

# 2021 Community Health Improvement Plan for the South Central Public Health Network (SCPHN)



Working to improve the health and well-being of the  
communities in the South Central Region of New Hampshire

*Communities included in the SCPHN are Atkinson, Chester,  
Danville, Derry, Hampstead, Londonderry, Plaistow, Salem,  
Sandown and Windham*



**SOUTH CENTRAL NH  
PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK**

The healthiest and safest communities in New Hampshire!  
AN INITIATIVE OF GRANITE UNITED WAY

# What is Public Health?

Public Health is the practice of promoting health and protecting the health and wellbeing of people in the communities where they live, learn, work and play. Professionals in public health work to prevent people from getting sick or injured.

During the period June 2019 through January 2020, a Community Health Needs Assessment was completed by the SCPHN in preparation for the creation of the 2020 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for the region.

Methods used for assessment included paper and online surveys, key leader surveys, focus groups and all available data for the region.

Community survey respondents were asked to select the **“most pressing health needs or issues in your community today”**. They were then asked to select the top five needs from their perspectives. The complete survey can be viewed on the SCPHN Website <http://www.southcentralphn.org> or by scanning the QR code with your phone.



We invite you to read further about Network priorities. Your input is important to us. Please feel free to contact us to learn more or become involved. The SCPHN thanks the individuals, agencies, and state and local governments who have made this plan possible through their contribution of time, effort, and resources.

## The Funded Scopes of Work in the SCPHN

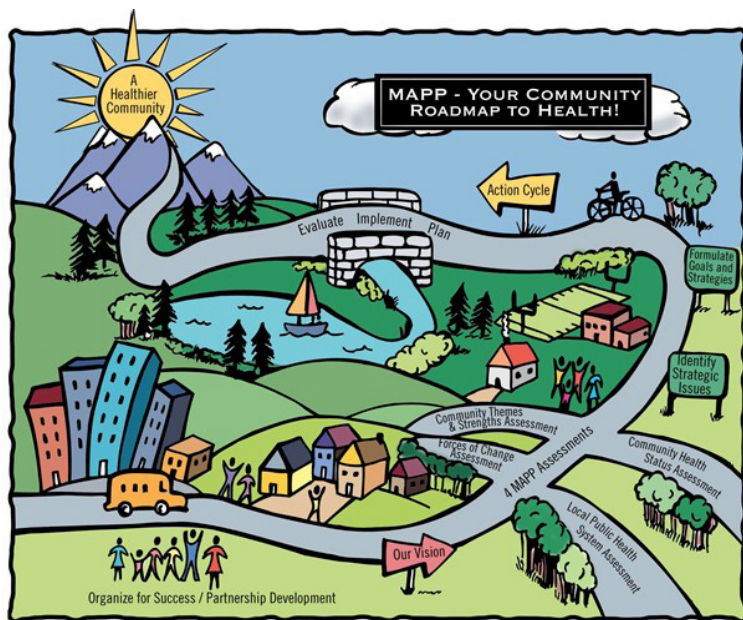
What does it mean to be a funded Scope of Work in the Network? In short, it means that three organizations have provided financial support to five (5) Scopes of Work at this time. The funded work includes that of The Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC), Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP), Substance Misuse Prevention (SMP), The Continuum of Care (COC) and Young Adult Strategies (YAS). Resources to support these portions of the work are provided by:



This document may be called a Plan, but the reality is that it is also a Call to Action. It is a plea to regional residents to be mindful about their health, safety and wellbeing. It is also an invitation to join those who are working towards the priorities described here to expand opportunities and conditions in which we live, learn and play. Each scope of work follows the same roadmap to success:

- Evaluating data indicators and trends
- Identifying goals
- Determining measurable objectives
- Agreeing on Improvement strategies
- Implementing action steps with partners in the work
- Conducting vigorous evaluation to insure equity and identify opportunities for change

Work of this nature is a long-term systemic effort to address public health problems in a community. It is based on the results of community health assessment and associated activities. The plan is developed collaboratively, and defines a vision for the community's health. It is the community's plan and must include the voices and support of those it serves.



## The Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC)

The PHAC is comprised of volunteer representatives from a wide array of organizations including but not limited to health care, schools and social service agencies representing the communities served by the network.

The primary work of the PHAC is to set regional health priorities, provide guidance for public health activities, and ensure coordination of health improvement efforts. It is responsible to collect, analyze and disseminate data about the health status of the region; educate network partners about on-line and other sources of data; and participate in community health assessments. Each year, the PHAC is responsible to:

- 1) Oversee and support the development of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)
- 2) Publish an annual report to the community on the status of the work
- 3) Support the efforts of each of the funded scopes of work, including educational opportunities and information sharing among partners
- 4) Seek financial resources to complete unfunded priority action areas

For more information on the PHAC and the South Central Public Health Network visit:

<http://southcentralphn.org/>

# Lead Poisoning Prevention

From time to time, the PHAC has an opportunity to work on projects beyond those described in the regional Plan.

In 2020 and beyond, the PHAC will be working with unique funding from The NH Healthy Homes Lead Poisoning and Prevention Program to increase awareness of the risks to children and others of exposure to lead in paint, water and in the environment.

Lead poisoning is entirely preventable. However, nearly 1 million children living in the United States have blood levels high enough to impair their ability to think, learn, and concentrate.

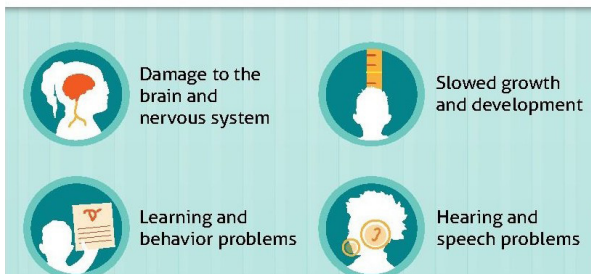


**Goal: To increase awareness of the risks of lead exposure in the region**

## Strategic Approach:

- 1) Provide outreach and education to families, educators, health care professionals, contractors and others in the region
- 2) Implement a digital strategy to further education and outreach through social media
- 3) Train home and community educators in effective methods of sharing lead prevention information

**Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child's health.**



## Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)

PHEP includes collaborating with local emergency responders, hospitals, and community partners to plan for and respond to public health emergencies and threats in the region. Examples of public health emergencies include infectious disease outbreaks, acts of bioterrorism, and medical needs following weather related events. Being prepared for a public health event reduces the impact of the emergency to you, your family, first responders, and the community.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the SCPHN has been planning for the release of the COVID-19 vaccine with community partners, while responding to the needs of the community, and providing support to state and local response initiatives.

Communication is key to weathering any public health emergency. How do we know what to do? We receive information from our doctor's office, the television, radio, newspapers, social media, word-of-mouth, newsfeeds, flyers at our local grocery store, etc. Information is crucial to share when responding to any type of crisis or event that requires the community to have awareness about or to act upon to maintain their health and safety. Examples of Public Health information to be shared with communities include: What should I pack in an emergency preparedness Go-Bag? Where is the nearest emergency shelter?

Preparing for and responding to Public Health emergencies requires consistent communications with state and local partners, and community residents to ensure that communities have situational awareness and are provided information to make informed decisions to take the necessary precautions and safety measures. The following represents the primary PHEP goal related to this CHIP:



## Goal: Build a Regional Public Health Communications Plan

Improve communications across the region by building a Regional Public Health Communications Plan in collaboration with regional partners with these objectives:

- 1) Forming a Communications Plan Committee
- 2) Developing a Regional Communications Plan
- 3) Testing and Implementing the Plan

### Strategic Approach:

- 1) Identify public information partners to serve on the Committee and develop the Plan
- 2) Convene regular meetings to address gaps and identify solutions
- 3) Engage with specialist agencies and organizations to assist with custom messaging for unique populations
- 4) Develop a notification algorithm
- 5) Conduct exercises
- 6) Share and implement the Plan



## Substance Misuse Prevention (SMP)

Substance misuse is one of the most prevalent and problematic public health issues. It presents a wide range of safety and health risks and impacts an individual's physical, social, and emotional well-being. Substance misuse involving tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs, misuse of prescription drugs, or combinations of all of these behaviors poses negative consequences for the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. In addition to contributing to both acute and chronic disease and injury, substance misuse is associated with destructive social conditions, including family dysfunction, lower prosperity, domestic violence, and crime.

### What the data shows...

There are methods and tools that help communities gain insights into the prevalence of health behaviors including those related to alcohol and other drug use among youth. As example, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is one such tool developed by federal agencies in partnership with state and local health and education departments. The 2019 YRBS data for this region shows that youth report less past 30-day use of marijuana, alcohol, and prescription drugs than youth state-wide as well as a higher perception of harm for use of these substances.

The Substance Misuse Prevention Coordinator and Lead, in collaboration with partner agencies and community members, provide leadership and coordination to impact substance misuse and related health promotion activities by implementing, promoting and advancing evidence-based primary prevention approaches, programs, policies, and services. An ongoing process of outreach, engagement, and information sharing supports these efforts.

This work is accomplished by:

- Engaging the six core sectors in prevention which are: business, community supports, education, government, health/ medical and law enforcement/safety.
- Raising awareness and providing community-level information with the long-term aim of changing social and cultural norms.
- Building community capacity to address substance misuse.
- Compiling, sharing and using data and research for problem solving and decision-making.

A primary SMP goal related to this CHIP is:



**Goal: Strengthen the capacity of the SCPHN to address substance misuse**

### **Strategic Approaches:**

- 1) Increase business sector representation and partner participation in SMP scope of work.
- 2) Promote opportunities for partners and community members to develop advocacy skills and take action around policies and laws related to substance misuse.
- 3) Increase access to resources and trainings in the substance misuse and related fields to enhance the knowledge base.
- 4) Increase social and other media message outreach to raise awareness about issues related to substance misuse.

The Substance Misuse Prevention Team develops, with the help of stakeholders and citizens, a 3-Year Strategic Plan to inform communities of its priorities and strategies as well as opportunities to become engaged. We invite you to read the 2019-2022 Plan at:

<http://southcentralphn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/BDAS-SCPHN-SMP-3-year-plan-2019-2022-004-2.pdf>



***"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."***  
***—Margaret Mead***

# The Continuum of Care (COC)

The goal of Continuum of Care (COC) Development, an initiative of NH DHHS/BDAS, is “to ensure that all residents of the state can access a robust, effective and well-coordinated continuum of care for substance use disorders that includes prevention, early identification and intervention, treatment and recovery support, and that are integrated whenever possible with primary and behavioral health care services.”

The 3 key objectives for this work are: 1) increase awareness of and access to services; 2) improve communication and build collaboration; and 3) build capacity and expand delivery. The Prevention Team works closely with SCPHN's Emergency Preparedness Team, the Public Health Advisory Council and the Young Adult Strategies Program thus contributing to a supportive network and inclusive approach in addressing the public health needs of the region. An important outcome of this synergistic approach is a better understanding of the assets and gaps for substance misuse services in the region so that the assets are effectively promoted, and solutions developed to address the gaps.



A primary COC goal related to this CHIP is:



**Goal: Engage regional partners in processes that improve communication and collaboration among service providers in cooperation with the PHAC, SMP, PHEP and YAS scopes of work**

### **Strategic Approaches:**

- Provide a forum for service providers and community members from diverse sectors to come together for resource sharing and problem solving by offering bi-monthly Leadership Team meetings.
- Participate in regional taskforce, coalition, sector and service provider meetings to stay more informed of regional efforts, share resources including the Substance Support Service Provider and training opportunities.
- Promote resources and information related to the continuum of care work through social media platforms to enhance education and outreach efforts.

The Substance Support Service Navigator is a guide to services in the South Central Public Health region created and maintained by the PHAC to support the continuum of care work. This resource can be found at:

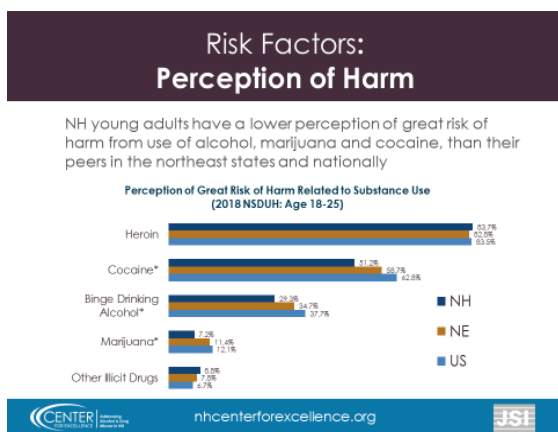
<http://southcentralphn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SCPHN-Substance-Support-Service-Navigator.9.2020.pdf>



## Young Adult Strategies (YAS)

Young adults (18-25) face the challenges of substance misuse and addiction at alarming rates in NH. Young adults in New Hampshire have higher rates of alcohol and drug misuse when compared with young adults nationally. While many prevention efforts are aimed at youth, the need for young adult supports and interventions is evident and necessary. The Young Adults Strategies initiative aims to reduce substance misuse in the young adult population using evidence informed prevention strategies.

Overall, NH young adults are less fearful of using substances than others across the country.



Prevention interventions aim to support and bolster protective factors, which give people the resources and strengths they need to avoid substance use. Having strong and positive family ties and social connections, being emotionally healthy, and having a feeling that one has control over one's successes and failures are all protective factors. Being satisfied with one's life, having a sense of a positive future ahead, and emotional resilience are other examples of protective factors.

There is also a strong correlation with substance use disorders and mental illness or concerns in young adults.

### Risk Factors: Mental Health

A third of young adults report little interest or pleasure in doing things (32.6%) and feeling down, depressed or hopeless (33.9%) on several days in the past two weeks

- a. Almost one in five (17.1%) reported having seriously attempted suicide during the past 12 months
- b. Gender minorities were significantly more likely to report depression symptoms when compared to their cisgender peers
- c. Mental health symptoms increase with financial insecurity



[nhcenterforexcellence.org](http://nhcenterforexcellence.org)



In coordination with The Upper Room, The SCPHN will address the risk and protective factors to reduce the rates of substance misuse in the young adult population within our communities.



Young adults today are at a defining stage in their development as they transition from adolescent dependence to adulthood and independence. In the period ahead, YAS will work on the following:



## **Goal: Reduce the percentage of young adults engaging in substance misuse.**

- 1) Connect young adults to substance and mental health prevention, intervention and treatment resources.
- 2) Increase knowledge of substance misuse behaviors and signs of addiction.

### **Strategic Approaches:**

- 1) Act as a referral source to area agencies, recovery programs and other resources.
- 2) Employ evidence based workshops such as Team Resilience, presentations and support.
- 3) Spread information via social media including Sober Curious exploration.
- 4) Increase awareness among employers, schools, colleges and family members of supports that are available.
- 5) Host events, workshops and groups.
- 6) Provide individual support when needed.
- 7) Collaborate with regional partners and others to align activities and interventions.



## Community Connections – A Regional Priority

The SCPHN is committed to advancing the priorities of each scope of work over the next four years. In some cases, the strategies included build on previous plans with existing partners, while in other cases new workgroups will be formed. In all cases, these efforts advance action to improve the conditions in people's lives and environments.

The 2020 Community Health Needs Assessment uncovered numerous pressing community concerns that are beyond the funded scopes of work. In the 2021 CHIP, the SCPHN will focus on "ENHANCING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS" as its four year Regional Priority.



Utilizing the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health> as the blueprint, the SCPHN will develop a resource library tied to the five key categories in an effort to connect residents of the region to services and support they might need.

The key issues identified in the assessment will be the focus of the work. Resource information will be categorized by age group and will be updated regularly and shifted to address emerging concerns. Key issues identified by survey participants included:

- Adverse childhood experiences/trauma
- Bullying/School violence
- Suicide prevention
- Domestic violence prevention
- Prevention and treatment of chronic illness
- Opportunities for physical activity and good nutrition
- Care for frail elders
- Abuse and neglect across continuum
- Stress related to financial difficulties
- Services to those with disabilities



**Goal: To build a bank of information and resource support utilizing the SDOH framework, to connect individuals with what they need to live, work, learn and thrive in the SCPHN**

### **Strategies:**

- 1) Create a Community Connections Workgroup to interface with designated populations.
- 2) Develop an inventory of resources and identify gaps in the region based on the 2030 social determinants of health.
- 3) Develop a Connection Resource Plan.
- 4) Implement outreach and marketing strategy.
- 5) Monitor and track progress.
- 6) Make adjustments as needed.

## Partnering in the Work

Community Alliance for Teen Safety provides leadership for both the Substance Misuse Prevention and Continuum of Care activities in the region.

Granite United Way provides leadership for fiscal management of the South Central Public Health Network and evaluation of public health initiatives in the region.

Greater Derry Community Health Services provides leadership for community health planning including Lead Poisoning Prevention through the Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC).

Parkland Medical Center provides leadership for public health emergency preparedness coordination and readiness.

The Upper Room provides leadership for young adult strategies around substance misuse prevention.

Our vision is to become the healthiest and safest communities in New Hampshire by identifying public health priorities and developing solutions to improve community health and safety.



***Thank you for taking the time to read the  
Community Health Improvement Plan  
for the South Central Public Health Network!***

We welcome your participation in our shared efforts to improve the health and safety of this region through outreach, collaboration and action planning.

For more information on how to become involved in the Network, please contact:

*Donna Tighe, Public Health Advisory Council Lead*  
*[dtighe@chsgreaterderry.org](mailto:dtighe@chsgreaterderry.org)*

You will be connected with the representative of the action areas you feel most passionately about.

Please be safe and healthy!

V O L      N T E E R  
all that's missing is U



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