

National Winter Sports Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Awareness Month

January 2, 2019
Events

January, National Winter Sports TBI Awareness Month, calls attention to the fact that although sports injuries contribute to fatalities infrequently, the leading cause of death from sports-related injuries is traumatic brain injury. Sports and recreational activities contribute to about 21 percent of all traumatic brain injuries among American children and adolescents. For more information about traumatic brain injury, go to <http://www.biausa.org>.



Drugs: SHATTER THE MYTHS

January 14, 2019
News

This video answers teens' most frequently asked questions about drugs and drug abuse.

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=YIFDDB061i8>



<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/node/37059>

February is American Heart Month

February 1, 2019
Events



National Wear Red Day® is Friday, February 1, 2019! — Wear red to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease and save lives.

February is American Heart Month, an ideal time to remind everyone to focus on your heart health. Cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke, remains the leading global cause of death with more than 17.9 million deaths each year.

The biggest part of living healthy comes down to simply making healthy choices. While you can't change things like age and family history, the good news is that even modest changes to your diet and lifestyle can improve your heart health and lower your risk by as much as 80 percent.

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

February 1, 2019
Events



Every year, approximately 1.5 million high school students nationwide experience physical abuse from a dating partner. It is also known that 3 in 4 parents have never talked to their children about domestic violence. Teen dating violence (TDV) is defined as a pattern of abuse or threat of abuse against teenaged dating partners, occurring in different forms, including verbal, emotional, physical, sexual and digital. TDV occurs across diverse groups and cultures. The National Dating Abuse Helpline provides 24-hour national web-based and telephone resources to help teens experiencing dating abuse. Young people (as well as concerned friends, parents, teachers, clergy, law enforcement, and service providers) anywhere in the country can call toll free, 1-866-331-9474, text “loveis” to 22522, or log on to the interactive website, loveisrespect.org, and receive immediate, confidential assistance.

World Cancer Day – February 4, 2019

February 1, 2019
Events



Monday, February 4th is World Cancer Day, when organizations and people around the world unite to raise awareness about cancer and work to make it a global health priority. An estimated 9.5 million people worldwide were expected to die from cancer in 2018 – about 26,000 cancer deaths a day – and that number is predicted to grow.

How people can help themselves:

- Make healthy lifestyle choices that include avoiding using tobacco products, getting plenty of physical activity, eating a healthy diet, limiting alcohol, and staying safe in the sun.
- Know about the signs and symptoms of cancer and early detection guidelines because finding cancer early often makes it easier to treat.
- Share stories about their own cancer experiences, communicate with decision-makers and join support groups to help make positive change for all people affected by cancer.
- When possible, use work and other daily activities during and after cancer treatment as opportunities to maintain normality, routine, stability, social contact, and income.

How people can help others:

- Support cancer patients and survivors with the physical and emotional impacts of cancer even after treatment ends.
- Call on government leaders to commit adequate resources to reduce cancer deaths and provide a better quality of life for patients and survivors.
- Educate themselves and others about the link between certain lifestyle behaviors – including smoking, poor diet, and lack of physical activity – and cancer risk.
- Dispel rumors and myths that lead to stigma and discrimination against people with cancer in some communities.

Encourage schools and workplaces to implement nutrition, physical activity, and no smoking policies that help people adopt healthy habits for life.

National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

February 21, 2019
Events



The goal of National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (#NEDAwareness) is to shine the spotlight on eating disorders by educating the public, spreading a message of hope, and putting life-saving resources into the hands of those in need. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness and will affect 30 million Americans at some point in their lives, but myths and misinformation still keep people from getting the help they need. Eating disorders are serious conditions that can have a profound mental and physical impact, including death. This should not discourage anyone struggling—recovery is real, and treatment is available. Statistics on mortality and eating disorders underscore the impact of these disorders and the importance of treatment.

The NEDA Helpline is available Monday-Thursday from 9AM to 9PM ET, and Friday from 9AM to 5PM ET. Contact the Helpline for support, resources and treatment options for yourself or a loved one.

You may reach the NEDA helpline by calling (800) 931-2237.

Helpline volunteers are trained to help you find the information and support you are looking for. Reach out today!

AMHC Welcomes New CFAO

February 25, 2019
News



AMHC is pleased to welcome Christy Daggett, MPP, as AMHC's new Chief Financial and Administrative Officer. As the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer, she is responsible for providing leadership for the financial and administrative systems of the organization. Prior to joining AMHC, she has worked in public service in Maine for close to a decade, holding program-oriented and leadership roles at MCD Public Health, the Maine Center for Economic Policy, and the Aroostook County Action Program. She has served as Board President of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Maine Affiliate, President of the Aroostook Training and Education Coalition (ATEC), and Board Member of the Maine Children's Alliance. A native of Presque Isle, Christy earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Maine and her master's in Public Policy and Management from the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine. She has testified as an expert on rural public policy issues before the Maine Legislature, and her pieces have been published in many statewide and national forums, including health policy research on Medicaid expansion, health care price transparency, cancer screening access for rural Mainers, and the correlation between school-based health clinics and better graduation and attendance outcomes for K-12 students.

National Nutrition Month® 2019

March 1, 2019
Events



National Nutrition Month® is an annual nutrition education and information campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The campaign, celebrated each year during the month of March, focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

During National Nutrition Month®, help the Academy achieve its vision of a world where all people thrive through the transformative power of food and nutrition.

Key Messages:

1. Discover the benefits of a healthy eating style.
2. Choose foods and drinks that are good for your health.
3. Include a variety of healthful foods from all of the food groups on a regular basis.
4. Select healthier options when eating away from home.
5. Be mindful of portion sizes. Eat and drink the amount that's right for you, as MyPlate encourages us to do.
6. Keep it simple. Eating right doesn't have to be complicated.
7. Make food safety part of your everyday routine.
8. Help to reduce food waste by considering the foods you have on hand before buying more at the store.
9. Find activities that you enjoy and be physically active most days of the week.
10. Consult the nutrition experts. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists can provide sound, easy-to-follow personalized nutrition advice to meet your lifestyle, preferences and health-related needs.

International Women's Day

March 8, 2019
Events



March 8th is recognized as International Women's Day. In the late 1800's/early 1900's, the fight for equality was very real – equal pay and women's right to vote. AMHC is lucky to employ extremely talented and exceptional women who work diligently each day to provide excellent service to each other and our community.

Today, Central Office staff celebrated women empowerment, and success within our agency and our lives. We wear purple to support International Women's Day, including the women we are all fortunate to have in our lives each and every day.

National Sleep Awareness Week (March 10-16)

March 8, 2019
Events



Join AMHC and the National Sleep Foundation in celebrating its annual Sleep Awareness Week, March 10 to 16, 2019. This year's theme "Begin with Sleep" highlights the importance of good sleep health for individuals to best achieve their personal, family, and professional goals. To calculate how much sleep you need to be the best you can be and articles about good sleep health, sleep problems, and how each affects your lifestyle, visit <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/bedtime-calculator>.

Social Work Month 2019

March 12, 2019
Events

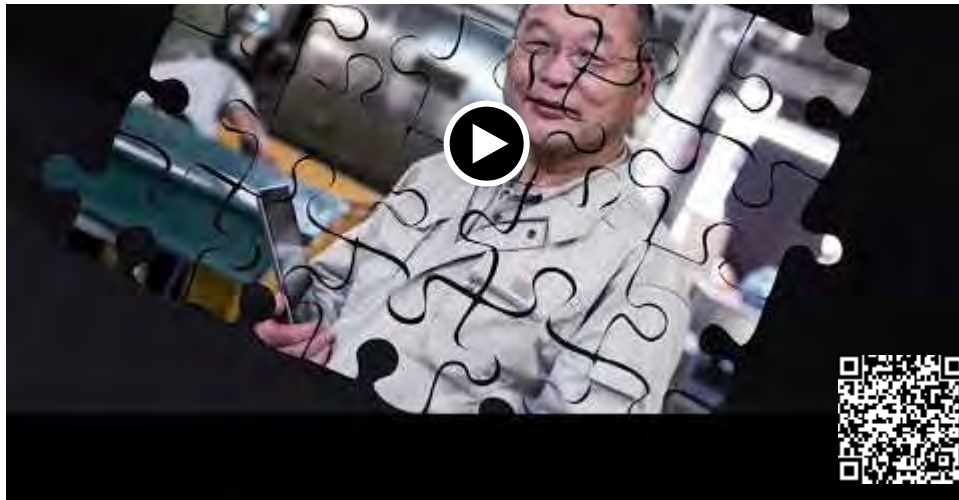
Aren't you glad there are social workers in the world? What would the world be like without them?

Social Work Month is in March and this year's theme is ELEVATE SOCIAL WORK.

Each day, nearly 700,000 social workers nationwide work to elevate and empower others, giving them the ability to solve life's problems, cope with personal roadblocks and get the services they need. Social workers are needed now more than ever as the nation grapples with serious issues such as income equality, preventing suicide, ensuring access to good health care for all, as well as addressing the growing opioid addiction now gripping the nation.

You may not realize it, but social workers are everywhere—and they work across AMHC in most all of our service locations. For generations, social workers have worked tirelessly to improve our wider society and make our nation a better place to live. For example, they work in mental health facilities and clinics and hospitals helping place people on the path to recovery from sickness and mental illness. They support our brave military personnel, veterans and their families. They are in schools, helping students overcome issues that prevent them from getting a good education, and they protect children who have been abused or neglected. They also help children find new families through adoption.

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=xijYuqxSfRY>



Library hosts art created by people suffering brain injuries

March 18, 2019
News



Staff from the Center for Integrated Neuro Rehabilitation in Caribou stand in front of a display at the Caribou Public Library showcasing artwork created by clients for Brain Injury Awareness Week. Those pictured here, from left, are Pamela Searles, Keely LeBlanc, David LeTourneau, Betty Hendrickson, and Kevin Huston.

For over a decade, people in The County suffering from brain injuries have turned their experiences into art as part of the Center for Integrated Neuro Rehabilitation (CINR) program based in Caribou. Now, that art is on display at the Caribou Public Library for the entire month.

Pam Searles, a clinical consultant with CINR, said this is the first time the facility has ever showcased their clients art via a public display.

Keely LeBlanc, a CINR brain injury support specialist, said she often uses art as a medium through which her clients can both express themselves and re-develop skills that may have been lost due to a neurological condition.

“They did such a great job,” said LeBlanc,” that Pam suggested we contact the library and see if they would like to hold a display.”

Caribou Public Library Director Hope Shafer said she and the library staff were “thrilled” and “excited” to bring awareness to the public about both the center and people in the area dealing with brain injuries.

“We hope to bring awareness by having this group showcase the incredible art their clients have done,” she said, “and to help others recognize why this artwork is so incredible.”

Searles said CINR, which is part of the Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC), primarily focuses on helping those with trauma or an acquired brain injury to get back into and functioning in society. That goal is accomplished through many outlets, such as art, she said.

“Art helps them manage their emotions,” said Kevin Huston, a rehabilitation technician at CINR, “and to express things that otherwise can’t be expressed. Some of our people have aphasia, or the inability to use words, so it’s a useful outlet. If a right-handed person has a stroke and loses the ability to use that side of their body, they really have to concentrate on things like drawing and using their motor skills.”

LeBlanc said she hopes the exhibit will help members of the community learn more about the experiences of people with brain injuries.

“I hope people will know that those with a brain injury can do the same things others can,” she said. She wants folks “to look at them as a human being, and know that while sometimes they may look OK, you may not be able to tell visually that something has happened to them. Often times people don’t take into account that there are things below the surface.”

Huston said this is one of the primary misconceptions about brain injuries, adding that it “is not always evident,” and that people with brain injuries sometimes exhibit different characteristics.

The art pieces themselves were drawn as part of the program’s efforts to improve motor function, the following of directions, and problem solving. For one project, clients had to draw straight lines and follow a pattern, while another involved placing beans over a tracing of an image.

LeBlanc said that some aspects that go beyond the directions, such as which colors to choose, can be overwhelming to certain patients and may cause them to stop. Other clients, however, began with specific patterns in mind and ended up becoming so absorbed in the project that the end result did not resemble their original intention.

“For some people,” LeBlanc said, “it can be hard to plan out. It can be overwhelming.”

David LeTourneau, a CINR brain injury specialist, said the organization’s specific mission is to work with people so they can become “as independent as they can possibly be.”

“We want to help people acquire the skills needed to obtain their own apartment,” he said, “or to do their own grocery shopping.”

CINF is CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) accredited, and while it specializes in brain injury rehabilitation, staffers also are able to help clients get in touch with other mental health professionals working under AMHC.

Jamie Owens, director of marketing and development at AMHC, said the organization has been providing services to people in Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock counties since 1970. AMHC now serves about 6,000 clients annually.

Searles said that if a client comes in with issues related to mental health counseling or substance abuse, CINR staff will make referrals to the appropriate organization.

“We all collaborate together,” she said, “to help support our clients’ needs.”

While the library exhibit had only been up a few days, Shafer said she’s already heard a great deal of positive feedback from patrons.

“Most are drawn immediately because of the artwork,” she said, “and will say that they need to bring their mom or relative back so they can see it. The display brings out a lot of stories from people with family members who have had injuries, and I’ve heard people say they wish this had been available for their uncle, aunt, cousin, sister, or friend. We are blessed to have this available in Aroostook County.”

Source: <https://thecounty.me/2019/03/14/living/arts/library-hosts-art-created-by-people-suffering-brain-injuries/>

April is Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month

April 10, 2019
Events

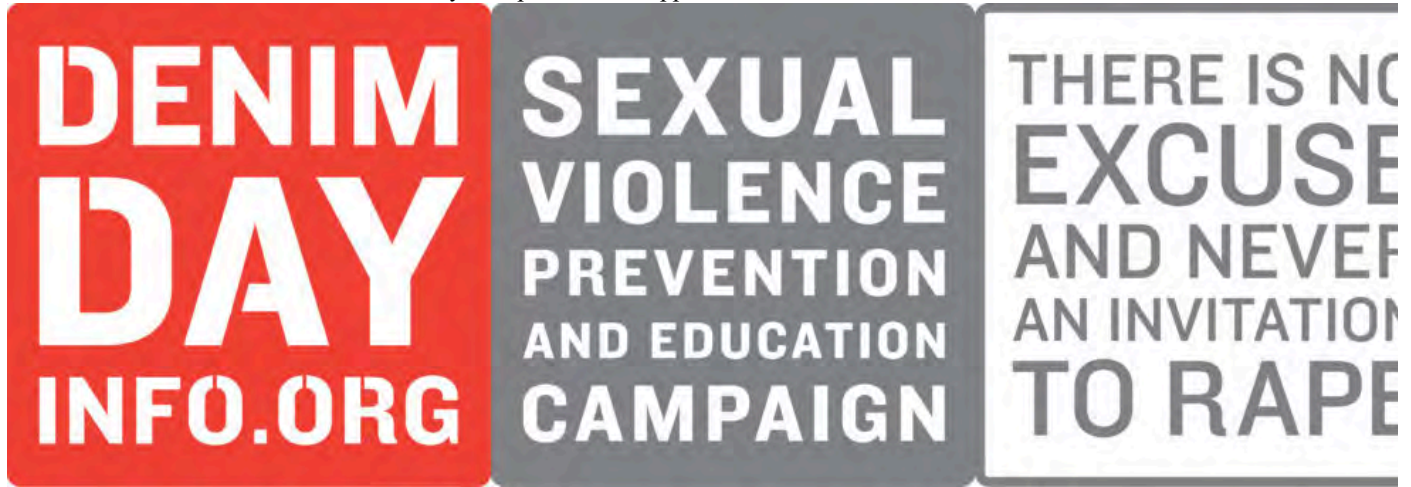


- In Maine, over 4,000 children in 2018 were victims of abuse.
- Visit the Prevent Child Abuse America (PCAA) website at <https://preventchildabuse.org> for resources on how to spot child abuse.
- In the U.S., 4 to 5 children die from child abuse or neglect every day.
- U.S. child protective services referrals involve 7.2 million children every year.
- 91% of child abuse perpetrators are parents.
- Maine Child and Family Services has a 24/7 hotline to report suspected child abuse or neglect: 1 (800) 452-1999
- <http://www.joyfulheartfoundation.org/learn/child-abuse-and-neglect>
- <https://www.positivepromotions.com/child-abuse-prevention-month/c/hlcchildabusepreventionmonth/>

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April 10, 2019
Events

Join AMHC for the 20th Annual Denim Day on April 24th in support of Sexual Assault Awareness Month!



STAND UP, SPEAK OUT: WEAR DENIM TO BREAK THE SILENCE

Wear Denim for your mother, sister, brother, grandmother, uncle, neighbor, cousin, cashier, teacher, father, friend... Wear it for all those who have been affected by Sexual Violence. Show your support. As a Community, we can end violence.

HISTORY:

In 1992 an 18-year-old Italian woman was picked up by her driving instructor to begin her driving lesson. Soon after her instructor sexually assaulted her on the side of the road. She reported the incident and he was convicted. The instructor appealed the case to the Italian High Court. In 1999 the court overturned the conviction, with a member of the High Court declaring that since the victim was wearing very tight jeans, the instructor could not have removed them himself, therefore the victim must have been a willing participant. Women of the Italian legislature protested the decision by wearing jeans. As news spread so did the protest. In April 1999 the first Denim Day was established in the United States.

For more information please contact AMHC Sexual Assault Services at 1-800-871-7741

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

April 11, 2019
Events



Founded and sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (now Facing Addiction with NCADD), Alcohol Awareness Month was established in 1987 to help reduce the stigma so often associated with alcohol addiction by encouraging communities to reach out to the American public each April with information about alcohol, alcohol addiction, and recovery. Alcohol addiction is a chronic, progressive disease, genetically predisposed and fatal if untreated. However, people can and do recover. In fact, it is estimated that as many as 20 million individuals and family members are living lives in recovery from alcohol use!

According to the NCADD, "Alcohol is the most commonly used addictive substance in the United States. 17.6 million people, or one in every 12 adults, suffer from alcohol abuse or dependence along with several million more who engage in risky, binge drinking patterns that could lead to alcohol problems. More than half of all adults have a family history of alcoholism or problem drinking, and more than 7 million children live in a household where at least one parent is dependent on or has abused alcohol." Warning signs of alcohol abuse include:

- Drinking to calm nerves, forget worries or boost a sad mood
- Guilt about drinking
- Unsuccessful attempts to cut down or stop drinking
- Lying about or hiding drinking habits
- Causing harm to oneself or someone else as a result of drinking
- Needing to drink increasingly greater amounts in order to achieve desired effects
- Feeling irritable, resentful or unreasonable when not drinking
- Medical, social, family or financial problems caused by drinking

How is AMHC addressing the issue?

- Individual Outpatient Therapy (IOP)
- Outpatient and Intensive Outpatient Treatment programs, which require regular attendance for a set period of time.
- Maine Mothers Network <https://www1.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/help/mainemothersnetworkflyer.pdf>
- Driver Education and Evaluation Program (DEEP) services for individuals seeking to regain their license following an operating under the influence charge.
- Peer support
- MAT services including Opioid Health Home
- DMS (Detox management services)
 - Money available for medication
 - Treatment IOP, individual, residential
- Residential Treatment Facility "The Farm"
- Criminogenic treatment services
 - Working with local probation services
 - Diversion Academy
 - Mark Nelson working in Jail (Breaking Free program)
- The Roads to Recovery Community Center services in Caribou and coming soon to Houlton
 - Various recovery meetings
 - AA
 - NA
 - Al-anon
 - Refuge recovery
 - men/women group
 - father/mother group
 - Recovery writing, art groups, music
 - Families Anonymous
 - Substance use and domestic violence
 - Maine can work

- Narcan training
- IOP has been attending every two to three weeks
 - High-power box
 - Jeopardy
 - music
 - Benefits are that our customers have increased confidence to participate in various recovery meetings

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

May 1, 2019
Events



Millions of Americans are affected by mental health conditions every year. Here are some facts about the prevalence and impact of mental illness.

- Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S.—43.8 million, or 18.5%—experiences mental illness in a given year.
- Approximately 1 in 25 adults in the U.S.—9.8 million, or 4.0%—experiences a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.
- Approximately 1 in 5 youth aged 13–18 (21.4%) experiences a severe mental disorder at some point during their life. For children aged 8–15, the estimate is 13%.
- 1.1% of adults in the U.S. live with schizophrenia.
- 2.6% of adults in the U.S. live with bipolar disorder.
- 6.9% of adults in the U.S.—16 million—had at least one major depressive episode in the past year.
- 18.1% of adults in the U.S. experienced an anxiety disorder such as posttraumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and specific phobias.
- Among the 20.2 million adults in the U.S. who experienced a substance use disorder, 50.5%—10.2 million adults—had a co-occurring mental illness.

Social Stats

- An estimated 26% of homeless adults staying in shelters live with serious mental illness and an estimated 46% live with severe mental illness and/or substance use disorders.
- Approximately 20% of state prisoners and 21% of local jail prisoners have “a recent history” of a mental health condition.
- 70% of youth in juvenile justice systems have at least one mental health condition and at least 20% live with a serious mental illness.
- Only 41% of adults in the U.S. with a mental health condition received mental health services in the past year. Among adults with a serious mental illness, 62.9% received mental health services in the past year.
- Just over half (50.6%) of children with a mental health condition aged 8-15 received mental health services in the previous year.
- African Americans and Hispanic Americans each use mental health services at about one-half the rate of Caucasian Americans and Asian Americans at about one-third the rate.
- Half of all chronic mental illness begins by age 14; three-quarters by age 24. Despite effective treatment, there are long delays—sometimes decades—between the first appearance of symptoms and when people get help.

Consequences Of Lack Of Treatment

- Serious mental illness costs America \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year.
- Mood disorders, including major depression, dysthymic disorder, and bipolar disorder, are the third most common cause of hospitalization in the U.S. for both youth and adults aged 18–44.
- Individuals living with serious mental illness face an increased risk of having chronic medical conditions. Adults in the U.S. living with serious mental illness die on average 25 years earlier than others, largely due to treatable medical conditions.
- Over one-third (37%) of students with a mental health condition age 14–21 and older who are served by special education drop out—the highest dropout rate of any disability group.
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. and the 2nd leading cause of death for people aged 10–34.
- More than 90% of people who die by suicide show symptoms of a mental health condition.
- Each day an estimated 18-22 veterans die by suicide.

What Is Stigma?

People experiencing mental health conditions often face rejection, bullying and even discrimination. This can make their journey to recovery longer and more difficult. Stigma is when someone, or you yourself, views you in a negative way because you have a mental health condition. Some people describe stigma as shame that can be felt as a judgment from someone else or a feeling that is internal, something that confuses feeling bad with being bad.

Navigating life with a mental health condition can be tough, and the isolation, blame, and secrecy that is often encouraged by stigma can create huge challenges to reaching out, getting needed support and living well. Learning how to cope with stigma and how to avoid and address stigma are important for all of us.

AMHC's New "Maine Mothers' Network" Program Can Help Pregnant and Parenting Women Affected by Substance Abuse

June 10, 2019
Press Release



AMHC urges pregnant and parenting women who use drugs or alcohol to call the Maine Mother's Network (MMN) 24/7 referral line today.

Aroostook, Washington and Hancock Counties, Maine (Friday, May 29, 2019)
— Aroostook Mental Health Services (AMHC) is urging **women who are pregnant or parenting children five years of age and under** to join a new, free program in northeastern Maine that can help them create a substance-free future for them and their children. **The referral line for Maine Mothers' Network is open 24/7 at 1-800-244-6431.**

“Pregnancy is a time of hope for the future, and we know that for some women who use drugs or alcohol, the time can be a powerful force for change. Our goal is to help them gain access to needed services to attend to their substance use or become substance-free in order to give their baby the best possible start,” says Lorraine Chamberlain, LCSW, and Program Director at AMHC. “But we also know that breaking free of substances is both physically and mentally hard. Maine Mothers' Network helps mothers with their unaddressed needs that are underlying substance use – helping them break the cycle of drug or alcohol use for good.”

In the context of an opioid epidemic that resulted in more than three hundred fatal overdoses in Maine last year, the program's mission is even more urgent. Per the Maine Center for Disease Control, Maine's per capita rate of substance-affected babies is the highest in the nation. Data from the Augusta-based Maine Children's Alliance show that **one in ten babies** born in Aroostook County is born drug-affected, and this correlates with higher rates of infant death during the first year of life – a problem that is on the rise in Maine.

“This program is cost- and judgement-free,” says Chamberlain. “We want moms to call us, so we can help them get to the place they want to be. Our agency has helped thousands of people in Aroostook County recover from substance use over the past fifty years. We aren't here to judge. We're here to help.”

Each mom will be assigned a case manager who can help her with various needs – from health coverage, to healthy food for her and her baby, to help finding a place to live, high-quality childcare for her children, or get training for a better job. At the same time, moms will learn more about events from their own early lives that have led to the stressors that too often underlie high risk behaviors like substance use – and start the process of healing. National experts from the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) have recognized this program as an example of “evidence-based practice,” and skilled practitioners will be engaged using tele-health technology, ensuring that moms living in the country and small towns still receive first-class care.

Maine Mothers' Network is offered through a consortium of partner agencies across the state of Maine, including AMHC, Crisis and Counseling, Day One, Tri-County Mental Health Services, and Wellspring. It is funded through the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services.

*AMHC is a private, non-profit community health and social service organization with operations in Aroostook, Hancock, and Washington Counties, Maine. We offer mobile crisis response and stabilization, outpatient, behavioral health home, rehabilitation, residential, peer support, supportive visitation, case management, and educational services to meet the community's mental health, substance use, and brain injury treatment and recovery needs. Our mission is to provide integrated healthcare services that maximize an individual's potential to **recover** and improve their quality of life.*

Downeast Treatment Center expanding services

July 31, 2019
News

https://www.amhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/7-30-19-WVII-TV7-Fox-Downeast-Treatment-Center.mp4?_=1



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For a little more than a year, the Downeast Treatment Center in Ellsworth has been working with area hospitals and organizations to help those with substance use disorders. Now, treatment center leaders are hoping to expand on the help being provided.

The opioid crisis affects people across the entire state and now the Downeast Treatment Center is providing more opportunity for those people seeking help.

“I don’t know if I’d be alive,” said DTC patient Ryan Miller. “I really think this place saved my life.”

Before Miller was a patient at the center he was behind bars. Now he’s employed and in his own words, picking up the pieces of his life.

“This and the structure from the Hancock County Drug Court program really has brought me a long way in life,” he said.

Leaders at the center are now focused on removing barriers to treatment so that more people can find help.

“Through a federal grant that’s come through Healthy Acadia we’re able to pay for treatment for people who either don’t have insurance or don’t have enough insurance so that cost is no longer a barrier,” said Healthy Acadia Community Health Program Manager Penny Guisinger. “It’s no cost to services to people who would benefit from that.”

The DTC provides medication-assisted treatment, using doctor-prescribed Suboxone to fight addiction.

“It takes care of cravings, and it keeps people from going into withdrawal, and those two single issues will wreck someone’s life,” said DTC Clinical Advisory Committee member Dr. Julian Kuffler.

Medication-assisted treatment paired with group counseling is what’s helping get addicts on the path to recovery.

“Being here is the only time they can talk about their recovery and their struggles,” said DTC Substance Abuse Counselor Lisa Groo. “Being out in the big wide world...there’s a stigma attached”

Through customized treatment plans, expanded hours and financial assistance, DTC leaders are hoping to help even more people.

<https://www.foxbangor.com/news/item/downeast-treatment-center-expanding-services/>

AMHC and Link for Hope host Grand Opening for Aroostook Recovery Center of Hope

September 11, 2019
News



An open house for the Aroostook Recovery Center of Hope (ARCH), located at 36 North Street, will be held on Saturday, September 14 from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ARCH, a service of Aroostook Mental Health Center in collaboration with Link for Hope, is a place where individuals can come and receive support for their recovery journey. ARCH will help connect people to resources and also serve as a venue for various recovery meetings.

It will be an important time of sharing with the community how a peer support recovery center like ARCH provides such a benefit to those struggling with alcohol and drug use.

The grand opening will include an overview of services offered, refreshments and a ribbon cutting at 3:30 p.m. All are welcome. Overflow parking will be accommodated at the former Portland Glass building next door. For more information, please contact Emily Bragdon at 493-1278 or Trudy Rairdon at 521-2283.

AMHC Raises Awareness on Suicide

September 18, 2019
News



In honor of Suicide Prevention Month, staff members at AMHC’s central office wore their “Don’t Let Your Story End” swag. AMHC is available to anyone experiencing a crisis. To access their Mobile Emergency Services team please call or text the Maine Crisis Line at 1-888-568-1112.

September is designated as Suicide Prevention Month and Aroostook Mental Health Center has been partnering with other community organizations to highlight awareness, prevention, and local resources that are available to everyone.

“According to the Maine Centers for Disease Control, suicide is the second leading cause of death for Mainers ages 10-45,” explains Michelle Ferris, Director of Emergency Services. “AMHC has been busy this month working with a number of other organizations to raise awareness. Maine’s suicide rate remains higher than the rest of the nation; I recently learned that more people in Maine die from suicide than from car accidents or breast cancer and for every homicide in Maine, there are seven suicides. AMHC is available to anyone experiencing a crisis. To access our Mobile Emergency Services team please call or text the Maine Crisis Line at 1-888-568-1112.”

Activities that have taken place include:

- Crisis Intervention Team training for Law Enforcement in Houlton – AMHC collaborated with NAMI Maine (National Alliance on Mental Illness) to train 17 officers on behavioral health issues. The officers were provided tools and resources to manage behavioral health crises in the community.
- Suicide Prevention training for Resident Assistants, UMFK
- Out of the Darkness Walk, Fort Kent
- Awareness table at Machias Saving Bank, Caribou
- Student presentations on suicide prevention at Van Buren Middle and High Schools
- Illuminate Life event, Boys and Girls Club, Presque Isle on September 18
- UMFK Student Health Fair on September 19
- Community Suicide Awareness Presentation with NAMI and MADRN (Make A Difference Right Now), on September 19 in Calais
- Anxiety and depression screenings at Cary Medical Center Health Fair on September 21 in Caribou

AMHC Selected to Serve on National Advancing Health Equity Learning Collaborative

October 9, 2019
News

Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC) has been selected to serve on a national *Advancing Health Equity Learning Collaborative*, a component of the Advancing Health Equity: Leading Care, Payment, and Systems Transformation program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Lorraine Chamberlain, Program Director of Integration and Behavioral Health in Aroostook County will represent AMHC.

“It is an honor for AMHC to be chosen to participate in this collaborative,” said Ellen Bemis, AMHC CEO. “Our organization works daily with individuals who experience health disparities including poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to education, housing and healthcare resources. With 37 years of experience in mental health, substance use and crisis services, Lorraine will be a tremendous voice and advocate in leading this transformational work to advance health equity at the national level.”

Representatives from state Medicaid agencies, Medicaid health plans, and health care organizations from Maine, Delaware, Illinois, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Washington were competitively selected to work together to reduce health disparities. For the next two years, the group will convene to design integrated health care delivery and payment models to reduce health disparities and then implement these efforts at health care delivery organizations and surrounding communities.

“This is the first attempt that we know of to bring together these three stakeholder groups to identify common goals for advancing health equity and then work together to implement them. We are excited about the potential of this project,” noted Andrea Ducas, Senior Program Officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Celebrating 55 years, AMHC is a nonprofit organization supporting approximately 6,000 clients annually. The agency has 20 service sites and 325 employees located across Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock counties providing mental health, substance use, crisis and sexual assault services. For more information, connect with AMHC at www.amhc.org.



AMHC Announces Updates to Senior Leadership Team

October 16, 2019
News



AMHC announces the following updates to its senior leadership team: Michelle Ferris, LCSW, Director of Emergency Services; Lorraine Chamberlain, LCSW, CCS, Director of Integration and Behavioral Health in Aroostook County; and Debra L. Jacques, Director of Marketing and Development.

Ellen Bemis, CEO, Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC) has announced the following senior leadership updates: Michelle Ferris, LCSW to Director of Emergency Services; Lorraine Chamberlain, LCSW, CCS to Director of Integration and Behavioral Health in Aroostook County; and Debra L. Jacques as Director of Marketing and Development.

“I am pleased to share these updates regarding our senior leadership team,” said Bemis. “Each of these women possesses a great deal of knowledge and expertise in their respective fields. They will be a great asset to AMHC in their new roles as we work as a team to support our clients and their families, expand our services and increase our presence in the communities we serve.”

As the Director of Emergency Services, Michelle Ferris is responsible for AMHC’s Mobile Crisis Services and Sexual Assault Services in Aroostook, Hancock, and Washington Counties, and Crisis Stabilization Units for both adults and children in Aroostook County. Michelle has been with AMHC for 14 years. She has held several positions since 2006, most recently serving as Emergency Services Supervisor in Aroostook County.

Lorraine Chamberlain has assumed the position of Director of Integration and Behavioral Health in Aroostook County. She is responsible for substance use and intensive outpatient program services including the Residential Treatment Facility in Limestone, Medicated Assisted Treatment and Behavioral Health services in the five outpatient offices in Aroostook. In addition, she oversees Children Behavioral Health Services that include the Behavioral Health Home services, Therapeutic Foster Care and Supportive Visitation. Lorraine has served in many capacities since joining AMHC in 1982, most recently as the Director of Emergency Services, a position she held for 19 years.

Debra “Deb” Jacques is responsible for the agency’s marketing, planning and development activities. She has more than 25 years of experience in marketing and development and was most recently the Community Relations Manager for Katahdin Trust. The majority of Deb’s career has been in non-profit work, serving as the Business Development Director for Eastern Maine HomeCare (now Northern Light Home Care & Hospice) and as Resource Developer for Aroostook County Action Program.

As Seen on WAGM This Morning: Stop the Stigma Related To Mental Health Part One

October 23, 2019
News

On this segment of WAGM This Morning we talk with local mental healthcare practitioners about the stigma related to mental health, how to overcome it and access local resources for help.

People can contact the Aroostook Mental health Center at: amhc.org and to make an appointment call AMHC's Access Center at 1-800-244-6431 Maine Crisis Line 1-888-568-1112

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<https://www.wagmtv.com/content/news/As-Seen-on-WAGM-This-Morning-Stop-the-Stigma-Related-To-Mental-Health-Part-One-563693561.html>

AMHC Welcomes New Therapists to Central Aroostook

November 6, 2019
News



AMHC announces Krystal Griffiths, LMSW-CC and Andrea Chasse, LMSW-CC has joined its outpatient offices in central Aroostook.

Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC) is pleased to announce the addition of Krystal Griffiths, LMSW-CC and Andrea Chasse, LMSW-CC to its central Aroostook service area.

“AMHC is so pleased to have Krystal and Andrea joining our growing team of professionals,” said Lorraine Chamberlain, Director of Integration and Behavioral Health in Aroostook County. “Both women bring a diverse background of experience working with adolescents and adults experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges. They will be a great asset to those we serve.”

Krystal is located in AMHC’s Presque Isle Outpatient Office at One Edgemont Drive. For the past nine years, she has provided services to adults and adolescents in Pennsylvania as well as Jamaica, West Indies. She has a broad range of experience in individual and group therapy, working with those in the correctional services system as well as experience assisting individuals in a psychiatric hospital. She is passionate about helping her clients reach their life goals while assisting them in managing their mental health challenges. She received her Bachelor of Social Work from Northern Caribbean University and a Master of Social Work from Shippensburg University, Pennsylvania.

Andrea is located in AMHC’s Caribou Outpatient Office at 43 Hatch Drive. While completing her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Maine at Presque Isle, Andrea interned in a hospice program. Upon graduation, she worked primarily with young children and teenagers. During that time, her emphasis was on the strength of each individual, providing social skills support, coping skills and ways to manage emotions in positive ways in order to support youth in achieving their goals. While completing her Master’s Degree in Social Work from the University of Maine, Orono, Andrea focused on experiential art therapy and the elderly. Since then, she has worked with elderly veterans and their spouses, and now as a generalist therapist. Andrea is currently working toward earning her LCSW credential. Once completed she will be independently licensed as a generalist practitioner therapist.

For more information about AMHC services please contact AMHC’s Access Center at 1-800-244-6431.

Therapist Joins AMHC's Houlton Office

November 8, 2019
News

Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC) is pleased to announce the addition of Suzanne Costallos, LCSW to its Houlton Outpatient Office.

"I am very pleased to have Suzanne as part of our talented team," shared Lorraine Chamberlain, Director of Integration and Behavioral Health in Aroostook County. "She has a passion for working with people who are experiencing mental health challenges. Her focus is on promoting resiliency and engaging those we serve to be active participants in their journey to wellness and healing."

Suzanne has been working as a licensed clinical social worker for more than 15 years. She is a strong proponent of treatment methods that incorporate both mind and body therapies. Suzanne earned her Master of Social Work (MSW) from Yeshiva University – Wurzwiler School of Social Work in New York. A native New Yorker, she relocated to northern Maine in 2004. Suzanne is also a professional actress and singer and a graduate of The Juilliard School in New York.

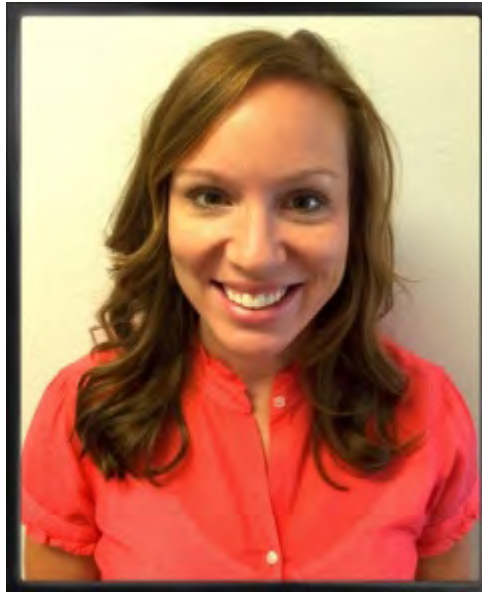


AMHC announces Suzanne Costallos, LCSW has joined its Houlton Outpatient Office.

For more information about AMHC services please contact AMHC's Access Center at 1-800-244-6431.

AMHC Welcomes Behavioral Health Therapist to Houlton Office

November 11, 2019
News



AMHC announces Tiffany Cumming, MA, LCPC, IMH-E® has joined its outpatient services in the Houlton area. Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC) has announced that Tiffany Cumming, MA, LCPC, IMH-E® has joined its Houlton Outpatient Office.

“I am very pleased that Tiffany has joined AMHC,” shared Lorraine Chamberlain, Director of Integration and Behavioral Health in Aroostook County. “Tiffany’s focus is on promoting resiliency for youth through social-emotional development and learning. She is passionate about partnering with those who influence the development of children be they parents, guardians, teachers or childcare providers. We are grateful to have Tiffany return to Aroostook County to serve the needs of children and families living in the greater Houlton area.”

A native of Houlton and a graduate of Houlton High School, Tiffany most recently provided early childhood services in the state of Colorado. Prior to that, she offered clinical services for youth and families in the Boston area. She has a Master of Arts in Expressive Therapies: Mental Health Counseling & Art Therapy from Lesley University in Cambridge, MA. She carries the state of Maine independent counseling license, LCPC, Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.

For more information about AMHC services please contact AMHC’s Access Center at 1-800-244-6431.

Aroostook Children's Advocacy Center Marks One Year of Service

December 5, 2019
News



The Aroostook CAC includes Katherine Bartlett, Family Services Advocate; Lydia Christie, Program Coordinator; and Lori Deschaine, LCSW, Forensic Interviewer

The Aroostook Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), a program of Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC), recently marked its one year anniversary of providing services to children and families. The CAC is committed to minimizing trauma and promoting healing for children and their families following the allegation of sexual abuse. The program provides a streamlined, timely and evidence-based community response in a safe and neutral environment.

Located in Fort Fairfield, in its first year, the CAC assisted more than 80 children and their families, highlighting the need for services in Aroostook County. "Prior to its opening, the closest Children's Advocacy Center was in Bangor," said Lori Deschaine, LCSW, Forensic Interviewer. "Having this program locally reduces the barriers in navigating a sometimes complex system while connecting the child and family with resources and supports."

"This program would not be possible without the strong support it received from many local organizations and businesses who understood the need for this service," explained Lydia Christie, Program Coordinator for Sexual Assault Services and Aroostook CAC. "As we start our second year of operation, we wish to thank our community partners for making this possible."

Donations will continue to be an important part of Aroostook CAC's funding. "We are grateful for the continued support that helps ensure the sustainability of the program," said Christie. Monetary contributions may be sent to Lydia Christie, AMHC, P.O. Box 1018, Caribou, Maine 04736. The CAC also has a list of program supplies available on the Amazon Aroostook CAC wish list accessible through the following link: <https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/29S0Y11KEEX6X>.

Referrals for Aroostook CAC come through law enforcement, child protective services, or the district attorney's office. To receive more information, contact the CAC directly at 207-472-6134.

2019 AMHC Annual Report

December 17, 2019
News



AMHC is pleased to release its 2019 Annual Report to the community. “AMHC staff accomplished a great deal in 2019,” shares Ellen Bemis, CEO. “Thanks to their efforts nearly 6,000 individuals in Aroostook, Washington and Hancock Counties received support in mental health, substance use, crisis, and sexual assault services. I also wish to thank our many partners and donors who make this work possible. We look forward to 2020 and all that we can achieve together.”