

PROGRAM

GREATER SEACOAST COMMUNITY HEALTH



2024 Legislative Breakfast

Friday, March 29, 2024 | 7:30 - 9:30 AM
Rochester Elks Lodge
41 Columbus Ave, Rochester, NH 03867

Agenda

7:30 – 8:00 AM | Breakfast & Networking

8:00 – 8:10 AM | Opening Remarks

Cora Long, Prevention Coordinator, SCPHN

8:10 – 9:00 AM | Panel Discussion

Facilitated by Brittany Potvin, Community Health Worker, SCPHN

9:00 – 9:15 AM | Questions for the Panel

9:15 – 9:30 AM | Closing Remarks

Steve Pappajohn, Youth Services Coordinator/Teen Center Director, Dover Police Dept.

**We welcome you to stay after our program to network and
continue the conversation**

Panelists

Allison Burridge | Assistant Director of Housing Initiatives, Granite United Way

Justin Holsapple | Account Manager, Working Fields & Program Director, The Freeman House Sober Living

Katherine Michaud | Behavioral Health & Matter of Balance Coordinator, Cornerstone VNA

Rad Nichols | Executive Director, COAST

Phil Sletting | Research Director, New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute

Insights from Community Forums

CHALLENGES

Housing

- Lack of safe and sustainable housing is exacerbating mental health and substance use related issues, including suicidal ideation
- Affordable housing, including workforce housing, isn't realistic when coupled with cost of living (for individuals, families, single parents)
- Clients are utilizing programs longer than intended due to the lack of sustainable housing options available after completion
- Families are being "priced out" of communities due to high housing costs and the lack of affordable or attainable options
- Housing options are difficult or not attainable for people with physical disabilities

Transportation

- There isn't enough funding (federal, state or local) to design a more comprehensive system
- The paperwork is challenging and its difficult to show qualification for assistance
- License revocation is a common punitive measure in NH for non-driving related offenses, which can create more challenges for people trying to access resources
- Large service deserts; navigating to areas from drop off points takes a lot of time and effort
- Caseworkers spend a lot of time and effort in trying to help clients with transportation needs

Mental Health Care

- People don't have access to care unless they are in crisis
- Lack of providers for mental health care, and even less when looking in-network
- Being turned away from resources and long waits are discouraging; people are giving up, getting worse, or dying while seeking help
- Wages are not competitive, leading to staff shortages and burn out; inability to help clients access other services is causing burn out, as well
- People are being discharged too soon due to capacity, and not getting adequate care long enough for successful outcomes

Insights from Community Forums

SOLUTIONS

- Clear and realistic definitions for “workforce housing”, “market rate” and “affordable housing”
- Education in rental market about accepting vouchers and incentivizing the acceptance of vouchers
- Collaboration by and between businesses, housing developers, municipalities and agencies to solve as a regional issue
- Sustained, permanent, low barrier shelter in Strafford County
- Wraparound services for people transitioning to independent living to improve housing readiness
- Incentives from the state to build affordable units

Housing

- Supportive programs and resources to help people get licenses reinstated
- Financial assistance with obtaining and maintaining transportation
- Improve avenues that would allow people to drive with restricted licenses
- Additional, smaller bus routes and other transportation resources to help people reach more ancillary places
- Expanding and improving the CTS system
- Explore adding smaller transportation vehicles like micro-buses into the system

Transportation

- More prevention, intervention, and peer-based services that can be implemented outside of a traditional treatment setting
- Legislation to incentivize more professionals in this field such as tuition reimbursement, lowering or waiving application fees, more obtainable licensing requirements and more
- Incentives like tax breaks for practices to take on clients who have Medicaid or are uninsured
- State-funded mental healthcare centers
- Regulation of response times from mental health care providers to patients

Mental Health Care

CALL TO ACTION

Basic needs, like housing, transportation and access to health care are imperative to the health and wellbeing of our communities. In Strafford County, these basic needs go unmet for some of our most vulnerable populations, oftentimes due to the cost burden.

Without transportation, individuals struggle to work, creating further barriers to accessing essential resources like healthcare.

The dismal housing landscape in our state is not only creating a cost burden on citizens, it is creating workforce challenges across sectors – affecting our ability to provide timely services like mental health care to our populations.

Unmet basic needs and unstable living conditions can exacerbate behavioral health issues like mental health and substance use disorders. Limited access to mental health care, substance use treatment, and wraparound services perpetuates a cycle of crisis, trapping some Granite Staters in a web of challenges that have increasingly high barriers.

We can break down these barriers to wellness by advocating for comprehensive solutions, prioritizing funding streams and supporting evidence-based interventions that meet the diverse and complex needs of our communities. By joining us today, and by continuing to support these improvements across our communities, you are helping to ensure that the needs of individuals and families in Strafford County and across the Granite State are reflected throughout the decision making process.

GREATER SEACOAST COMMUNITY HEALTH



SCPHN.org | SCPHN@GoodwinCH.org



This project was supported with funding from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.