

AMHC Board Selects New CEO

October 11, 2018
Press Release



With the imminent retirement of its current Chief Executive Officer, Greg Disy, AMHC's board of Directors has selected Ellen Bemis as the new CEO effective January 1, 2019. Board President Athill Hebert states, "On behalf of the Board of Directors, we are pleased that Ellen Bemis has accepted the position as AMHC's new Chief Executive Officer. Ellen is an exceptionally skilled and professional leader with successful non-profit management experience. She has a high level of commitment to meeting the health and social service needs of Aroostook County residents and extensive knowledge of the regulatory, fiscal, and operational accountability under which non-profit organizations function. We are confident she will lead AMHC with skill and integrity to fulfill its mission in the future."

Ms. Bemis comes to AMHC having served for 20 years as the Chief Financial Officer of the Aroostook County Action Program and as a member and past president of AMHC's Board of Directors since 2011. She began her career as a Certified Public Accountant with Newman, Noyes & Associates in Portland and David N. Felch, CPAs in Caribou and holds a Public Accounting degree from Husson College. Ms. Bemis is a native of Maine and resides in Presque Isle with her husband Frank and their three children.

AMHC Appoints New Board Members

October 22, 2018

[Press Release](#)



left to right: Tim Doak, Debra Jacques, and Al Martin

Effective November 6, 2018, three new members will join AMHC's Board of Directors serving as representatives from Aroostook County. Debra Jacques is the Community Relations Manager for Katahdin Trust; Tim Doak is the Superintendent of Schools of Eastern Aroostook RSU 39 for Caribou, Limestone and Stockholm, MSAD 20 for Fort Fairfield, and MSAD 27 for Fort Kent; and Al Martin is the Human Resources Manager for Twin Rivers Paper in Madawaska.

Greg Disy, CEO, states, "I am pleased that Ms. Jacques, Mr. Doak, and Mr. Martin have volunteered to serve on AMHC's board. Each is an exemplary individual whose skills and experience will be an asset to our Board and I am confident that each of them will be excellent stewards of AMHC's mission of service to our communities.

The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring AMHC's mission is fulfilled and provide oversight for AMHC's services and business practices. Board Members must be a resident of the AMHC's service area and interested and capable of contributing to the development of policies and programs of AMHC. The term of each new member's membership is three years.

AMHC is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in 1964. AMHC offers behavioral health, brain injury rehabilitation, and social services for individuals of all ages, serving approximately 6,000 individuals annually from more than 20 locations across Aroostook, Hancock, and Washington Counties.

Roads to Recovery Community Center – Grand Opening

November 13, 2018
Events



On Saturday, November 24th and Sunday, November 25th from 12-4 PM, AMHC and RECOVERY AROOSTOOK are extending an invite for the community to join us for food, an orientation of services, and a sampling of the recovery groups that are offered on a daily basis at *Roads to Recovery Community Center* located at 1 Water Street here in Caribou, Maine.

Roads To Recovery aims to provide sustainable resources and services to individuals seeking recovery, and anyone impacted by addiction. We offer individual peer support and recovery coaching, peer-led, psychoeducational and skill building groups as well as job development support. We are open and supportive of all pathways to recovery ie. 12 step, MAT, refuge, faith-based, SMART etc.

Please drop by to see what's been happening at Aroostook County's very first RECOVERY CENTER. Come and learn what is available for YOU in Recovery.

Creating a Community that Celebrates Recovery!

Children's Advocacy Center begins serving County families from Fort Fairfield location

November 21, 2018
News



FORT FAIRFIELD, Maine — An advocacy center focused on serving children and families affected by sexual abuse in Aroostook County recently opened in Fort Fairfield and hopes to collaborate with other local agencies to provide crucial services that have not always been readily available.

The Aroostook County Children's Advocacy Center is a division of the Aroostook Mental Health Center's Sexual Assault Services and a part of the Maine Network of Children's Advocacy Centers. Staff members serve children aged 4 to 18 as well as adults with developmental disabilities throughout Aroostook County.

Program Coordinator Lydia Christie said that the center's staff members utilize a "multi-disciplinary team" approach in which they collaborate with law enforcement, officials from the Aroostook County District Attorney's office and Child Protective Services during a family's visit to ensure that they have access to any services they might need.

"Before children's advocacy centers existed, law enforcement would often respond to a report of sexual abuse but not always know where to refer families for advocacy, counseling or legal services," Christie said.

Families also would have had to travel as far as Portland to the Spurwink clinic, which provides forensic medical exams for children who have reported experiencing sexual abuse. Although Spurwink hosts monthly clinics at locations throughout the state, the nearest of those clinics is in Bangor.

The staff members at the Aroostook County Children's Advocacy Center are working with Spurwink to eventually offer forensic medical exams at the Fort Fairfield location, thus eliminating the travel barrier that many families can face when seeking the specialized medical service. They also plan

to offer evidence-based counseling services on site to ensure that any service that families might seek out exist under one roof.

In addition to Christie, the CAC staff includes forensic interviewer Laurie Deschaine, who conducts a private interview with victims regarding their alleged abuse, and Kate Bartlett, a family advocate who first meets with families, refers them to outside legal, medical or counseling services, and works to provide comfort to children while parents and guardians meet with law enforcement.

"My goal as an advocate is to have families leave here with the necessary appointments already scheduled," Bartlett said. "I also follow up with families one week and then one month after their initial visit to help make sure nothing falls through the cracks."

The CAC is a nonprofit organization that provides services free to families and receives funding from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. Christie said that the first conversations about opening such a center in northern Maine began five years ago when lawmakers in the state Legislature passed the Child and Family Services and Child Protection Act. The law stated that all counties in Maine must establish a Children's Advocacy Center that provides multidisciplinary services for children affected by sexual abuse.

In 2015, CAC staff members in Aroostook County formally received funding from DHHS, thus allowing them to develop services that align with their goal of receiving national accreditation. Officials from Northern Light A.R. Gould Hospital, then known as The Aroostook Medical Center, later offered to house the center at its health center in Fort Fairfield.

Christie noted that the CAC has received much support and financial donations from the community during the renovation of its current office space. On Saturday, Nov. 24, the center will be one of the organizations to benefit from funds collected from the Presque Isle Rotary Club's annual TV auction.

"None of this could have been possible without the community stepping up and realizing everyone's responsibility in keeping children safe," Christie said.

Though statistics say that one in every five people in Maine will experience sexual violence at some point in their lives, Christie said, that type of data is harder to track with children, as many might go years without reporting an incident. Many children might not have the words to describe what happened to them and in some situations could feel shamed or scared into staying silent by their abuser.

If a child comes forward about sexual abuse, Christie and CAC staff members encourage adults to remain calm and assure the child that what they've experienced is not their fault.

"We want to be here for families and let them know that they're not alone," Christie said. "It's our responsibility as a community to make sure all children feel safe."

<http://thecounty.me/2018/11/10/news/childrens-advocacy-center-begins-serving-county-families-from-fort-fairfield-location/>

World AIDS Day

November 27, 2018
News



Significant progress has been made in the AIDS response since 1988, and today three in four people living with HIV know their status. But we still have miles to go, as the latest UNAIDS report shows, and that includes reaching people living with HIV who do not know their status and ensuring that they are linked to quality care and prevention services. So, don't wait, this World AIDS Day, take a quiz to help you know your status at <https://www.kff.org/quiz/hivaids-quiz/>.

2019 HOPE Conference

December 6, 2018
Events

“Stronger Together: Embracing Relationships, Well-being & Community”

SAVE THE DATE 2019 HOPE Conference



“Stronger Together: Embracing Relationships, Well-being & Community”

**May 29, 2019
8:00 AM to 4:00 PM**

Augusta Civic Center
76 Community Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330

Coming Soon: Call for Presentations, Call for Artwork & Registration.
Follow us on the CCSM Facebook Page or Website for more details!

2019 HOPE Conference

CALL FOR ARTWORK

The HOPE Conference Planning Committee is looking for artwork to match this year's theme: “Stronger Together: Embracing Relationships, Well-Being & Community”.

Artwork will be used for an official HOPE conference pin, flyers, on the registration site and more!

Keep in mind that all artwork must be able to be sized to 2 inches or less. We are looking for artwork ONLY, no wording!



SUBMISSION DEADLINE: February 2, 2019

For questions or to submit artwork:

Hope Conference Planning Committee
c/o Consumer Council System of Maine
219 Capitol Street
Augusta, ME 04330
1-877-207-5073



AMHC's 2018 Annual Report

December 26, 2018
News

AMHC's 2018 Annual Report has been posted on our website. It can be found under 'ABOUT AMHC' in the navigation sidebar under 'Publications' or by visiting <https://www.amhc.org/publications>.

Downeast Treatment Center Sees Success with Hub and Spokes Model of Care

December 26, 2018
Press Release

Date: 12/05/2018

As the Senior Physician Executive for Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, Mike Murnik, MD has seen the devastating effects of Maine's opioid crisis first-hand. With opiate-related overdose deaths rising in the state over the last five years, Dr. Murnik knew there was a need for more treatment services in Hancock County and western Washington County, and a need to increase access to those services.

"People were dying," Dr. Murnik said. "But it was really hard for them to get into treatment."

It was a concern shared throughout the community. A series of monthly meetings began four years ago to discuss the crisis. Held at Ellsworth Town Hall, these meetings bring together law enforcement, healthcare providers, substance abuse counselors and other community partners who are attempting to mitigate the crisis. Through these ongoing discussions, they developed an idea: a treatment hub where people dealing with opiate use disorder could get stabilized and then move out into the community for maintenance and counseling.

In April, this idea became a reality: Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, Northern Light Maine Coast Hospital in Ellsworth, and MDI Hospital in Bar Harbor partnered with the Aroostook Mental Health Center and Healthy Acadia to open the doors of the Downeast Treatment Center to the community.

The Downeast Treatment Center provides outpatient treatment for patients with Opiate Use Disorder through a "hub and spokes" care model. At the Center – the hub – those affected receive counseling and medication assisted treatment (MAT). Once they are stabilized and improving, these patients are connected with primary care provider "spokes" in the community who can continue ongoing care, including MAT. As a result, treatment can be initialized more immediately, and the patient has more support as they taper off their medication, and after.

Dr. Murnik said this model is particularly helpful given the nature of the disease.

"The Center is set up to help with relapses which can be typical because this is a chronic, relapsing disease," he said. "If a person falls off the wagon and starts using again, they can go back to the hub for stabilization, and then go back out to the spokes."

After only seven months, several patients have been successful after entering the hub and progressing to the spokes.

"One graduate is now stabilized and applying for a job," Dr. Murnik said. "And another is completely off of Suboxone. They've tapered off completely and are doing well so far."

Dr. Murnik, however, acknowledges there's still more work to be done. His team is leading other initiatives to fight this epidemic, including implementing a model for initiating treatment in the emergency room that was pioneered by Yale-New Haven Hospital in Connecticut.

Dr. Murnik said ongoing community collaboration will continue to be vital in combatting Maine's opioid crisis.

"Addressing this as a community is key," he said. "This problem is as prevalent as diabetes, but there's still such a stigma. We need to figure this out and continue to meet people where they are. We have to make it easier to provide treatment and medications."

Dr. Murnik is up for the challenge and making positive changes.

"Our providers tell me that some of the most rewarding work they do is MAT, seeing people turn their lives around and get back to their families and back to work. The DETC and the Hub and Spokes Program make it easier for providers to do that work and for community members in need to get into treatment."



Michael Murnik, MD, VP, Senior Physician Executive Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital stands outside the Downeast Treatment Center.

Source: <https://northernlighthealth.org/Maine-Opioid-Crisis/Impact-Stories/Downeast-Treatment-Center-Sees-Success-with-Hub-an>