2020 Annual Report
This past year has been a year of change and challenges. But instead of viewing these challenges as stone walls, we have turned them into stepping stones. We have faced the winds of change and have turned so that the wind is now behind us, pushing us forward in new positive directions.

Our Board has demonstrated a renewed and deep commitment to NCHC and our mission to meet the needs of our staff, our community, and our partner organizations.

Our staff has shown tenacity, flexibility, and creativity by quickly building and adapting to safe guidelines through remote work; adopting new client-facing guidelines for in-person programs to be able to continue serving those in need; providing trainings and conferences virtually; developing new program models that can be delivered remotely to keep our youth connected; and creating new models to respond to emerging public health needs.

Our clients have learned how to attend programs remotely, adapting to telehealth and attending programs even in isolation while awaiting test results; and our state and local community has supported us through collaboration and financial assistance.

Like most organizations, we needed to make extremely difficult decisions that have included cost-saving measures across the organization, suspending residential services for three months, eliminating positions, laying off staff, and critically examining the viability and community need for programs and services.

To us, resilience means more than bouncing back – it means using the challenges as a new force, a new energy to advance, meeting the emerging needs of our community – and reexaming and re-committing to our mission as we look towards the future. We continue to move forward, with the wind at our back, spreading new seeds of growth as we enter a new year. We are and will continue to be... resilient.

From our Board President and Interim CEO

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Stepping Up to Resilience

A Year to Remember

Over and above our pivots to create new program models and ways of working, we were also able to take a leadership role in response to the pandemic to help coordinate efforts between North Country towns, healthcare organizations, and the community at large.

January

Late January: North Country Regional Public Health Network (RPHN) began monitoring for potential cases of COVID-19 in tandem with the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

March

March 2: DHHS announces first presumptive positive result for person in NH tested for COVID-19.


March 18: NCHC identified the need for a formalized Unified Command structure to be responsive to the needs of the region. RPHN activated the MACE (Multi-Agency Coordinating Entity), bringing to the table the 5 overarching entities as Unified Command partners to manage the COVID-19 pandemic response in the region: NCHC, City of Berlin, Town of Bethlehem, Town of Lancaster, and Littleton Emergency Management.

April

April: Colebrook Police Department joins the Unified Command team, expanding the regional group to 6 partnering entities.

May-June

May-June: RPHN recruited and vetted new Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers, lead volunteer trainings, including orientation to the Northern NH MRC, introductions to the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS), and prepared volunteers to work in Alternate Care Sites.

July-Sept

July-Sept: Increased facilities available to be Points of Dispensing (PODs), and training to cover all aspects of planning for mobilizing to ensure capacity to provide medications, vaccines, or medical supplies. The North Country RPHN prepared by partnering with agencies in the community to form open and closed PODs.

Some of our Accomplishments include:

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Maintained a liaison role at State and Federal levels, facilitating the ordering and acquisition of PPE for healthcare and long-term care facilities, while keeping stock of the regional emergency supply trailers.

Capacity - Participated in planning and set-up for medical surge sites, partnering with the NH National Guard and regional hospitals.

Volunteer Training - Recruited, vetted, and lead virtual orientation trainings for Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers.

Information Clearinghouse - Provided daily updates and risk communication to the community via the NCHC website and other media platforms.

Planning, training for, and responding to public health emergencies based on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s 15 Preparedness Capabilities. This is accomplished by improving the overall preparedness and resiliency of communities, while also developing specific emergency response capabilities across the public health, healthcare, and behavioral health systems.

4

5
Resiliency 101: Basic Public Health

Getting the Lead Out

NCHC began working on NH Health Homes Lead Poisoning Prevention Initiative to reduce the risk of lead poisoning in children throughout the North Country.

Our Goals:

- Create community-focused, culturally competent marketing campaign informing region about Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Initiative
- Engage municipalities, healthcare professionals, and the education sector in lead poisoning prevention efforts
- Host 2 lead information sessions
- Work with North Country realtors, building centers, and municipal officials to disseminate materials that increase awareness and provide lead prevention resources for new homeowners and for homeowners doing their own renovations

Healthy Smiles

Our oral health program helped spread the word about the importance of good oral health and provided oral health education to parents, staff, and students, preschool through grade 6, in the North Country.

Increased Vaccine Storage

The North Country Public Health Network purchased a new vaccination storage refrigeration unit with digital data logger that can be monitored using Wi-Fi. The Regional Public Health Network (RPHN) can now safely store and monitor vaccinations to keep the North Country population immunized against preventable diseases, starting with the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.

North Country Health Consortium’s Oral Health Program focuses on community outreach and education. The program engages community members, of all ages, to connect oral health to overall health.

Flu Shots & Vaccinations: Improving Immune Response in the North Country

In July, we began planning community-based influenza drive-through clinics to administer vaccinations to North Country residents in Littleton, Lancaster, and Haverhill.

Last year, the Public Health Network worked throughout the region and administered free flu vaccinations to 386 Students at 11 Schools!

Public health services include: increasing awareness and access to substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery services by monitoring and enhancing continuum of care systems; ongoing development to ensure public health emergency preparedness; and strategic planning to mitigate the health impacts of climate change and other disease prevention and health promotion activities.

300+

Flu Shot FREE

In 2022, the Public Health Network worked throughout the region and administered free flu vaccinations to 386 Students at 11 Schools!
Drug Treatment Court of Grafton County is a multi-phase intervention program designed for adults who have been convicted of a felony and diagnosed with a SUD as an alternative to prison time. Historically serving participants in-person, the Drug Treatment Court of Grafton County was the first in the state to offer virtual hearings. The court relied on Zoom encrypted technology, where NCHC helped facilitate court sessions with the Judge, as well as providing support for team meetings during quarantine. Our innovation minimized interruption to the system, reduced backlogs, and continued to give participants the option to choose intensive supervision and treatment over a potentially lengthy prison term.

In NH, residents convicted of an impaired driving offense are required to participate in a state-approved Impaired Driver Care Management Program (IDCMP). NCHC’s IDCMP supports individuals to navigate the system to regain driving privileges. Last year, our Impaired Driver Care Management Program (IDCMP) made a pivot early in the pandemic to offer services virtually, including program intakes and NCHC facilitated Impaired Driver Education Program (IDEP) classes. We were able to help 131 people regain their driving privileges, while referring 163 people who were identified as having a possible substance use disorder to additional recovery support services, such as counseling with a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2020 Participation</th>
<th>Total Intakes</th>
<th>Total IDEPs</th>
<th>Individuals Participated</th>
<th>Individuals Completed</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>131</td>
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Consistent and Responsive Despite the Pandemic

14 Enrolled in 2019/2020
5 Graduated From the Program
2 Achieved High School Equivalency (HISET)
2 Enrolled in College
12 Working Full Time
2 Working Part Time

Drug Treatment Court Participants

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Building Resilience Statewide

Day of Learning!

In collaboration with North Country Healthcare, Coös County Nursing Home, Coös County Nursing Hospital, NH Health Care Association, the NH Sector Partnerships Initiative, and Genesis HealthCare-Country Village Center, we hosted the 2nd Annual Day of Learning, Celebration, and Renewal for Licensed Nursing Assistants (LNAs) last October. Over 100 nursing assistants, along with vendors, presenters, and planners, attended this full-day event.

Educational topics for the day included:
- Supporting patients and families with trauma responsive care
- Recognizing skin and wound care concerns
- Effective and productive communication with coworkers, patients, and families
- Self-care & wellness for the caregiver

Girl Power: Girls in Technology

In December, the NNH AHEC staff participated in a Girls in Technology Day interactive workshop titled “There’s a Health Career for Everyone” with White Mountain Community College and NH Department of Education (NH DOE).

Continuing Education 2020

74 Events
31 Live
30 Live Virtual
13 Self-Paced Online

7 Partners
UNH, MHCDS, NCH, Caravan Health, WMCC, Statewide IDNs, NH Healthcare Sector*

1048 Attendees

Help Where it’s Needed

Last October, Coös County Department of Corrections completed an agreement for project-specific funding to support the delivery of intensive case management services and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) to inmates of the correctional facility.

Pivots in Trainings and Forums

Last year, Region 7 Integrated Delivery Network (IDN) was involved with 14+ trainings/forums that reached 200+ people. Starting in March, these numbers were dramatically impacted by the pandemic. In-person trainings were canceled and eventually recreated to be virtual. The upshot is that now many of these trainings will be available virtually for the fall and winter months.

Exploring Unintended Consequences

In December, Region 7 IDN partners engaged in a Ripple Effects Mapping exercise aimed at exploring the intended and unintended consequences of the DSRIP (Delivery System Reform Incentive Program Waiver) work underway in the region.

Five main themes were identified from the exercise:
1. The enhancement of care coordination
2. Commitment to an integrated “whole person” approach to care
3. Critical Time Intervention (CTI) for care transitions
4. Accessible Substance Use Disorder treatment options
5. The impact of workforce shortages

The Region 7 IDN partners have used this insight to inform discussions about the best use of incentive payments earned by the region to address these areas of opportunity. During the COVID pandemic, this information provided focus for efforts to leverage the strength of the network to address the needs of the region’s most vulnerable residents.

Last Year’s Numbers

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<th>Last Year’s Numbers</th>
<th>662</th>
<th>9</th>
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<tr>
<td>People served using the CTI model</td>
<td>New MAT programs developed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>810</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People served with new MAT programs</td>
<td>New IOP programs developed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People served with new IOP services</td>
<td>People practicing as Peer Recovery Coaches</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2042</td>
<td>1689</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People served with Recovery Coach services</td>
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The enhancement of care coordination
- Commitment to an integrated “whole person” approach to care
- Critical Time Intervention (CTI) for care transitions
- Accessible Substance Use Disorder treatment options
- The impact of workforce shortages

1. MAT: Medication Assisted Treatment
2. IOP: Intensive Outpatient Program
3. CTI: Critical Time Intervention

*UNH- University of New Hampshire, MHCDS- Master of Health Care Delivery Science, NCH- North Country Healthcare, WMCC- White Mountains Community College
Building Youth Resilience through Engagement

Virtual UP Granite Youth Conference

June’s virtual conference proved to be as engaging as ever with a presentation by award-winning global speaker, Kevin Hines, who was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at 19. Hines jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge and survived the suicide attempt. He now travels the world sharing his story of hope, healing, and recovery, while teaching people of all ages the art of wellness and ability to survive pain with true resilience.

… the virtual presentation went well and was just as impactful as it would have been face to face. Huge kudos to you and everyone who made it possible!

–Phil, Student Assistance Professional

Facilitated by North Country youth, this free livestream included an interactive chat session, shoutouts from local youth and past presenters, and resources for the 1200 viewers in attendance.

Coalition Educates Lawmaker About Drug-Free Communities

NH Senator, Jeanne Shaheen, visited Woodsville High School to learn more about the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Grant and its impact on the Haverhill Area Substance Misuse Prevention Coalition. The group presented relevant statistics of youth substance use and highlighted the Coalition’s priorities and initiatives throughout the tenure of the DFC Grant: Drug Take Back Day, various chem-free community events, sticker shock campaigns, and community education sessions, including parent-focused opportunities to learn about the dangers of vaping and detecting drug use and risky behaviors in teens.

The Coalition is comprised of citizen stakeholders representing 12 different sectors, including, state and local government, substance misuse organizations, youth, parents, business, media, schools, youth-serving organizations, law enforcement, civic organizations, religious organizations, and healthcare, with the mission to reduce and prevent substance misuse among youth by working together to build a healthy, safe and drug-free community.

We Delivered

• 680+ lbs of unused prescription medications were collected in the North Country on Drug Take Back Day, Oct 2019
• 288 info packets filled with educational information and resources about substance misuse to households with 7-12th grade students.

Reaching young people through prevention and educational initiatives is fundamental to turning the tide of the substance use disorder epidemic.

–Senator Jeanne Shaheen

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Student Assistance Programs • Last year NCHC conducted:

- 153 strategies reaching 2,488 students
- 28 strategies reaching 1,200 parents
- 163 small group sessions reaching 304 students
- 1,968 individual sessions reaching 543 students

Substance Misuse Programs includes programming to address the entire continuum of care from prevention, identification, early intervention, treatment, to recovery supports.

Gathered around the table to meet Senator Shaheen and members of her staff were Members of the Haverhill Coalition, DFC Program Coordinator, and local students.

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### Continued Support for Chronic Illness

Last year, Ways2Wellness CONNECT Community Health Workers (W2WC CHWs) worked with 122 clients in their homes or the community to: provide chronic disease self-management tools and health information; assist in managing provider instructions and medications; and connect them to services and supports that can help with paying for medication and medical bills, food, transportation, and housing.

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### Aggregating “Pop-Up Resources”

From individual acts of kindness to group-organized endeavors, the pandemic prompted many in the North Country to do what they could to help. Through our connections with members and partners in the community, we learned about these “pop-up resources” and created a database that is updated regularly and available through the AskPETRA website.

### Tapping Into Our Resilience

Our WARM (Wellness And Recovery Model) program provided Community Health Worker/Recovery Coach (CHW/RC) Support to 43 individuals with Substance Use Disorder (SUD); community and professional education around SUD, including Recovery Coach Academy, Mental Health First Aid, Motivational Interviewing, Stigma and Language Training, and other beneficial SUD treatment and recovery topics; and engagement with Community Coalitions to change the culture around addiction by hosting community conversations, trainings, and other educational opportunities.

### Pivoting our Response

Last year, Ways2Wellness CONNECT programs pivoted quickly to more innovative operations. We began providing telehealth; developed written protocols, including COVID screening and social distancing methods (including meetings with clients outdoors); acquired plenty of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); and the option for clients to take sanitized tablets inside their homes to share health, safety, and medication concerns with us via Zoom.

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### Anticipated ROPM Outcomes Include:

- Strengthening partnerships between law enforcement and other organizations to increase support, including healthcare, treatment, basic needs, and recovery resources.
- Providing training for law enforcement and other first responders to expand their knowledge and understanding of recovery and local resources.
- Development of data collection and tracking tools to show program impact to further sustainability conversations.

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### Working with Law Enforcement

Recovery-Oriented Policing Model (ROPM) is a pilot program supported by our WARM program. ROPM was created to help law enforcement engage with and link individuals to treatment and other resources.

### Anticipated ROPM Outcomes Include:

- Strengthening partnerships between law enforcement and other organizations to increase support, including healthcare, treatment, basic needs, and recovery resources.
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As a response to Northern NH’s Substance Use Disorder (SUD) crisis, NCHC launched AskPETRA in April 2020 to address prevention, treatment, and recovery services in the North Country.

AskPETRA is designed to fill gaps in regional systems-level navigation and infrastructure.

AskPETRA is the North Country Health Consortium’s response to Northern NH’s Substance Use Disorder (SUD) crisis. This free service provides local training and one-on-one help to connect providers, adults, and families with the help they need to understand, prevent and treat SUD.

We know that support with daily needs makes a dramatic difference in recovery from SUD. AskPETRA has compiled local resources to support adults in the North Country. Our easy-to-use database features connections that include housing, food, healthcare, job search, childcare, and more.

AskPETRA includes a broad range of SUD education plus a regional outreach plan including the development of a robust website, resources, and communication tools.

In August, AskPETRA rolled out the “Save One Life” campaign, consisting of education in SUD stigma and harm reduction, as well as the promotion of the life-saving drug, naloxone. AskPETRA’s naloxone kits include Narcan, sterile supplies, fentanyl test strips, CPR masks and gloves, and educational materials.

The website is always adapting to our local audience in these challenging, ever-changing times and includes professional trainings plus up-to-date guidance and resources related to treatment and recovery. Some of last year’s trainings for providers covered brain injury and overdose, ethical considerations of peer recovery, alcohol use in the shadows, unintended consequences of cannabis, and the assessment and treatment of co-occurring personality disorders.
The Resilience to Keep it Going

Our heartfelt thank you to our amazing staff for their dedication and commitment to the people of the North Country.

Connecting Resilience

Collaboration and Outreach through Social Media

Between our Facebook pages, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter, our staff is always pushing out great, local, up-to-date information. Our Facebook Posts alone have attracted as many as 2500 viewers!

Let us know your opinion on the priority needs and concerns in your North Country Community by connecting to our social media sites. Interact with us by liking and sharing posts, sending direct messages and commenting.
Resilience to Know What to Do

Overcoming Challenges at Friendship House

Another chapter in Substance Use Disorder Treatment: Friendship House programs seek new future

For the last three years, the Friendship House and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Clinical Services, managed by NCHC, has included Residential Treatment for the disease of addiction. Intensive Outpatient and Outpatient services to residents of Northern NH.

After much discussion, in a special board meeting, the NCHC Board of Directors made the decision to seek another home for the SUD Clinical Services programs, with a full transition by the end of December 2020. The Governor has allocated continuous challenge to cover costs for the high-quality services delivered, which was significantly magnified by COVID. The Board of Directors applauds the dedicated staff for all of their efforts and successes serving people with substance use disorder.

...the NCHC Board of Directors made the decision to seek another home for the SUD Clinical Services programs ... and beyond. A complete transformation included setting up a new building, expanding treatment beds from 14 to 28, and achieving a prestigious designation from the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Since that time, NCHC has provided addiction-related treatment and counseling services to 533 people for residential treatment, and more than 800 individuals for evaluations and outpatient treatment, addressing this significant public health need.

CARES Act funding to NCHC that will allow the programs to remain open through the end of December 2020, and NCHC will be working with the State and the community to identify potential providers of these critical services in the North Country. Mike Lee, NCHC’s Board President, noted “North Country Health Consortium assumed operations of the Friendship House when there was no apparent home for it because there was—and still is—a significant need for high quality treatment. Unfortunately, it has been a challenge to cover costs for the high-quality services delivered, which was significantly magnified by COVID. The Board of Directors applauds the dedicated staff for all of their efforts and successes serving people with substance use disorder.”
Our Resilience is Possible Because of YOUR Resilience. Thank You!

NCHC Members

Androscoggin Valley Hospital
Cottage Hospital
Grafton County Nursing Home
Indian Stream Health Center
Littleton Regional HealthCare
Mid-State Health Center
New Hampshire AHEC
North Country Healthcare
North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency
Northern Human Services
RS Consulting
Tri-County Community Action Program, Inc.
University of New England
Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital
Weeds Medical Center
White Mountains Community College

NCHC Funders

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Beacon (Wellsense)
Dartmouth Medical School/Geisel School of Medicine
Grafton County Human Services
Integrated Delivery Network Region #7
JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.
Lamprey Healthcare/Southern NH Area Health Education Center
Mascoma Bank Giving Fund

NAMI New Hampshire
Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund, NH Charitable Foundation
National Association of County & City Health Officials
New Hampshire Bureau of Drug & Alcohol Services
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services
New Hampshire Healthy Families
New Hampshire Judicial Branch
SAU #7, Colebrook
US Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources & Services Administration, Office of Rural Health Policy
US Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention

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Community SUD Provider
Jeanne Robillard
CEO, Tri-County Community Action Program
Leading innovative collaboration to improve the health status of Northern New Hampshire.