



## **Executive Summary and Evaluation of the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) for Mount Desert Island Hospital**

In collaboration with Healthy Acadia, Mount Desert Island Hospital (MDIH) conducted the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) for 2020–2023. This assessment focused on identifying critical health disparities and developing strategies to improve the overall health outcomes of the population in the hospital's nine-town service area. The report outlines strategic goals, necessary resources, and MDIH's leadership in community health.

### **Key Focus Areas and Initiatives**

#### **1. Accessibility, Affordability, and Quality of Healthcare**

- MDIH has made significant efforts to improve access to affordable healthcare by increasing awareness of available services and removing barriers. Key goals include overcoming obstacles to accessing services, enhancing telemedicine, and increasing resources for chronic disease management.
- **Resources:** Integrated care teams, diabetes nurse educators, health coaches, licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs), palliative care services, and partnerships with organizations like Healthy Acadia are crucial to expanding access.
- **Workforce Development and Retention Plans:** MDIH has implemented strategic workforce development plans, including clinical pathways to nursing employment and the MDI Medical Rural Education Program, which rotates medical students, residents, and interns from all disciplines through the hospital. Additionally, MDIH has hired a clinical nursing educator with affiliations across all nursing schools in Maine, providing much-needed on-campus training and clinical rotations. These initiatives support long-term healthcare workforce growth and retention.
- **Community COVID-19 Response:** MDI Hospital led the MDI Community COVID-19 Response and Public Health Collaborative, which provided community information, front-line worker support, testing for exposure, free masks to visitors, workers, schools, and businesses, and daily updates on respiratory disease prevalence.

#### **2. Mental Health and Community Connectedness**

- MDIH has focused on increasing access to mental health resources and fostering community connectedness. The hospital has addressed mental health care's stigma while making services more affordable.
- **Resources:** LCSWs embedded in primary care centers, media campaigns to raise awareness, and partnerships with local mental health providers like Acadia Family Center are part of the mental health strategy.

- **Youth Mental Healthcare:** MDI Hospital addressed youth mental healthcare by hiring a child and adolescent psychiatrist and providing additional counseling resources through e-consulting and curb-side consulting at primary care centers for behavioral and mental health needs.
3. **Social Determinants of Health**
- MDIH recognizes the critical role of social factors such as housing, food security, and transportation in overall health. The hospital has implemented initiatives to address these determinants.
  - **Resources:** Partnerships with the Good Shepherd Food Bank and local food pantries, volunteerism projects like the Acadia National Park Clean-up, and efforts to increase affordable housing.
4. **Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery**
- MDIH has taken a leadership role in substance use disorder treatment by sponsoring the **Downeast Treatment Center** in Ellsworth, a "hub & spoke" treatment model. The hospital also supports the **first dose** program, where the Emergency Department provides suboxone to patients seeking recovery and connects them to further treatment.
  - **Resources:** MDIH's **Behavioral Health Center** and **Emergency Department** support recovery coaches who help patients navigate recovery, providing sustained assistance. The hospital also distributes Naloxone and engages in public education around substance use disorder.

### **Compliance with IRS 501(r) Regulations**

The CHNA and action plan align with IRS 501(r) regulations, ensuring that Mount Desert Island Hospital remains compliant by conducting triennial community health needs assessment and developing implementation strategies that address identified health needs.

### **Evaluation**

MDIH has demonstrated strong leadership and commitment in addressing critical healthcare needs across its service area. By providing comprehensive mental health services, substance use treatment, and addressing social determinants of health, the hospital continues to play a pivotal role in improving health outcomes. Specific efforts such as expanding youth mental health services through a child and adolescent psychiatrist, enhancing telemedicine capabilities, and leading the region's COVID-19 response are significant achievements that reflect MDIH's forward-thinking approach to healthcare.

**Age-Specific Healthcare and Digital Access:** MDIH continues to work on improving age-specific healthcare initiatives and strategies and expanding digital access through telehealth services to ensure that care is accessible to all population segments.

MDIH's full CHNA report is available for more detailed information on the hospital's website, [mdihospital.org](http://mdihospital.org).