



Greater Sullivan County
Public Health Network

2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

About the Region

The Greater Sullivan County Public Health Region is one of 13 New Hampshire public health regions. This region includes the following 15 rural towns and one city with a combined population of approximately 47,000 people: Acworth, Charlestown, Claremont, Cornish, Croydon, Goshen, Langdon, Lempster, Newport, Springfield, Sunapee, and Unity in Sullivan County and Newbury, New London, Sutton, and Wilmot in Merrimack County. There are two community hospitals located in the region: Valley Regional Hospital on the western edge of the region in Claremont and New London Hospital in the eastern part of the region. The priority updates in this report include initiatives led by the Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC) and community partners.



2020–21 Public Health Priority Updates

Many other projects, programs, and initiatives were launched that are not listed in this report. Contact us to learn more!

Public Health Advisory Council

Chair: Catherine Bardier, New London Hospital

The Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC) consists of community leaders representing multiple sectors and towns/cities throughout the Public Health Region. Catherine Bardier, the PHAC chair, continues to review our regional priorities based on the most recent Community Health Needs Assessments and newly available data for our region. We always welcome new partners to the table. We meet on the first Wednesday of each even month from 9:00-11:00 AM virtually to respect the COVID-19 pandemic.



GSC Public Health Advisory Council Vision:

To foster a community that supports healthy lives, health equity, and wellbeing for people of all ages.

Community Partners Meeting

Contact: gscphn@hitchcock.org

The Community Partners Meeting (CPM) is hosted in partnership with the Greater Sullivan County Public Health Network, Southwestern Community Services, and Service Link. The CPM aims to connect community-based organizations in a roundtable discussion and resource sharing. The Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC) utilizes the CPM to disperse information throughout the community on topics that include: community dental offering, Hepatitis clinics, housing and homelessness, transportation, and healthy eating. The CPM is best equipped to take information shared at the meeting and provide the populations that the organization serves with the most up-to-date information about emerging trends and topics regarding all types of health and wellness. The group meets on a monthly basis on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 12:00-1:30 PM virtually via Zoom.

Substance Misuse Prevention, Intervention, Treatment, & Recovery

Contacts: Deryn Smith & Lauren Chambers - gscphn@hitchcock.org

Greater Sullivan County 360 (GSC360) is a group of community members and professionals working together to reduce harms from alcohol and other drugs through education, policies, practices and programs related to substance misuse prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery. GSC360 serves as the PHAC's Substance Misuse workgroup. Due to an increase in youth use of vaping devices in recent years, GSC360 invested resources in decreasing this trend, along with alcohol, marijuana, opioid, and other drug use. GSC360 makes it a priority to increase youth perception of harm relating to substance use, by promoting prevention education techniques.

Substance Misuse Prevention, Intervention, Treatment, & Recovery

Contacts: Deryn Smith & Lauren Chambers - gscphn@hitchcock.org

In fiscal year 2021, GSC360 held 1 workshop providing information about vaping, along with 5 other forums/workshops, to increase the perception of harm of alcohol, marijuana, and nicotine used via electronic vapor products. GSC360 supported UNH Cooperative Extension Master Wellness Volunteer, Youth CAN Photovoice project. Vital Communities youth group, TLC Family Resource Center SHINE program, and Finding Our Stride. The GSC SMPC also collaborated cross regionally with the Upper Valley Teen Concerns group to support dissemination of alternative activities available during COVID. Mental health and isolation were a major challenge in FY21 due to the limitations from COVID-19 restrictions. GSC360 disseminated 300 Detera bags to people who were isolated so that they could safely dispose of prescription medications without leaving their homes. The workgroup also worked to disseminate 150 wellness bags with Detera bags, social emotional coloring books, and community resources to elementary students in the Claremont School District who had not gotten access to the wellness bags the Department of Education had given out earlier in the year.

The Youth CAN Coalition spent a lot of time preparing to apply for the CDC's Drug Free Communities grant. If accepted, this grant would allow for a full time Program Coordinator to work with the Youth CAN Coalition to promote substance misuse and suicide prevention work within the Newport and Claremont area. West Central Behavioral Health received this grant in September of 2021 for the Youth CAN Coalition. The Youth CAN Coalition also focused on prevention messaging during the holiday season around substance misuse and mental health, to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and provide support to community members that needed help.

The COMPASS Coalition's primary focus was recruiting members for the coalition, to assure that there were people at the table bringing different perspectives, backgrounds, and support to help the community around substance misuse and suicide prevention. The COMPASS Coalition spent a lot of time looking into annual events and community events to align prevention initiatives with as well. Both the Youth CAN Coalition, and the COMPASS Coalition provided a lot of support, information, PSA's, and materials to make the bi-annual Prescription Drug Takeback Day successful across the Greater Sullivan County Region. Both Coalitions also assisted in promoting the Seize the Awkward Campaign through a grant funded by the Katz Amsterdam Foundation which focuses on having conversations about mental health that might be uncomfortable, but can make all the difference.

Emergency Preparedness

Contact: Stephen Belmont - gscphn@hitchcock.org

The public health emergency preparedness (PHEP) workgroup has continued to provide mitigation measures to protect Greater Sullivan County from the COVID-19 Pandemic as it has gripped the country, state and region. From February 1st, 2020 through June 30th 2020, GSCPHN in conjunction with Dartmouth Hitchcock, has provided forty four community COVID-19 vaccination clinics. In that time we provided 1,195 first doses and 1,383 second doses (2,578 total) of the COVID-19 vaccine to community members. In that time established six vaccinator contracts with local Fire /EMS and hospitals to provide us with a capable workforce of experienced providers. We also relied heavily on our Medical Reserve Corp (MRC), which is a group of dedicated volunteers who have helped us in all facets of our mitigation efforts. We continue to hold monthly and quarterly meetings with community partners so that we can share the most up to date information as we battle COVID-19. We are grateful for all of our community partners and the common goal we share of keeping our communities safe.

Health & Wellness

Contact: Catherine Bardier - Catherine.Bardier@newlondonhospital.org

The Wellness Connection serves as the PHAC's Health & wellness partner workgroup. New London Hospital is the backbone organization. The Wellness Connection acts as a convener for partner organizations with a focus on healthy eating, active living and general well-being of the community. The group did not meet in person in 2020-2021 due to COVID-19. Many of the partners were involved in the Greater Sullivan Strong work on food access, isolation concerns, etc. The group communicated via email and virtual meetings with an exchange of requests, information and general support. A few highlights for the period was the implementation of a Mobile Farm Stand for food insecure patients in collaboration with Farmsteads and the FEED Kearsarge Garden in a Tray program. In addition, community partners came together this year to launch Kearsarge Community Network (KCN) focused on community resiliency, including reduced isolation and connectedness.



Learn more about the Public Health Advisory Council and our partners by visiting www.GSCPHN.org

COVID-19 Pandemic

When the COVID-19 global pandemic touched our region and we started to see the financial and resource struggles facing many of our partners and their clients, the Greater Sullivan Strong (GSS) Coalition and GSS Community COVID-19 Relief Fund was started. To date, the GSS Community COVID-19 Relief Fund has approved 58 total partner requests for a total of 30 organizations, including Southwestern Community Services HUB Funding.



Greater Sullivan
STRONG

**Southwestern Community Services HUB Funding
for COVID-19 Hardships
July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021**



Housing

- More than \$10,500 was distributed to provide housing stabilization in Greater Sullivan County
- Support included rental assistance, emergency housing, & utilities



Electric & Fuel Assistance

- More than \$12,000 was distributed to provide electric & fuel assistance for residents of Greater Sullivan County



Childcare

- More than \$1,600 was distributed to support childcare in Greater Sullivan County
- Families partnered with TLC Family Resource Center for childcare



Transportation

- More than \$1,600 was distributed to support transportation in Greater Sullivan County
- This included bus passes and last mile taxi services

Greater Sullivan County Public Health Region

Community Health Priorities 2019-2020



Substance Misuse Prevention and Reduction

Contact: Deryn Smith & Lauren Chambers - gscphn@hitchcock.org



Emergency Preparedness

Contact: Steve Belmont - gscphn@hitchcock.org



Strengthening Families

Contact: Stephanie Slayton - Stephanie@tlcfamilyrc.org



Access to Care

Contacts: Mental Health- ctwombly@wcbh.org
Dental Health- cdcc@comcast.net



Health and Wellness

Contact: Catherine Bardier - Catherine.Bardier@newlondonhospital.org



Housing

Contact: Beth Daniels- bdaniels@scshelps.org



Transportation

Contact: Beth Daniels- bdaniels@scshelps.org

"The Greater Sullivan County Public Health Advisory Council members and leadership team continue to rally around the critical health needs impacting the communities we serve. COVID-19 has only amplified these health needs and the associated social drivers of health for our most vulnerable populations. There continues to be an impressive commitment and collaboration that happens within the Council. I am honored to be a member of such a dedicated group of professionals."

Catherine Bardier, M.S.

Program Director, Community Health and Wellness, New London Hospital
Chair, Greater Sullivan County Public Health Advisory Council

Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank the members of the GSC Public Health Advisory Council and all of our community partners that dedicate their time and effort to improving public health in our region.

The Public Health Advisory Council member agencies include, but are not limited to:

Valley Regional Hospital, New London Hospital, the City of Claremont, Community Dental Care of Claremont, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Claremont Lead Action Task Force, Lake Sunapee Region VNA and Hospice, SAU 43, SAU 6, Summercrest Senior Living Community, Southwestern Community Services, Sullivan County, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, West Central Behavioral Health, TLC Family Resource Center, the Center for Recovery Resources, Newport Fire Department, River Valley Community College, Groups Recover Together, Better Life Partners, HIV/HCV Resource Center, Keady Family Practice, Region I Integrated Delivery Network, Service Link, Turning Points Network, New Futures, Newport Police Department, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Norris Cotton Cancer Center, Upper Valley Public Health Council, Larry Flint-Senior Advocate and others.

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Taralyn Bielaski
Public Health Advisory Council Lead

gscphn@hitchcock.org
603-526-5083

www.GSCPHN.org

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