

**North Country Hospital  
Community Health Needs Assessment - Implementation Strategy  
Update April 2014**

**Mission**

At North Country Hospital, quality patient care is our greatest commitment, employees are our greatest asset, excellent patient experience is our greatest accomplishment, and the health of the community is our greatest responsibility.

**Population Served and How Priorities Were Determined**

As described in its Community Health Needs Assessment, and as documented in the data section, North Country Hospital (NCH) serves a population that is at greater economic risk when compared to VT or the US. With this in mind, and as noted in the Assessment document, the NCH Advisory Team agreed on a set of criteria by which to prioritize health needs that became apparent from the entire process, including the survey process. The criteria elements established are listed below. It is noted that these elements are aligned with those recommended by the Catholic Health Association (CHA) and VHA, Inc. in prioritizing community health needs as documented in Assessing & Addressing Community Health Needs (CHA, 2011).

- ◆ Magnitude of the problem or issue as defined by number of people or percentage of population affected
- ◆ Severity as defined by rate of morbidity or mortality, if applicable
- ◆ Vulnerable population, identified examples of which include low socioeconomic, children, elderly
- ◆ Opportunity to affect change

Through the assessment process, the NCH Advisory Team identified key health concerns as priorities for the NCH service area. As described on page 5 of the assessment document, these priorities are in agreement with those identified by community members through the survey process. The tables on the following pages list these health needs and give a brief overview of current strategies that are being implemented within the community, along with collaborating agencies involved.

**Key to Terms Used in Table Below:**

VDH - VT Department of Health  
DVHA - Department of VT Health Access (Medicaid, Blueprint, Ladies First)  
ADAP - VT Dept of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention  
NEKLS - Northeast Kingdom Learning Services  
LDAC - Licensed Drug and Alcohol Counselor  
LICSW - Licensed Clinical Social Worker  
PCMH - Patient Centered Medical Homes - The NC Primary Care Practices (PCP) meet this designation, as do Island Pond Health Center, Newport Pediatrics and NC OB/GYN Services.  
WIC - Women, Infants, Children - VDH program for low income

Key Health Concerns	Current Status /Strategies	Partners/Collaborators	Notes / Comments (If Any)	Potential Plan/ Upcoming Developments
<b>Tobacco Use</b>	<p><b>Tobacco Cessation Services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Group &amp; one-on-one coaching</li> <li>◆ Access to free NRT x 8 wks (or more through NCH)</li> <li>◆ Access to VT Quit Partners for alternative services (Quit Line, Online)</li> </ul> <p><b>Tobacco Prevention:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Local agencies have a grant to restrict tobacco use in public areas and restrict advertising in retail stores.</li> <li>◆ Some local elementary schools have tobacco prevention grants to provide activities in their after-school program.</li> </ul>	<p>NCH is main support for both coaching and some NRT. VDHA supports free NRT. DVHA / Blueprint reimburses group coaching only, with strict definitions.</p> <p>ADAP NEKLS</p> <p>Some local elementary schools such as Holland, Newport, Charleston, Jay.</p>	<p>Provider referral to quit services via NCH Community Health Dept has been in place over three years and working well. Referral form and feedback form to provider are now in EHR.</p> <p>Lead agency is ADAP with NEKLS implementing their grant.</p> <p>Schools do this independently through their grants.</p>	<p>Continue this process. Providers are familiar with process and using it. Tobacco users also self-refer to Community Health.</p> <p>Grant expiring 6/30/14. NEKLS has re-applied for new grant to begin July 1, 2014.</p>
<b>Drug &amp; Alcohol Abuse - Specifically: Need for additional LDAC &amp; LICSW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Treatment services for drug / alcohol abuse are provided by NEK Human Services (mental health) which has a number of qualified counselors on staff.</li> <li>◆ BAART Behavioral Health Services provide substance abuse treatment via mobile services.</li> <li>◆ There are several private practitioners in the area</li> <li>◆ Currently 2 full time (FT) social workers at NCH, 1 assigned FT specifically to MCH and ED due to increase need in this patient population. Additionally, through Blueprint 2 FT social workers cover the NC Primary Care Practices, North &amp; South.</li> </ul>	<p>. Key providers are: NEKHS, some private clinicians, BAART Behavioral Services.</p> <p>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ NEKHS staff reports that if more funding was available they would hire more clinicians. The need exceeds what they can currently provide financially.</li> <li>◆ Having 2 licensed counselors (social workers) providing services at NC Primary Care will help alleviate some of the need in the community.</li> <li>◆ Over recent months, DVHA and ADAP are collaborating through Blueprint Project Managers to implement Hub &amp; Spoke Model for opiate dependence treatment.</li> </ul>	<p>NCH added 4<sup>th</sup> FT social worker April 2013 as planned.</p> <p>NEKHS moved into their new building in May '13 as planned to centralize staff and improve services.</p> <p>NEKHS, BAART, DVHA and ADAP (through BP Project Manager) currently collaborating on Hub &amp; Spoke model for opiate dependence treatment.</p>

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<p><b>Cancer -</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Need for increased screening, especially colorectal</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Continue and increase as possible our currently fairly high rates of mammograms and pap tests.</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Prevention as related to lung cancer and reducing tobacco use as described above</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Community awareness campaign regarding colorectal cancer screening was completed fall 2012;</li> <li>◆ The NC PCPs mail reminders to patients who are due for colorectal screening w/ an educational message re: importance of early detection.</li> <li>◆ NC PCPs plan an annual process to notify patients by mail when due for mammogram or Pap test.</li> <li>◆ NCH Diagnostic Imaging sends letters annually to remind patients that their mammogram is due.</li> <li>◆ NCH has a grant from Komen to help women pay for breast cancer screening and diagnostic procedures.</li> <li>◆ October-National Breast Cancer Awareness Month - NCH submits newspaper articles and sets up displays</li> <li>◆ NCH provides Oncology Services in collaboration w/ DHMC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ DVHA- Ladies First</li> <li>◆ VT/NH Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure</li> <li>◆ VHD - Local district office as they remind their clients regularly</li> <li>◆ DHMC Oncology</li> </ul>	<p>Most current (2012) colorectal cancer screening rate (% adults age 50 – 75) is:  VT: 71%  Orleans Co: 69%  Essex Co: 62%  Both OC and EC are considered statistically similar to VT rate.  (<a href="http://www.healthvermont.gov">www.healthvermont.gov</a> – <u>County Cancer Fact Sheets</u>, January 2014)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ NC PCPs completed FY’13 campaign reminding 50 y. olds about colon cancer screening.</li> <li>◆ NC PCP South plans to mail reminders for cancer screening in FY’14.</li> <li>◆ Stay current with VDH data re: cancer screening in our HSA to know if we are improving over time</li> <li>◆ Continue DHMC partnership for oncology services at NCH</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Diabetes -</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Disease management and prevention;</b></li> <li>◆ <b>This is also closely linked to the health concern of obesity noted below.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ VT Blueprint (BP) for Health has a focus on Diabetes, both for prevention &amp; symptom control.</li> <li>◆ NCH PCPs participate in BP and plan to send reminders to patients re: need for lab work, app't</li> <li>◆ Diabetes Self-Management Workshops under BP; free; basic info</li> <li>◆ NCH Diabetes Education - By provider referral; fee for service; paid by insurance</li> <li>◆ NCH - Full time Registered Dietitian for diet counseling</li> <li>◆ Chronic Care Coordinator serves NC PCPs, offering one-on-one support / instruction to diabetics &amp; their caregivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ DVHA - Blueprint</li> <li>◆ Community Health Team members - Inform their respective clients of these services</li> <li>◆ VDH - Local Office- informs clients of available services</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Continue collaboration with VT Blueprint/ DVHA</li> <li>◆ Continue all current strategies</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Access to Health Services -</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Particularly need for Community Health Team(s) (CHT)</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Also greater access to mental health services in northern Essex County (Please see next page)</b></li> </ul>	<p>Regarding overall access to health services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ NC PCPs are accepting new patients, including pediatrics.</li> <li>◆ Recent provider retirements and changes are planned so recruitment for PCPs is in progress.</li> <li>◆ NCH ED staffs sufficiently for a “transport nurse” to accompany a patient to tertiary care center via ambulance whenever needed</li> </ul> <p>Regarding Community Health Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The local CHT currently facilitated by the Blueprint Project Manager has been in place for over two years. Now meeting monthly, it is always well attended by a wide variety of agency representatives.</li> <li>◆ The “core” team now has a FT Chronic Care Coordinator, 2 FT LICSW, and part time dietitian.</li> <li>◆ A 2<sup>nd</sup> FT LICSW position was filled in April 2013.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Island Pond Health Center</li> <li>◆ Newport Pediatrics</li> <li>◆ Three local independent provider practices</li> <li>◆ All members of the CHT</li> <li>◆ Key provider of mental health services is NEKHS, serving three counties.</li> <li>◆ DVHA/ Blueprint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Nurse assisted transports from NCH ED is a community benefit with significant value.</li> <li>◆ The CHT has a strong networking value which helps improve patient services by all involved.</li> <li>◆ The services of a Chronic Care Coordinator, LICSW and dietitian all help improve access to services.</li> <li>◆ CHT seems to be strengthening with greater networking among care providers to persons with chronic illness, i.e., SASH, Chronic Care Coord, NEVAAA, VNA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Continue collaboration with DVHA and participation in VT Blueprint</li> <li>◆ Continue to grow CHT services as possible under Blueprint, as evidenced by the addition of the 2<sup>nd</sup> LICSW for PCMHs in Orleans and Barton.</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Regarding the need for greater access to mental health services in northern Essex County</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Island Pond Health Center, a PCMH, has a half-time Behavior Specialist (Licensed Mental Health Counselor), under Blueprint funding, serving patients of IPHC</li> <li>◆ Canaan Schools (Elem &amp; High) have a full time school therapist (LICSW)</li> <li>◆ NEKHS is the key provider. They provide case managers from several different programs that allow for home visiting and especially focus on parent education, throughout northern Essex Co.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ NEK Human Services</li> <li>◆ Island Pond Health Center</li> <li>◆ DVHA /Blueprint</li> <li>◆ Essex North Supervisory Union (Canaan Schools)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Individuals from the Island Pond area not served by services listed under Current Status usually travel to Newport or St. Johnsbury for services.</li> <li>◆ Those further north and east in Norton or Canaan generally travel to Colebrook, NH for services if their insurance (usually Medicaid) will pay.</li> <li>◆ As previously noted, if funding was available NEKHS would hire more clinicians. The need exceeds what they can currently provide financially</li> </ul>	

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<p><b>Obesity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Specifically the need for education regarding the importance of physical activity and healthy eating choices.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Physical Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ NCH Wellness Center offers a variety of low cost options for physical activity</li> <li>◆ Several local businesses support employee participation at Wellness Center</li> <li>◆ Several private gyms are available in Newport area (NCH pays partial membership for employees)</li> <li>◆ Local trail networks for walking, skiing, biking, snowshoeing, hiking, such as Memphremagog Ski Touring, Northwoods Stewardship, and Craftsbury Outdoor Ctr.</li> <li>◆ Two ski resorts in area offer reduced prices to local schools and residents</li> <li>◆ Local recreation, i.e., Newport Parks &amp; Recreation</li> <li>◆ Coutts Moriarty Youth Camp (Derby) provides variety of activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Businesses supporting employee participation at WC and other local gyms</li> <li>◆ Memphremagog Ski Touring Foundation</li> <li>◆ Northwoods Stewardship Center</li> <li>◆ Craftsbury Outdoor Center</li> <li>◆ Jay Peak/ Burke Mtn</li> <li>◆ State parks/ beaches (Brighton, Maidstone, Crystal)</li> <li>◆ Local beaches - Prouty, Salem, Shadow</li> <li>◆ Indoor pools- Jay, Npt City Motel</li> <li>◆ Newport /Derby Recreation</li> </ul>	<p>WC Manager writes and submits weekly articles to local newspaper, many of which focus on healthy eating and physical activity.</p> <p>NCH Community Health also writes and submits articles on similar topics over the year. Additionally, displays are set up on hospital campus and in the community.</p>	

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<b>Obesity (Continued)</b>	<p>Healthy Eating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ NCH offers Registered Dietitian Services</li> <li>◆ Farmer’s Markets throughout the area in spring, summer, fall</li> <li>◆ Community gardens in some areas (Newport, Derby)</li> <li>◆ Blueprint Self-management workshops provide education on healthy eating such as label reading to be aware of fats, sodium, calories</li> <li>◆ Learning Kitchen - 6-week healthy cooking and shopping program offered by Hunger Free VT</li> <li>◆ Healthy Eating 6-wk Workshops offered by NEV Area Agency on Aging</li> <li>◆ Ladies Fist and 3 Squares VT (Food Stamps) -- provide education on healthy eating</li> <li>◆ VDH-Local office has nutritionist who provides education to WIC clients.</li> <li>◆ Local Breastfeeding Coalition to promote breastfeeding</li> <li>◆ Green Mtn Farm to School: connects schools and farms through food and education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Local Farmers’ Markets</li> <li>◆ DVHA/ Blueprint/ Ladies First</li> <li>◆ Hunger Free VT</li> <li>◆ Green Mtn Farm to School</li> <li>◆ VDH-Local Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Almost all elementary schools and the NCU Jr High participate in Green Mtn Farm to School</li> </ul>	



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<p><b>Chronic Care Self-management-</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Emphasize/ improve self-management of chronic diseases, for example, diabetes, asthma, hypertension, heart or lung disease</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Self-management workshops, 6 sessions in length, are offered throughout the year by NCH (under Blueprint) for chronic disease and diabetes management</li> <li>◆ NCH Certified Asthma Educators provide services at NC PCPs.</li> <li>◆ NC PCPs and other healthcare providers continuously strive to provide the most appropriate educational materials to their patients</li> <li>◆ The development of the roles of Chronic Care Coordinator and Social Worker within the PCMHs provides more opportunity to patients for one-on-one instruction / support to improve self-management.</li> <li>◆ Self-management techniques are also emphasized by the NCH outpatient departments such as Cardiac Rehab, Rehab Services (Speech, PT, OT), Cardiopulmonary Services (Better Breathers)</li> <li>◆ SASH (Support &amp; Services at Home) - - Under Blueprint, to enhance safety and self-management of the Medicare population living in senior housing</li> <li>◆ Medicaid Health Coaches - support to 'Caid clients to improve medication management, appointment adherence, diet counseling, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ DVHA/ Blueprint</li> <li>◆ SASH, under Blueprint</li> <li>◆ Medicaid Health Coaches</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Continue offering and recruiting participants for the 6-week self-management programs under Blueprint</li> <li>◆ Continue asthma education at PCMHs</li> <li>◆ As possible, continue to “grow” the core CHT, i.e., chronic care coordinator(s) , social workers to support self-management</li> </ul>



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