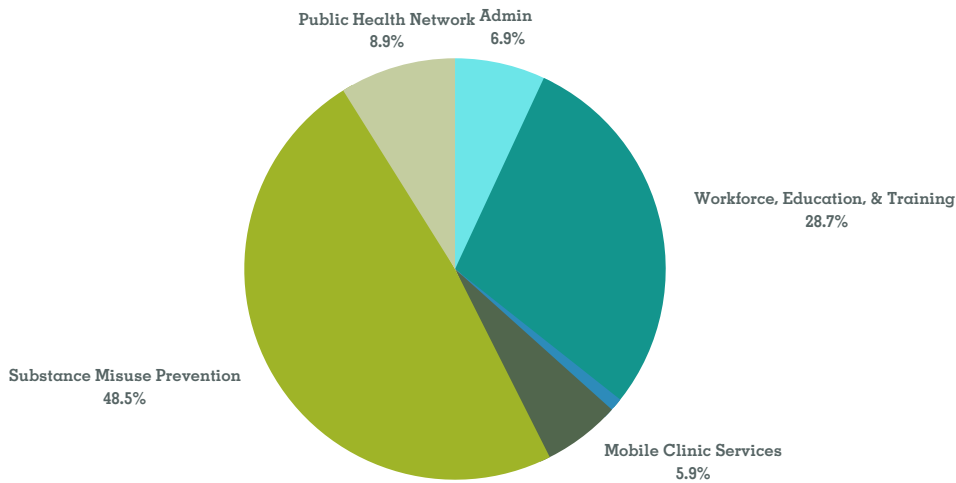


With staffing shortages at critical levels, and a steadily greying workforce, new and innovative approaches to workforce recruitment and retention need to be explored and pursued.



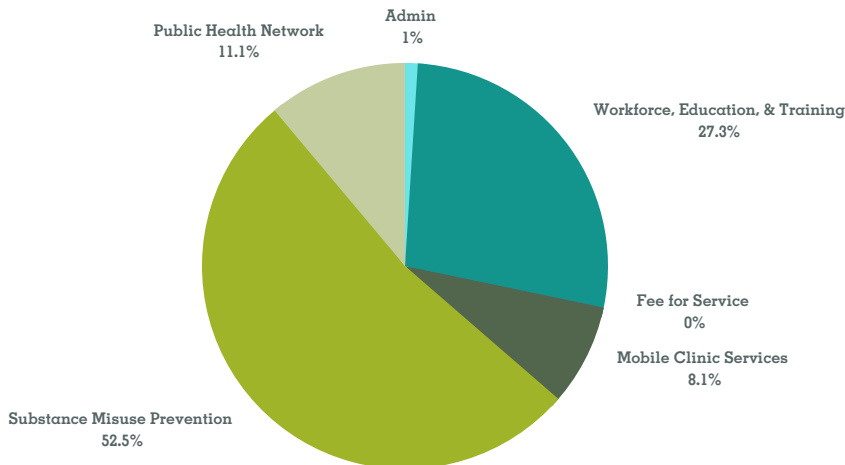
# Financial Information

## FY 2023 Revenue Sources



October 2022-  
September 2023  
Revenue Sources:  
**\$3.435 million**  
(Unaudited)

## FY 2023 Program Expenses



October 2022-  
September 2023  
Program Expenses:  
**\$3.392 million**  
(Unaudited)



## Board Members

### President (O)

Michael Lee  
President and CEO, Weeks Medical Center

### Treasurer (O)

Ann Duffy  
CFO, Cottage Hospital

Jeanne Robillard  
CEO, Tri-County Community Action  
Program

Margo Sullivan  
Executive Director, Androscoggin  
Valley Home Care Services

Tiffany Haynes  
CEO, North Country Home Health  
and Hospice

Scott Colby  
President and CEO, Upper Connecticut  
Valley Hospital

Jaime D'Alessandro  
Community Member

### Vice President (O)

Ken Gordon  
CEO, Coos County Family Health

### Secretary (O)

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President and CEO, Androscoggin  
Valley Hospital

Mark Bonta  
Plant Manager, Genfoot America

Kristina Fjield-Sparks  
Director, New Hampshire Area Health  
Education Center

Ed Duffy, MD  
Executive Vice President, Littleton  
Regional Healthcare

Suzanne Gaetjens-Oleson  
CEO, Northern Human Services

Eric Moran  
Director Peer Support, White Horse  
RCOs



## 2022-2023 NCHC Funders

Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

Dartmouth Medical  
School/Geisel School  
of Medicine/Area  
Health Education  
Center

Granite United Way  
Health Resources and  
Services  
Administration

Integrated Delivery  
Network Region #7

New Hampshire  
Department of Health  
and Human Services

NAMI New Hampshire

JSI Research and  
Training Institute

Mary Hitchcock  
Memorial

Hospital/Dartmouth  
Hitchcock

Neil and Louise  
Tillotson Fund, New  
Hampshire Charitable  
Foundation

Medical Reserve Corps  
- NACCHO RISE

US Centers for  
Medicare and  
Medicaid Services

University of New  
Hampshire Institute for  
Health Policy and  
Practice

University of New  
Hampshire College of  
Health and Human  
Services

NHMS Bowler-Bartlett  
Foundation

Southern New  
Hampshire Area  
Health Education  
Center/Lamprey  
Health

University of Vermont  
Recovery Friendly  
Workplace of New  
Hampshire

New Hampshire  
Healthy Families

New Hampshire  
Bureau of Drug and  
Alcohol Services

Endowment for Health

New Hampshire  
Judicial Branch



## 2023 NCHC Members

45th Parallel EMS

AHEAD Quarter, Inc.

Ammonoosuc Community Health Services

Androscoggin Valley Home Care Services

Androscoggin Valley Hospital

Center for New Beginnings

Coos County Family Health Services, Inc.

Cottage Hospital

Family Resource Center

Grafton County Nursing Home

Groups Recover Together

Martins Point Health Care, Inc.

Mid-State Health Center

Littleton Regional Healthcare

North Country Healthcare

North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency, Inc.

Northern Human Services

Tri-County Community Action Program, Inc.

University of New England

Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital

Weeks Medical Center

