



Summary of Accomplishments

July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026

Communities Served:

Atkinson, Chester, Danville, Derry, Hampstead, Londonderry, Plaistow, Sandown, Salem and Windham

The South Central Public Health Network (SCPHN) is an initiative of Granite United Way (GUW) and we are one of thirteen Regional Public Health Networks in New Hampshire, funded by the NH Department of Health and Human Services (NH DHHS). The focus of the Network is on promoting and protecting the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities within our region.

The Network convenes partners across all sectors – healthcare, education, business, municipal, and community-based organizations – to identify needs, coordinate responses, and build a stronger, more resilient region.

Regional efforts are guided by the **Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)**, which identifies regional priorities, strategies, and measurable objectives to address pressing public health issues.

This report covers the state fiscal year, spanning from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.

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) Response, and Substance Misuse Prevention (SMP)/Continuum of Care (COC).

Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC)

Led by: Donna Tighe, Public Health Advisory Council Lead, Supported by Community Health Services (CHS)

The primary work of the Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC) is to set regional health priorities, provide guidance for public health activities, and ensure coordination of health improvement efforts. The PHAC is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data about the health status of the region; educating network partners about online and other data sources; and participating in community health assessments that inform the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

Highlights from the past year:

Since early winter of 2025, the PHAC has been preparing for the completion of the 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment and the subsequent development of a new CHIP for the region. To support this effort, the Network has engaged the New Hampshire Community Health Institute to lead the Assessment process.

Looking Ahead:

Completion of the Community Health Improvement Plan in summer 2026 is already underway. In addition to Substance Misuse Prevention, the Continuum of Care and Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response, some areas of focus have been identified. They include, Improving Access to Mental Health, Services and Supports for older residents to support Aging in Place, Safety in Homes and Engaging Socially. The CHIP will likely also highlight the need to address the Drivers of Health related to Healthy Foods, Affordable Housing to the degree possible and supporting efforts to improve Affordability of Child Care throughout the region. The Network will continue work to expand partnerships in all priority areas, identify potential resources to dedicate to priority projects and expand PHAC participation as able.

Substance Misuse Prevention/Continuum of Care (SMP/CoC)

Led by: Kate MacDonald, MPH, Director of Public Health Strategies & Dakota Burrill, Public Health Coordinator

The primary work of the Substance Misuse Prevention and Continuum of Care scope of work is to reduce the impact of substance misuse in the community through prevention, education, intervention, and support services. Its work addresses the full spectrum of substance-related challenges, including tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs, and illicit substances. The program engages community partners and members, providing leadership and coordination to implement, promote, and advance evidence-based prevention programs, policies, and services. Ongoing outreach, engagement, and information sharing support these efforts and help protect and promote individual, family, and community health.

Highlights from the past year:

Legislative Luncheon Strengthens Collaboration on Unregulated Toxins

One of our most significant accomplishments this year was hosting a highly attended Legislative Luncheon focused on the growing issue of unregulated intoxicants. In partnership with Southern Rockingham Coalition for Healthy Youth (SoRock), the Community Alliance for Teen Safety (CATS), the Raymond Coalition for Youth, and the Seacoast Public Health Network, the event brought together legislators, public health professionals, prevention leaders, healthcare providers, law enforcement, educators, and community partners to discuss emerging trends, share local data, and explore opportunities for prevention and policy.



The strong turnout reflected a shared commitment to addressing this rapidly evolving public health concern through collaboration. By creating a space for meaningful dialogue between decision-makers and those working directly with affected individuals, the luncheon strengthened partnerships, increased awareness of local challenges, and built momentum for future prevention initiatives and continued legislative engagement.

Sustaining and Expanding Youth Wellness Programming

What began as a new partnership last year has grown into a sustainable youth wellness initiative. In collaboration with Unity Hot Yoga LLC. and The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Derry, the Youth Summer Yoga Series entered its second year and expanded from one day to two days each week, providing even more opportunities for youth to develop mindfulness, build resilience, and strengthen healthy coping skills.

The program's continued growth, strong youth participation, and ongoing support from community partners demonstrate the lasting value of investing in initiatives that promote mental health, emotional well-being, and positive youth development. This year's expansion was made possible through funding from the Alexander Eastman Foundation, whose support helped increase access to this wellness program for youth in our region.

Community partners have seen firsthand the positive impact the program has had on participating youth. Mason Gibeau, Director of Community Outreach at The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Derry, shared, "The yoga program, taught by Unity Hot Yoga instructors, is a wonderful addition to our summer program. Each week, our 3rd and 4th grade group and our 5th through 8th grade group have the opportunity to practice mindfulness, start their day with an hour of relaxation, and build perseverance through the challenges that yoga provides."

"Each week the kids engage in a variety of different yoga practices that range from calming breath, guided meditation, and sound baths to energy-moving vinyasa yoga, inverting, and activities that challenge the kids in physical ways."

-Meg Marley, Owner of Unity Hot Yoga LLC.,

Youth Teaching Garden

The Teaching Garden at the YMCA of Greater Londonderry continues to flourish through the ongoing partnership between the YMCA and Green City Growers. During the reporting period, the South Central Public Health Network (SCPHN) supported the garden's fall planting, harvest, and seasonal winterization, helping to ensure its continued success and sustainability.

What began as a pilot project has evolved into a lasting resource for youth, receiving continued funding from the Alexander Eastman Foundation to continue its impact. The Teaching Garden provides youth with hands-on learning experiences in gardening, nutrition, environmental stewardship, sustainability, and healthy eating. Throughout the 2026 summer season, youth attending the YMCA Summer Camp Program and the Early Learning Center participated in planting, tending, harvesting, and tasting fresh produce while learning where food comes from and how healthy foods support overall well-being.

The continued investment in the Teaching Garden reflects the community's commitment to creating engaging, educational opportunities that foster healthy habits, environmental awareness, and lifelong wellness for local youth.

Summer Camp Readiness Project



The bags were provided to youth attending programs at the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Derry, YMCA of Greater Londonderry, The Upper Room, Plaistow Community YMCA, and the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Salem.

Each bag included practical health and safety supplies such as a reusable water bottle, sunscreen, bug repellent, hand sanitizer, sunglasses, a first aid kit, tick prevention information, a water safety bracelet, a mental health fidget, and a parent resource folder with information about local health, safety, and family support services.

Medical Reserve Corps volunteers donated two full days of service to assemble all 200 bags, demonstrating the power of community partnership in supporting youth and families across the region.

GROWING HEALTHY KIDS & STRONG FAMILIES YMCA of Greater Londonderry Youth Teaching Garden



The YMCA of Greater Londonderry partnered with Green City Growers to establish the Youth Teaching Garden as a hands-on learning space where youth can explore gardening, nutrition, environmental stewardship, and healthy living.

WHY IT MATTERS

Through weekly garden education sessions led by Green City Growers, youth participating in YMCA programs have the opportunity to:

- Plant, maintain, and harvest a variety of fruits, vegetables, and herbs
- Learn where food comes from and how it supports overall health
- Develop responsibility, teamwork, and problem-solving skills
- Experience outdoor learning that promotes physical and mental well-being
- Share fresh produce with families and the community



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Four raised garden beds
- Weekly educational sessions led by a Farmer Educator from Green City Growers
- Hands-on planting, harvesting, and garden maintenance
- Research-based curriculum focused on gardening, nutrition, healthy eating, environmental stewardship, and pollinator education
- Opportunities for youth leadership and skill-building
- Fresh produce shared with YMCA families and the community
- Post-lesson summaries shared with YMCA staff



COMMUNITY SUPPORT MADE THIS POSSIBLE

The Teaching Garden was made possible through the generosity and collaboration of community partners:

- **Alexander Eastman Foundation** – Provided the primary start-up funding to launch the Teaching Garden
- **South Central Public Health Network** – Contributed additional funding to support fall planting, harvesting and closing of the garden
- **Granite Fence Company** – Donated fencing materials and installed fencing, creating a secure and welcoming space
- **Trimmer's Landscaping** – Generously donated site preparation work, including excavation, stonework, grading, and installation, helping transform the space into a safe and accessible outdoor learning environment



LOOKING AHEAD

Following a successful first year, the project has received an \$8,000 grant from the Alexander Eastman Foundation to continue and expand programming in 2026. This funding will support weekly educational sessions with Farmer Educators, garden supplies, a wide variety of plants, maintenance, and continued opportunities for youth to learn, grow, and connect through hands-on experiences.



TOGETHER, WE ARE GROWING HEALTHY KIDS, STRONG FAMILIES, AND LIFELONG SKILLS.
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Harm Reduction and Community Outreach

The South Central Public Health Network continues to strengthen regional harm reduction efforts by expanding access to naloxone and connecting individuals with lifesaving resources. Over the past fiscal year, more than 200 naloxone kits were distributed to community partners and members of the public, helping ensure this critical overdose reversal medication is readily available throughout the region.

In addition to naloxone distribution, the Network is developing outreach kits to support individuals experiencing homelessness or living in their vehicles. These kits will include essential items such as first aid supplies, bandages, instant cold packs, bug spray, sunscreen, and naloxone. Beyond providing immediate necessities, the kits serve as a meaningful point of engagement, creating opportunities to connect individuals with local health, housing, and social support services.

Looking Ahead:

As we look to the coming year, the South Central Public Health Network remains committed to building successful initiatives while strengthening partnerships to address emerging public health needs. We will continue expanding opportunities for community engagement, wellness, and substance use prevention through collaborative, evidence-based efforts that promote healthier and more connected communities.

One of our priorities is planning and hosting our first International Overdose Awareness event. Currently in the early planning stages, this initiative will bring together community partners, individuals with lived experience, families, first responders, healthcare providers, and recovery organizations to honor those lost to overdose, support those affected, reduce stigma, and increase awareness of prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery resources. We look forward to working alongside our partners to create a meaningful event that fosters remembrance, education, and hope.

We also look forward to expanding the Move Into Health Community Wellness Initiative by creating more opportunities for both community partners and community members to participate. Through collaboration with the On the Road to Wellness initiative and other local partners, we are exploring ways to strengthen and expand this effort by combining ideas, increasing accessibility, and offering more opportunities for residents across the region to engage in activities that support physical, mental, and social well-being.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)

Led by: Colleen Monks, Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response Director.

Supported by: Parkland Medical Center

The primary work of the Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response scope of work is to ensure that the region is prepared and ready to respond to and recover from public health emergencies and natural or human-caused disasters.

PHEP works to build local capacity through coordinated planning, training, and exercising with community partners and volunteers, as well as providing emergency preparedness and safety tips to community members through education and outreach.

PHEP is responsible for developing and maintaining regional response plans, facilitating communications across partner agencies, and promoting preparedness, health, and safety in the communities to improve readiness, response efforts, and resilience across the region.

Additionally, the PHEP program directs and manages the South Central Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), a group of forty dedicated and vetted clinical and non-clinical emergency response volunteers, trained to respond to public health emergencies and disasters, and provide community outreach.

Highlights from the past year:

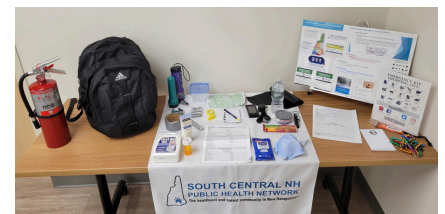
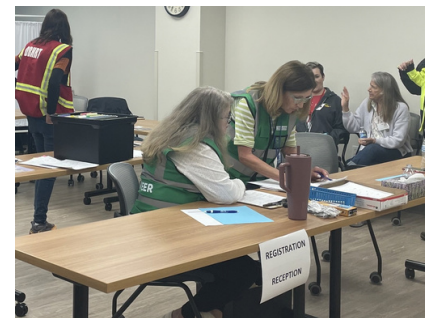
PHEP has been busy in the community providing emergency preparedness education and outreach to individuals across the region and sharing safety tips with community members of all ages. Topics include building an emergency go kit and being resourceful, how to use a fire extinguisher, the dangers of carbon monoxide, what to bring to an emergency disaster shelter, tick prevention, and the importance of having medical emergency and family communications plans.



The Memory Café is a new initiative in the South Central region that began last November as a result of an idea originated through Community Health Services of Derry with support from the Marion Gerrish Community Center. This new initiative is led by a nurse practitioner and South Central MRC clinical volunteer as the Program Coordinator, with assistance from PHEP Director and 2 additional clinical MRC volunteers. Hosted by the Marion Gerrish Community Center, the Memory Café meets monthly and is a place where individuals with Dementia, Alzheimer's, or other memory loss and

their care partners can connect with others in a supportive environment, and enjoy social activities and friendly conversation.

Last fall, PHEP coordinated and conducted a Hospital Family Reunification Exercise as a component to Parkland's Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) Exercise in alignment with Manchester Airport's Triennial MCI Exercise. The South Central MRC Reunification Staff reunited fifteen "victims" with their "families" after the mock incident. Additional partners engaged included NH's Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team (DBHRT), Parkland Case Management, Derry CERT, Derry Police, A Londonderry Emergency Response Team (ALERT), a civilian crisis actor, and NH's Public Health Emergency Planner with the Bureau of Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery as an Evaluator. PHEP continues to engage with hospitals, and state, regional, and local partners on Family Reunification planning.



South Central MRC in Action in FY26:

Our South Central MRC volunteers have participated in many activities throughout the year and have assisted in promoting and implementing some of our key initiatives in the community in FY26 including:

- Memory Café
- Parkland Balance Classes
- Reunification Exercise
- Community Emergency Preparedness and Safety Tabling
- Toy Drive
- Legislative Luncheon
- Summer Camp Readiness Bag assembly
- Quarterly Emergency Preparedness Task Force Meetings
- Granite State Health Care Coalition Annual Conference
- Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Safety Trainings

Looking Ahead:

Our work in Emergency Preparedness and Response will continue to strengthen partnerships in the community and across NH through communication, engagement, collaboration, planning, training, drills and exercises. We'll continue to educate community members of all ages across the region by providing safety tips, promoting resourcefulness, and encouraging individuals to take action to protect themselves and their families before a public health incident or disaster occurs.

In collaboration with our community partners, we are coordinating a Community Emergency Preparedness Event to be held in September to recognize National Preparedness Month. This event will encourage and empower community members to prepare for an emergency and learn basic actions to take in an emergency situation. We look forward to working with our partners and providing the community with the knowledge and basic skills needed to stand ready, be resourceful, be prepared to protect themselves and their families, and to contribute to their community's resilience.

PHEP will continue to collaborate with Parkland Medical Center and state, regional, and local partners, as well as volunteers on hospital reunification planning including plan and operational toolkit development, training opportunities, and drills.

The South Central Public Health Network will continue to engage and train our existing and dedicated South Central Medical Reserve Corps volunteers. We are always looking to recruit and retain new clinical and non-clinical volunteers to enhance our unit. We greatly appreciate our volunteers who play an important role in our outreach, preparedness, and response efforts.

Community Connection-A Regional Priority

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](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