

AMHC is the Local Provider for StrengthenME in Aroostook, Washington and Hancock counties

January 13, 2021
News



StrengthenME is Maine’s behavioral health and resiliency response to COVID-19. Community health workers are available from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. by contacting the statewide support number at 207-221-8198 or 866-367-4588. Residents of Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock counties also have the option to connect through a local number at 207-762-4851.

Providing support to individuals for stressors related to COVID-19

Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) is pleased to be the local provider for StrengthenME in Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock counties. StrengthenME is Maine’s behavioral health and resiliency response to COVID-19, providing free stress management, wellness, and resiliency resources.

“For individuals struggling with the stress of the pandemic, StrengthenME is here to support you,” explains Michelle Ferris, Program Director of Emergency Services. “Community health workers are here to listen, provide ideas for you to consider, and help you connect with community resources. We also encourage providers and other professionals to call for support as well, either for themselves or those they assist in a professional capacity.”

COVID-19 has changed things. Work is different. School is different. Home is different. Life is different, and that can be hard. The toll COVID-19 has taken on individuals, families, and communities is real.

StrengthenME offers stress management tools, emotional support resources, and program and community connections that promote wellness, resilience, empowerment, and recovery. StrengthenME is free, confidential, anonymous, and available to anyone in Maine.

Community health workers are available from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. by contacting the statewide support number at 207-221-8198 or 866-367-4588. Residents of Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock counties also have the option to connect through a local number at 207-762-4851.

AMHC Acquires Presque Isle Property, Increasing Access to Services

January 21, 2021
News



Greg Moody, CADC and Substance Abuse Counselor at AMHC's Presque Isle Outpatient Office (PIOP), gets settled at PIOP's new location at 180 Academy Street, Presque Isle.

Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) is pleased to announce that the agency has acquired the property at 180 Academy Street in Presque Isle. Previously known as Prasanna Suites, the former medical facility will house AMHC's Presque Isle Outpatient Office, administrative services, and by early spring, 2021 an expanded adult crisis stabilization unit (ACSU).

"This is an exciting time for AMHC," shared Ellen Bemis, CEO. "For several years, the agency has been searching for a suitable property to expand our adult crisis stabilization services. When this property became available, our board of directors saw the potential to bring a number of services under one roof."

Situated along Presque Isle's "healthcare corridor," the property is near Northern Light A.R. Gould Hospital and numerous other healthcare providers. "By bringing a number of services together, we make it possible for community members to more easily access the care they need," said Bemis.

As of Monday, January 18, AMHC's Presque Isle Outpatient and administrative staff will deliver services from 180 Academy Street. The Adult Crisis Stabilization Unit (ACSU) services will remain open at its current location at 162 Main Street. The opening of the new, expanded ACSU will be announced in March 2021.

Center for Integrated Neuro Rehab Achieves Three-Year CARF Accreditation

January 27, 2021
News



Pam Searles, Neuro-Rehabilitation Services Manager for Center for Integrated Neuro Rehab (CINR), a program of AMHC, proudly displays the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) certificate CINR was recently reissued for another three years.

Center for Integrated Neuro Rehab (CINR), a program of Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC), is pleased to announce that it has been reissued a three-year accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

“In their letter, CARF shared that our ability to achieve their highest level of accreditation is an indication of our organization’s dedication and commitment to improving the quality of the lives of the individuals we serve,” said Christine Brown, LCSW, CCS, AMHC Program Director of Community Integration. “We are proud of our staff who work each day to improve the lives of those diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury, or TBI.”

CARF is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services. Through accreditation, CARF assists service providers in improving their services, demonstrating value, and meeting internationally recognized organizational and program standards. Accreditation is an on-going process, establishing a provider’s commitment to enhance its performance, manage its risk, and distinguish its service delivery.

CINR first became CARF accredited in 2008. This is the fifth time the program has gone through the process. “Continuous process improvement is critical to the success of our program,” explained Brown.

Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are most commonly sustained through falls, as well as strokes, and motor vehicle accidents. Since 2007, CINR has supported hundreds of individuals and their loved ones. They address intellectual, emotional, and social functioning deficits to increase a brain injury survivor’s maximum recovery. Services may include psychological services, group therapy, family support groups, physical, occupational, speech therapy, and community reintegration.

Traumatic brain injuries are more common than many people think. On average weekly in Maine, there are nearly 200 TBI-related hospital emergency department visits. CINR works with individuals to help them gain more physical function skills, language/cognition, social/emotional well-being, and more independence with life skills. There is hope and help in overcoming the challenges associated with traumatic brain injury.

CINR services are offered at its facility at 159 Bennett Drive in Caribou and AMHC’s Houlton Outpatient Office at 11 Mill Street. CINR is currently accepting client referrals. Please contact them at 207-498-3820 for more information or to learn more about eligibility requirements.

AMHC Announces Promotion of Brittany Ballard to Senior Leadership

February 11, 2021
News



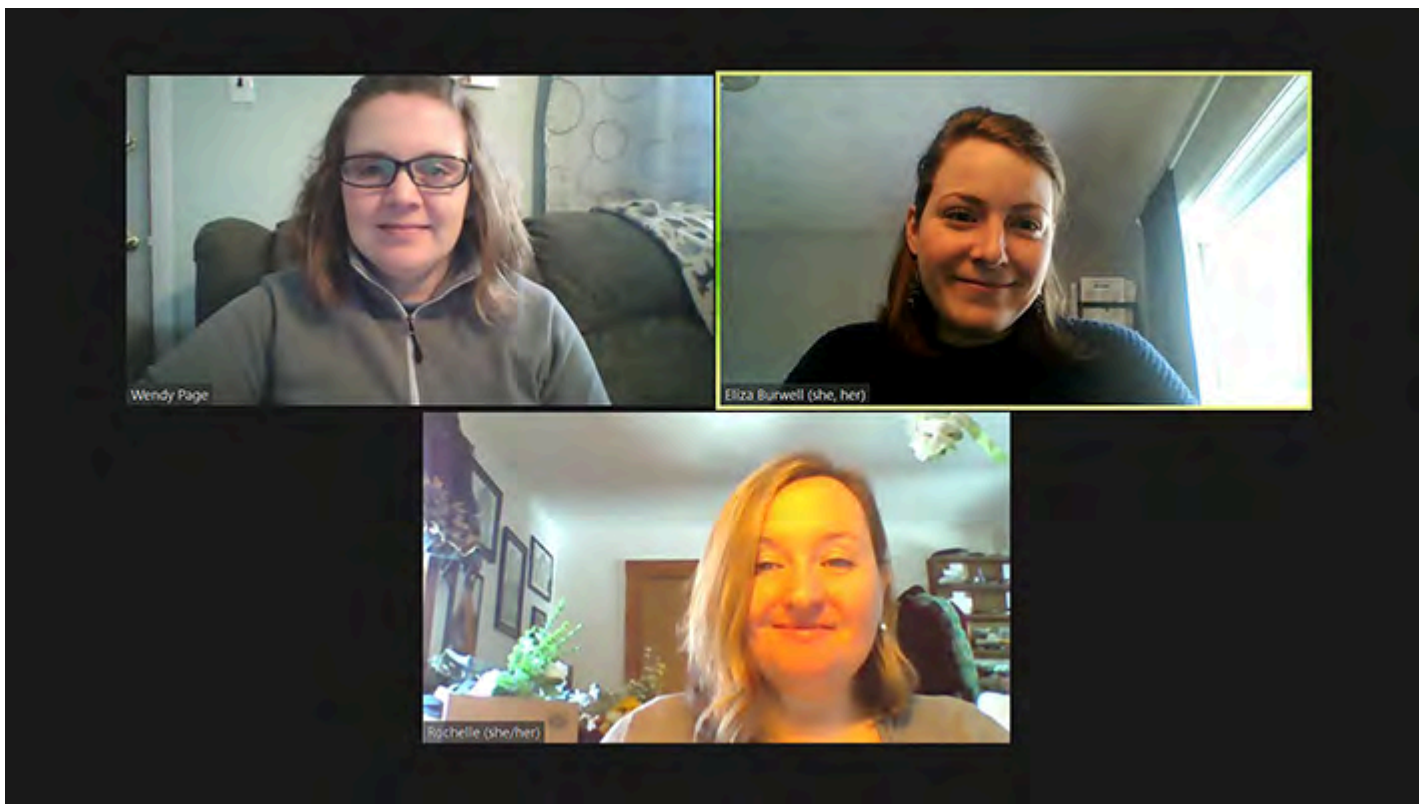
AMHC Announces Promotion of Brittany Ballard to Director of Human Resources.

Ellen Bemis, CEO, Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC), has announced the promotion of Brittany Ballard to Director of Human Resources. Brittany's new role includes joining AMHC's Senior Leadership Team. "We are very pleased to have Brittany accept this promotion," said Bemis. "As we continue to expand programming across our region, her addition to the senior leadership team helps ensure the infrastructure is in place to serve our staff and clients well."

Ballard joined AMHC in 2008. She has been part of the human resources team for seven years, serving the last five as HR Manager. Before that, she worked as a crisis counselor in Emergency Services. Ballard is an active member of the Society of Human Resources Management. She resides in Caribou with her family.

AMHC Sexual Assault Services Partnership Creates Virtual Statewide Support Group

February 17, 2021
News



Clockwise, top left: Wendy Page, AMHC Sexual Assault Services, Eliza Burwell, Sexual Assault Services of Southern Maine, and Rochelle Black, Rape and Response Services, have partnered together to offer a virtual statewide support group for survivors of sexual violence. Individuals can learn more by calling or texting the Sexual Assault Services 24/7 helpline at 1-800-871-7741.

AMHC Sexual Assault Services (AMHC SAS), Rape and Response Services (RRS), and Sexual Assault Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM) have partnered together to create a virtual statewide support group.

“The support group is open to all survivors of sexual violence,” explained Julia Miller, AMHC Program Director of Prevention and Sexual Assault Services. “The pandemic has created new opportunities to partner in virtual meetings. We are pleased we can work with RRS and SARSSM to offer this.”

“We all have a role to play in the prevention of sexual assault,” shared Miller. “AMHC Sexual Assault Services has provided services to individuals who have been affected by sexual violence since 1984. We not only advocate for victims and offer support to survivors 24/7. We provide prevention education for all ages on sexual violence, sexual harassment, internet safety, and personal body safety.”

To learn more about services, including the virtual support group, individuals can call the Sexual Assault Services 24/7 helpline at 1-800-871-7741.

About Rape and Response Services

The mission of Rape and Response Services is to offer hope, support, and advocacy to victims and people affected by sexual assault and stalking, to provide education about sexual violence, and to promote prevention.

About Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine

Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine provides free services in York and Cumberland counties to anyone affected by sexual assault, sexual harassment, or sexual abuse through prevention programs, support, education, and advocacy. Services have been provided since 1973.

About AMHC Sexual Assault Services

AMHC Sexual Assault Services Advocates can be reached by calling the 24-hour Sexual Assault Helpline at 1-800-871-7741. Text and chat are also available Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m. Calls, texts, and chats are free and confidential. For more information, visit AMHC Sexual Assault Services at <https://www.amhcsas.org/>.

AMHC Receives COVID-19 Funding from Maine Community Foundation

March 18, 2021
News



Maria Dubois, AMHC Mobile Emergency Services Specialist, dons her PPE as she provides services at a local hospital. Full PPE was a requirement for several months. Foundations like Maine Community Foundation helped support the purchase of equipment and supplies.

Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) has received a total of \$15,000 from the Maine Community Foundation's (MCF) COVID-19 Emergency Response Funds. "The donations received by the Maine Community Foundation in the past year have helped our agency purchase personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies, and more," said Ellen Bemis, CEO.

Maine Community Foundation has alleviated some of the financial pressure AMHC has experienced due to the pandemic. "Their support has helped us to continue our mission to deliver behavioral health services to individuals and families in our service area," shared Bemis. "We are grateful."

About Maine Community Foundation

Headquartered in Ellsworth, with additional personnel in Portland, Dover-Foxcroft, and Mars Hill, the Maine Community Foundation works with donors and other partners to provide strong investments, personalized service, local expertise, and strategic giving to improve the quality of life for all Maine people. To learn more about the foundation, visit www.mainecef.org.

AMHC Expands Adult Crisis Stabilization Services in Presque Isle

April 1, 2021
News



(l to r) Michelle Ferris, LCSW, Program Director of Emergency Services and Christine Wall, LCSW, Therapist-Consultant, welcome clients to the expanded adult crisis stabilization unit (ACSU) in Presque Isle. The new location opened on March 25, 2021.

Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) is pleased to announce that it has opened an expanded adult crisis stabilization unit (ACSU) at 180 Academy Street in Presque Isle. The ACSU joins AMHC's Presque Isle Outpatient and administrative offices at its property situated along Presque Isle's "healthcare corridor," near Northern Light A.R. Gould Hospital and numerous other healthcare providers.

"The expansion provides an opportunity to increase the number of clients served by 60%," explained Michelle Ferris, LCSW, Program Director of Emergency Services. "We anticipate reaching full occupancy as additional staff is hired to support the increase in capacity."

Due to demand for services, the former ACSU was occupied nearly 100% of the time. The new space offers eight private rooms with sinks, three bathrooms, and the facility is entirely handicap accessible. In addition to the expanded bed capacity, clients will have private space to visit with family, friends, or other supports. The open floor plan provides a larger kitchen, dining, and living room spaces.

"By bringing outpatient and ACSU services under one roof, we make it possible for community members to more easily access the care they need," said Ferris.

AMHC Response to COVID-19

April 1, 2021
News

Pandemic fatigue is affecting each one of us. During this time it is normal to experience anxiety, frustration, and grief. While we wait for life to have a sense of normalcy again, caring for our physical and mental health is critically important. AMHC is here for you. If you are in need of professional mental health assistance please reach out for a confidential telephone, tele-video (Zoom), or in-person appointment by calling our Access Center at 1-800-244-6431.

AMHC services remain open.

- AMHC is following the Maine CDC and Governor Mills' guidelines regarding face masks, physical distancing, hand washing, and facility cleaning.
- We are asking all clients to please wear a face mask when visiting our outpatient offices.
- If you have never had a video appointment with your provider, the first time may be a bit scary. Here is a great tool from SMI Advisor to help you prepare for your visit! <https://smiadvise.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/How-to-Prepare-for-a-Video-Appointment.pdf>

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April 8, 2021
News



Jeannette Phillips, AMHC Sexual Assault Client Advocate, participates in Teal Tuesday. Each Tuesday in April, the community is encouraged to wear teal to highlight Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

AMHC Sexual Assault Services joins the National Sexual Violence Resource Center and Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA) to highlight April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This year's theme, "We Can Build Safe Online Spaces" encourages each of us to learn how to practice consent online, keep kids safe from abuse, and facilitate and participate in respectful online communities.

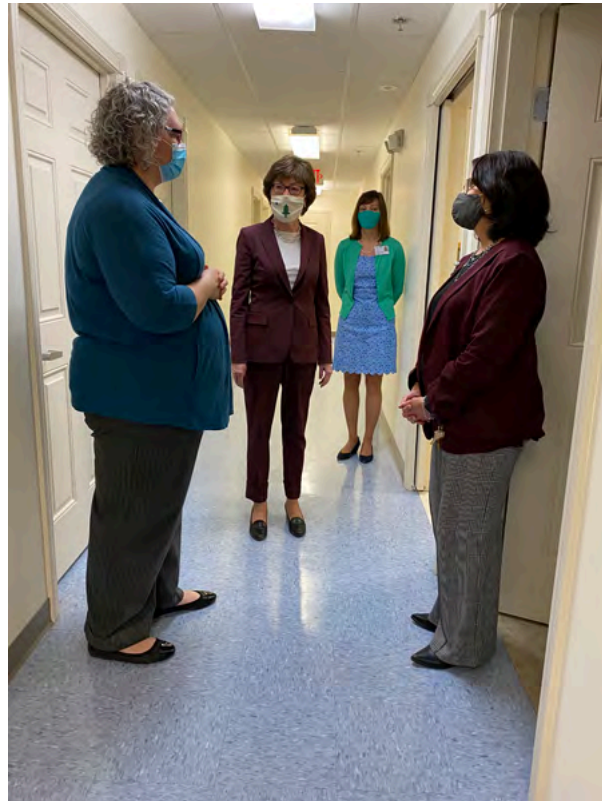
"We all have a role to play in the prevention of sexual assault," shared Julia Miller, Program Director of Prevention and Sexual Assault Services. "AMHC Sexual Assault Services has provided services to individuals who have been affected by sexual violence since 1984. We not only advocate for victims and offer support to survivors 24/7, we provide prevention education for all ages on sexual violence, sexual harassment, internet safety, and personal body safety."

Learn more about this year's theme "We Can Build Safe Online Spaces" by visiting <https://www.nsvrc.org/saam/2021/about/wecanbuildcampaign>

AMHC Sexual Assault Services Advocates support nearly 400 victims per year in Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock counties. They can be reached by calling the 24-hour Sexual Assault Helpline at 1-800-871-7741. Text and chat are also available Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m. The service is free and confidential. For more information, visit AMHC Sexual Assault Services at <https://www.amhsas.org/>.

Senator Collins Visits Aroostook Mental Health Center

April 13, 2021
News



U.S. Senator Susan Collins visited Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC) to tour the newly renovated Adult Crisis Stabilization Unit (ACSU) and meet with leadership, including AMHC CEO Ellen Bemis. During the visit, Senator Collins also joined the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) Planning Consortium Meeting.

"For nearly 60 years, the staff at Aroostook Mental Health Center have been dedicated to improving the health of rural and underserved communities. The newly renovated Adult Crisis Stabilization Unit will allow individuals with mental health disorders to continue to receive care close to home in a state-of-the-art facility. In addition, AMHC's leadership in establishing a consortium of law enforcement and local health care providers will be life changing for the thousands of Mainers struggling with addiction," said Senator Collins. "As a senior member of the Appropriations Committee, I will continue to support funding for federal programs such as RCORP that provide community health organizations with the resources they need to expand treatment and prevention programs."

Last year, Senator Collins announced that AMHC had been awarded a \$200,000 grant through RCORP. With this federal funding, AMHC created the Aroostook Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (ACORP). The consortium includes Aroostook Mental Health Services, Aroostook County Sheriff's Office, Cary Medical Center, Northern Light AR Gould Hospital, Houlton Regional Hospital, Northern Maine Medical Center, and a person in recovery.

In 2020, AMHC purchased the former Prasanna Building in Presque Isle. Following six months of renovations, the agency relocated the AMHC Presque Isle Outpatient Services Office, the ACSU, and administrative staff to the new building. The new building has allowed an increase from five to eight beds and currently provides the only crisis beds for residents of Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock counties.

Laurie Deerfield, D.O. Joins AMHC as Medical Director/Psychiatrist

April 14, 2021
News

Ellen Bemis,
CEO, Aroostook Mental
Health Services, Inc.
(AMHC) is pleased to
announce Laurie
Deerfield, D.O., has
joined AMHC as its
Medical
Director/Psychiatrist.

“Dr. Deerfield
brings a wealth of
knowledge and
experience to AMHC,”
said Bemis. “She is
passionate about
supporting individuals
challenged by mental
health and/or substance
use, and we are grateful
to have her as part of
our team.”

Dr. Deerfield
was most recently in
private practice in New
Jersey focused on
general and addiction
psychiatry, caring for
patients diagnosed with
various disorders
including anger
management,
anxiety/panic disorders, depression, chemical dependency/substance use, and more. She has served as a Medical Director and Provider for substance use treatment and recovery centers, as well as an independent contractor and medical consultant to multiple professional boards and organizations including Professional Assistance Program of New Jersey, Board of Medicine, Board of Nursing, and other health and legal boards.

Dr. Deerfield will be located at AMHC’s Ellsworth Outpatient Office and connecting with clients and staff agency-wide through telehealth. She shared: “I am very excited to be with AMHC and delighted to find such a diversely talented but universally welcoming group of individuals.” In her spare time, she enjoys being outside with her dogs and looks forward to exploring all that Maine has to offer.



AMHC Announces Laurie Deerfield, D.O. has joined the agency as its Medical Director/Psychiatrist.

Aroostook Teen Leadership Camp 2021 Registration Now Open

April 23, 2021
News



ATLC campers participate in a team-building activity (pre-pandemic). Registration is now open for 2021. Packets are available in Aroostook County middle schools or by emailing Amber Stedt, Prevention Coordinator at astedt@amhc.org.

Aroostook Teen Leadership Camp (ATLC) is a year-round leadership development and drug prevention program for teens. A part of Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC), ATLC has continued to meet with and mentor teens despite the challenges associated with the pandemic. Due to continued safety protocols and restrictions, ATLC's 2021 residential summer camp program will be a combination of in-person and virtual activities.

"Teens will hear from national speakers about positive leadership, attend workshops, participate in teambuilding activities, and small discussion groups," explains Amber Stedt, Prevention Coordinator. "The program is open to teens currently in grades 6 – 8 in Aroostook County."

The four-day camp begins in-person on Sunday, June 27 at the Caribou Rec Center followed by virtual camp days on Sundays July 11 and July 25, wrapping up with a final in-person camp day on Sunday, August 15 at the Caribou Rec Center. Following summer camp, teens can participate in a variety of activities throughout the year, including planning committees, Camp Reunions, applying to be on the following summer camp's staff, or being a member of the ATLC Advisory Board.

The deadline for registration is Thursday, May 6. Registration packets are available in Aroostook County middle schools with students in grades 6 – 8, or by calling 207-493-3620 or emailing Amber Stedt at astedt@amhc.org.

"As a former camper myself, ATLC made a huge impact on my life. I am proud to continue this work with the next generation of teen leaders in Aroostook County," shared Stedt. For more information, connect with ATLC at www.atlccamp.org.

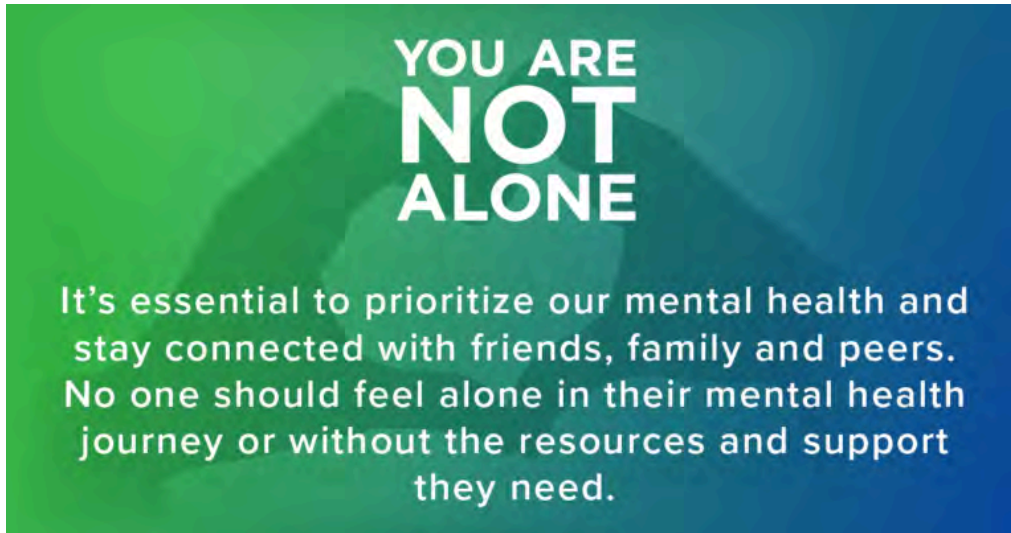
About ATLC

Since 1987, ATLC has mentored thousands of pre-teens and teens grades 5-12 in the process of social-emotional learning through a residential five-day summer camp augmented by a series of activities and programming throughout the school year. Pre-teens who attend as campers have the opportunity to become teen staff members who lead programming efforts. Goals include the prevention

of early use of alcohol and other illegal drugs, leadership training to develop teen drug prevention leaders, and developing positive role models.

AMHC Highlights Mental Health Awareness Month in May

May 19, 2021
News



May is Mental Health Awareness Month and Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) is pleased to join the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in highlighting its “You Are Not Alone” campaign.

“During COVID-19, many of us are challenged by fear and isolation,” explains Ellen Bemis, AMHC CEO. “It is more important than ever to develop coping skills that can help us prioritize our mental health and build resiliency, as well as support others who may be struggling.”

The pandemic has further increased the mental and emotional health challenges individuals are facing. For some, a simple phone call to a trained professional is enough to lighten their burden; for others, more support is needed. AMHC is pleased to highlight some of the following mental health resources that are available:

- Maine Crisis Line: 1-888-568-1112. Available 24/7 to call, text, or chat
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Available 24/7
- StrengthenME: 207-227-8198. Available 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. seven days a week to anyone in Maine experiencing stress reactions to the pandemic
- Maine Frontline Warmline: 207-221-8196 (Text: 898-211). Available 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. seven days a week for Maine’s health care workers, first responders, and school personnel who are experiencing stress as a result of the pandemic
- For a complete list of resources, including AMHC services county-wide, please visit amhc.org or call AMHC Access Center at 1-800-244-6431.

Roads to Recovery and Aroostook Recovery Center of Hope Will Serve as Host Sites for Governor Mills Opioid Response Summit

July 6, 2021

News

Community Welcome to Participate and Enjoy Free Lunch

Roads to Recovery (R2R) and Aroostook Recovery Center of Hope (ARCH) are pleased to be host sites for Governor Mills' 3rd Annual Opioid Response Summit on Thursday, July 15. The full-day program features live presentations and prerecorded panel discussions. Voices of persons in recovery will be featured prominently again this year.

"Our centers are pleased to serve as host sites for this live, virtual event," said Stacie Holton, Peer Center Manager. "The annual summit is part of the state's commitment to fighting the opioid epidemic and we look forward to hearing ideas, strategies, and best practices that support our communities in Aroostook County." The centers will provide a light lunch as well as refreshments in the morning and afternoon.

The summit's theme, "Perseverance, Prevention, and Promise" reflects the resolve and commitment by the State Of Maine to work together to address this crisis. Speakers include Governor Janet Mills, Attorney General Aaron Frey, and Director of Maine CDC, Nirav Sha, MD, J.D. The afternoon will feature a panel discussion with leaders in opioid response from the Biden-Harris Administration.

Roads to Recovery and Aroostook Recovery Center of Hope are programs of Aroostook Mental Health Services (AMHC). The centers provide individuals a place to come and receive support for their substance use recovery journey, connect people to resources, and also serve as a venue for a variety of recovery meetings.

For more information please contact:

- Roads to Recovery (Caribou) – 207-493-1278
- Aroostook Recovery Center of Hope (Houlton) – 207-254-2213

Downeast Recovery Support Centers Will Serve as Host Sites for Governor Mills Opioid Response Summit

July 7, 2021
News

Community Welcome to Participate and Enjoy Free Breakfast and Lunch

Downeast Recovery Support Centers (DRSC) are pleased to host Governor Mills' 3rd Annual Opioid Response Summit on Thursday, July 15. The full-day program features live presentations and prerecorded panel discussions. Voices of persons in recovery will be featured prominently again this year.

"Our centers are pleased to serve as host sites for this live, virtual event," said Amy Day, DRSC Manager. "The annual summit is part of the state's commitment to fighting the opioid epidemic and we look forward to hearing ideas, strategies, and best practices that support our communities in Washington County."

Thanks to \$6,500 in grant funds through the Maine Community Foundation (MaineCF), the centers will provide a light breakfast and lunch as well as refreshments throughout the day. "In addition, MaineCF has provided funding that allows us to promote the event as well as pay the \$35 registration fee for individuals who are unable to attend in-person at the center," said Day. "Anyone from Washington County can contact us and we will pay the fee for them to attend virtually from their home or wherever they are located. We are very grateful to MaineCF for their generosity."

The summit's theme, "Perseverance, Prevention, and Promise" reflects the resolve and commitment by the State Of Maine to work together to address this crisis. Speakers include Governor Janet Mills, Attorney General Aaron Frey, and Director of Maine CDC, Nirav Sha, MD, J.D. The afternoon will feature a panel discussion with leaders in opioid response from the Biden-Harris Administration.

Downeast Recovery Support Centers in Calais and Machias are programs of Aroostook Mental Health Services (AMHC). The centers provide individuals a place to come and receive support for their substance use recovery journey, connect people to resources, and also serve as a venue for a variety of recovery meetings. For more information or to register for the summit please contact DownEast Recovery Support Center in Calais at 207- 952-9279 or Machias at 207-259-6238.

About Maine Community Foundation

Headquartered in Ellsworth, with additional personnel in Portland, Dover-Foxcroft, Rockport, and Mars Hill, the Maine Community Foundation works with donors and other partners to provide strong investments, personalized service, local expertise, and strategic giving to improve the quality of life for all Maine people. To learn more about the foundation, visit www.mainecef.org.

Harvest Inn Peer Center Hosts Open House/Free Lunch

July 9, 2021
News



Harvest Inn Peer Center, located at 43 Hatch Drive in Caribou, is hosting a community open house on Friday, July 16 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. A free lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (L to R): Christine Brown and Kimberly Robbins review the items that will be available for door prizes, an arts and crafts table, and raffles including a flat-screen television, gift baskets, and more.

Harvest Inn Peer Center (HIPC), a program of Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC), is hosting an open house on Friday, July 16 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. with a free lunch from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The center is located at 43 Hatch Drive in Caribou.

“This is an exciting time for Harvest Inn as they make their activities and all they have to offer visible to the community,” said Christine Brown, AMHC Program Director of Community Integration. “The staff and peers look forward to serving the public lunch, sharing information and resources, and having fun with some fundraising efforts.”

Visitors to the event will be able to sign up for door prizes, enjoy a free lunch, purchase items from the arts and crafts table, as well as raffle tickets for a flat-screen television, gift baskets, gift certificates, and more.

Harvest Inn Peer Center serves anyone in the community with a self-identified mental health and/or co-occurring substance use issue. The center provides a welcoming, nonjudgmental space for mutual support, community-building services, and advocacy. Services are free and focused on recovery through weekly support groups, wellness training, job readiness support, recovery workshops, group-based activities, and social engagement.

For more information about the open house or services offered, please contact Kimberly Robbins, Manager, by phone at 207-492-1386 or by email at krobbins@amhc.org.

AMHC Expands Adult Crisis Stabilization Services into Washington County

July 15, 2021
News



(l to r) Crisis Counselors Ashley Warren, Ricky Devoe and Brigette Newel are part of AMHC’s new adult crisis stabilization unit in Calais. The service opened in June, 2021 and serves individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) is pleased to announce that it has opened an adult crisis stabilization unit (ACSU) at 127 Palmer Street in Calais. The ACSU joins AMHC’s other services in the same location.

“Prior to the opening of this facility, individuals in Washington County in need of a crisis stabilization unit would be referred to Bangor or Presque Isle, up to 120 miles away,” explained Michelle Ferris, LCSW, Program Director of Emergency Services. “This resulted in individuals having to wait in emergency departments or in the community while their crisis worsened. A local resource will have a significant impact on both the individuals in need of services as well as their family members.”

The opening of the ACSU is possible thanks to the grant funds provided through Davis Family Foundation (\$100,000), C.F. Adams Charitable Trust (\$30,000), and the Maine Community Foundation (\$10,000). “We are grateful for their tremendous support,” shared Ferris. “Due to their generosity, we anticipate providing services for up to 100 clients per year.”

The new space offers five private rooms, two bathrooms, and the facility is handicap accessible. In addition, clients will have a private space to visit with family, friends, or other supports. The open floor plan provides a kitchen, dining, and living room area.

A crisis stabilization unit (CSU) is for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis that would benefit from a short-term stay in a safe, residential-type environment. The CSU has trained crisis staff to offer support, intervention, safety planning, and connection to other services that may be needed. Referrals to the ACSU in Calais can be made 24/7 by calling 207-454-1910. Anyone is welcome to make a referral.

About the Funders

- The **Davis Family Foundation** is a public charitable foundation established by Phyllis C. Davis and H. Halsey Davis of Falmouth, Maine, to support educational, medical, and cultural/arts organizations located primarily in Maine.
- The **C.F. Adams Charitable Trust** was created by Charles Francis Adams in 1987 and currently focuses on enhancing the quality of life in the Downeast region of Maine and improving children’s behavioral health in Massachusetts.
- Headquartered in Ellsworth, with additional personnel in Portland, Dover-Foxcroft, Rockport, and Mars Hill, the **Maine Community Foundation** works with donors and other partners to provide strong investments, personalized service, local expertise, and strategic giving to improve the quality of life for all Maine people. To learn more about the foundation, visit www.mainecef.org.

AMHC Sexual Assault Services to Host Virtual Book Club for Survivors and Learners

July 16, 2021
News



AMHC Sexual Assault Services' staff members Amber Rankine, Client Advocate in Fort Kent, and Kirsten Tenney, Rural Advocate in Machias will be leading a virtual book club for survivors of sexual assault and any community member who wants to learn more about supporting others in their healing journey. The Learning, Health, and Growing through Literature series will begin Saturday, August 7. Participation and supplies are free of charge by registering at sas-info@amhc.org.

AMHC Sexual Assault Services is pleased to host a virtual book club for individuals to learn, heal and grow whether they are a survivor of sexual assault or want to learn more about supporting others in their healing journey. The weekly Zoom meetings will be held Saturdays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. from August 7, 2021 – September 11, 2021.

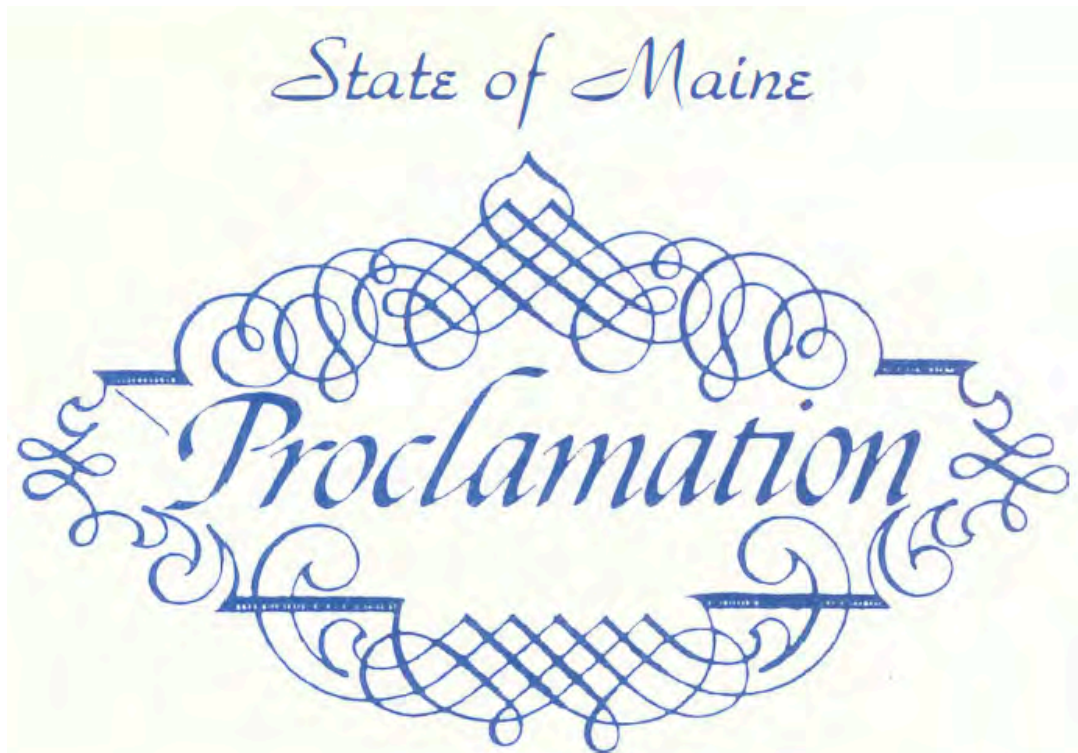
“We appreciate the Maine Humanities Council for making the grant funds available for us to host the book club,” said Julia Miller, Program Director of Prevention and Sexual Assault Services. “This Learning, Healing and Growing through Literature series will bring together participants from the comfort of their own home and create a safe space for them to discuss and share.”

Funding from the Maine Humanities Council will allow attendees to receive free of charge a copy of “The Body Keeps The Score” by Bessel van der Kolk, M.D., as well as a journal and 18-count color pen set to help attendees reflect on the weekly readings. Please register by Wednesday, July 28 by emailing sas-info@amhc.org.

AMHC Sexual Assault Services Advocates support nearly 400 victims per year in Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock counties. They can be reached by calling the 24-hour Sexual Assault Helpline at 1-800-871-7741. Text and chat is also available Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m. The service is free and confidential. For more information, visit AMHC Sexual Assault Services at <https://www.amhcsas.org/>.

International Overdose Awareness Day

August 31, 2021
News



WHEREAS, started in 2001 and recognized annually on August 31, International Overdose Awareness Day is a global event to remember those who have lost their lives to drug overdoses, to raise awareness of overdoses, to reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths, and to acknowledge the grief felt by families and friends; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, over 93,000 individuals died the United States from drug overdoses, including 504 individuals here in Maine; and

WHEREAS, the state of Maine has distributed over 90,000 doses of the life-saving drug Naloxone to date, resulting in over 2,500 lives saved; and

WHEREAS, there are now available in the State many types of treatment for substance use disorder, as well as robust harm-reduction activities and recovery support programs; and

WHEREAS, as part of the state's OPTIONS program, there are now behavioral health specialists in all sixteen counties reaching out to people using drugs and connecting them with harm-reduction services or pathways to recovery; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented stress on Maine people of all ages, leading to increases in alcohol consumption, illicit drug use, and other risky behavior; and

WHEREAS, as we have seen global solidarity and shared responsibility with the COVID-19 pandemic, we must also respond globally to reduce the harm associated with illicit drug use;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that I, Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby recognize August 31, 2021 as
International Overdose Awareness Day

throughout the state, and I and encourage all citizens to take part in activities and observances designed to remember those we have lost, to increase awareness of drug overdoses, and to join the global effort to reduce the death toll associated with drug overdoses.



Shenna Bellows
Shenna Bellows
Secretary of State

In testimony whereof, I have caused
the Great Seal of the State to be
hereunto affixed GIVEN under my
hand at Augusta this twenty fourth day
of August Two Thousand Twenty-One

Janet T. Mills
Governor

AMHC Raises Awareness on Suicide

September 1, 2021
News

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH



September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September is designated as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) encourages everyone to Take 5 to Save Lives!

“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. “Our State’s suicide rate remains higher than the rest of the nation and more people die from suicide than from car accidents or breast cancer. AMHC is available to anyone in Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock counties experiencing a crisis. To access our Mobile Emergency Services team please call or text the Maine Crisis Line at 1-888-568-1112.”

Take 5 to Save Lives is a public awareness campaign run by the National Council for Suicide Prevention in support of World Suicide Prevention Day, to be held on Friday, September 10, 2021. The goal of the campaign is to encourage everyone to take 5 simple actions steps that focus on preventing the tragedy of suicide. By taking 5 minutes to learn about suicide, you will be making a difference in the world! The steps include:

1. **LEARN THE SIGNS.** Although it may not always be obvious, individuals experiencing an emotional crisis usually exhibit one or more of the warning signs of suicide. Your ability to identify the signs will better prepare you to take action and could help save a life.
2. **KNOW HOW TO HELP.** You shouldn’t be afraid to ask your friend if they’re having thoughts of suicide. By knowing exactly what to say and do, you’ll be ready to act and keep your friends and family safe.
3. **PRACTICE SELF-CARE.** Research indicates that our mental fitness or wellness is crucial to our overall long-term health, and can even protect us from disease. Learn some tips for keeping mentally fit. Make it a priority!
4. **REACH OUT.** If you or someone you know is in emotional distress you must reach out for help. You are not alone. Learn about different help options and how to take that first step in seeking help and care.
5. **SPREAD THE WORD.** Let’s get people talking! By sharing the Take 5 campaign with 5 other people we can raise awareness of the problem of suicide and equip people with easy tools to help themselves and others. Together we can all make a difference!

AMHC Welcomes Daniel Clements to Senior Leadership

October 14, 2021
News



Ellen Bemis, CEO, Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) has announced that Daniel Clements has joined the AMHC Senior Leadership Team. “We are very pleased to have Dan join us as the Program Director of Residential/Crisis Units in Washington County,” said Bemis. “The expansion of services

AMHC Welcomes Daniel Clements as Program Director of Residential/Crisis Units in Washington County. throughout our region precipitated the need for an additional program director. Dan’s experience with crisis and residential services make him a great asset to our team.”

As program director, Dan oversees the residential programs in Calais including children’s residential, and both the children and adult crisis stabilization units. Dan was most recently the program director for Gateway Mountain Center in Truckee, California, an outpatient and therapeutic rehabilitation center for youth and transitional age youth. Prior to this, Dan supported children’s behavioral health programs in Nevada and Alaska. He received his Bachelor of Science: Biology with Psychology and Chemistry Minor from Liberty University in 2010. Originally from New Brunswick, Canada, Dan is looking forward to being closer to his family.

AMHC's Children's Residential Treatment Achieves Three-Year CARF Accreditation

November 15, 2021
News



AMHC Children's Residential team members proudly display the three-year accreditation certificate received by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Supporting the application and implementation are (l to r): Clem Deveau, Shannon Gove, Cathy Sawtelle, Tiffany Duchesneau, Brian Walton, and Dan Clements (absent: Dr. Katherine Rice). The program serves youth ages 7-19.

Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) is pleased to announce that its Children's Residential Treatment program has been issued a three-year accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Located in Calais, the program is a ten-bed 24-hour clinical residential facility serving youth ages 7-19 that are experiencing behavioral and developmental challenges.

"In their letter, CARF shared that this achievement is an indication of our organization's dedication and commitment to improving the quality of the lives of those we serve," said Clem Deveau, LCSW, CCS, AMHC Program Director of Behavioral Health for Washington and Hancock counties. "We are proud of obtaining this high level of accreditation and grateful for the staff who work hard serving the youth in our care."

CARF is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services. Through accreditation, CARF assists service providers in improving their services, demonstrating value, and meeting internationally recognized organizational and program standards. Accreditation is an ongoing process, establishing a provider's commitment to enhance its performance, manage its risk, and distinguish its service delivery.

AMHC Children's Residential program is currently accepting client referrals. Please contact them at 207-454-0269 for more information or to learn more about eligibility requirements.

AMHC Joins Workforce Board's Recovery Friendly Employer Network

November 18, 2021
News



Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) has joined the Northeastern Workforce Development Board's (NWDB) Recovery Friendly Employer network. "AMHC is excited to announce its participation," said Brittany Ballard, Director of Human Resources. "A major goal of this project is for employers to formally recognize their support of recovery, and then decide how that can be implemented within our own workplace practices."

NWDB recently voted to create a network and support system for employers that are recovery-friendly. "Addiction and the opioid crisis have hit Maine hard. People in recovery are struggling to find employment and businesses are feeling the impact of substance use disorder," explains Joanna Russell, Executive Director of the NWDB. "To help turn the tide, employers can adopt a culture that openly supports recovery, which can improve both employee satisfaction and better our community."

By joining this initiative, AMHC reinforces its commitment to a healthy, safe, and stigma-free work environment to eliminate barriers to recovery for those impacted by addiction. "In early November employees were notified of our involvement," shared Ballard. "Being designated a Recovery Friendly Employer is

a great step in AMHC formally declaring the agency's support for recovery."

About NWDB's Recovery Friendly Employer Network

As a member of the network, employers will have access to tailored advice, workshops, and resource materials. The NWDB will publish a formal list of employees in mid-January 2022. All businesses interested in taking part can visit the NWDB webpage (<https://www.northeasternwdb.org/recovery-friendly-employers/>) or contact Joanna Russell at 207-951-2549.

AMHC Seeks Community Feedback on Aroostook's Substance Use Epidemic

December 7, 2021
News



Erik Lamoreau, AMHC Project Coordinator is encouraging all residents to complete a short survey on substance use in Aroostook County to help gauge public opinion on stigma, access to services, and gaps in service. The survey closes on January 7, 2022, and participants will be eligible to win one of five \$100 gift cards.

Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) is asking community members to participate in a survey that will help the agency and its consortium update the 2020 Community Health Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis, which is focused on substance use in Aroostook County. The survey gauges public opinion on stigma, access to services, and gaps in service.

“Overdose deaths continue to increase and we are working to reverse that trend,” said Erik Lamoreau, AMHC’s Project Coordinator. “Updating our community survey is an important part of the process – we help ensure that our work aligns with evidence-based practices and community priorities.” The community survey is available on AMHC’s Facebook page, on its website and will be widely distributed through community partners. The electronic version is mobile-friendly and hard copies will be provided to individuals or organizations upon request.

This effort is part of AMHC’s Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) Rural Community Opioid Response Planning (RCORP) grant, which aims to reduce the morbidity and mortality of substance use disorder (SUD), including opioid use disorder (OUD) in Aroostook County. “In 2021, AMHC also received a HRSA RCORP Implementation grant, a three-year, \$1 million award to assist in adopting critical initiatives identified in the needs assessment,” explained Lamoreau. “That work has already begun and supported by our consortium members.” Representatives from AMHC, Northern Maine Medical Center, Cary Medical Center, Northern Light A.R. Gould Hospital, Houlton Regional Hospital, Aroostook County Sheriff’s Office, MicMac Behavioral Health Department, and a person in recovery are part of the consortium.

This 10-minute survey will conclude at 11:59 p.m. on Friday, January 7, 2021. All individuals who include their name and a contact number will be entered into a drawing for one of five \$100 Amazon gift cards. Winners will be contacted on Monday, January 10. Please note: Gift cards will only be awarded to individuals living in Aroostook County. For more information or to request a copy of the survey, please reach out to Lamoreau at elamoreau@amhc.org.

About HRSA

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New Resource Offered to Court Users Impacted by Substance Use in Washington County

December 22, 2021
News



Maryanne Young, AMHC Recovery Support Navigator, offers free, confidential services to court-involved individuals impacted by substance use and mental health challenges.

Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. (AMHC) is pleased to partner with the New England Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative, in collaboration with the Washington County District and Superior Courts, to offer a pilot program known as Recovery Support Navigation in Washington County. It is a free, confidential, and voluntary service for court-involved individuals impacted by substance use and mental health challenges. Funding for this program comes from the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

“Our county has the highest rates of overdose deaths in New England,” explained Judge David Mitchell, Washington County District Court. “It is critical that we combat substance use disorder from many different angles and this program has proved successful in other parts of the country.”

Services are provided by Maryanne Young, AMHC Recovery Support Navigator, who assists individuals and their loved ones with understanding prevention, treatment, and recovery resources available in the community; accessing substance use treatment services including Medication Assisted Treatment for addiction or psychiatric medications; developing personal goals and objectives related to addressing substance use disorder; MaineCare enrollment; and connections to care coordination services including housing, transportation, and employment.

Navigation services are eligible to court users or family members involved with any court department and do not need to have a current open case or be on probation to receive services. Referrals may come from the defense counsel, district attorney’s office, probation department, healthcare providers, law enforcement, and family members. Self-referrals are also welcome.

For more information, please reach out to Maryanne Young, Recovery Support Navigator by phone at 207-496-9733 or by email at myoung@amhc.org.

About Bureau of Justice

Recovery Support Navigation in Washington County Maine is supported in part by Grant No. 2017-PM-BX-K037 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). BJA is a component of the Department of Justices' Office of Justice Programs. The Recovery Support Navigation program is also supported by the New England Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative and AMHC.