

Community Health Improvement Plan 2023 Annual Report

The University of Vermont Medical Center



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A Message From Leadership



Erin Armstrong, LICSW
Director, Community Health
Improvement, UVM Health Network

The University of Vermont Health Network is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of people in the communities we serve. Every three years, UVM Health Network's six health care partners conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). CHNAs help us to reflect on our work to date and consider the challenges and opportunities involved in creating healthier communities. This process informs how priority health needs will be addressed by each health care partner alongside our diverse community partners.

The University of Vermont Medical Center's [Calendar Year 2023 Community Health Improvement Plan \(CHIP\)](#) annual report serves as a demonstration of the organization's accountability and effectiveness working together to strengthen community health. We are thrilled to celebrate and share stories of impact and collaboration, and the initiatives that are addressing the underlying drivers of health and advancing health equity in our region.

Our organization is committed to becoming an anti-racist organization and promoting greater access and inclusivity. Our priority is ensuring that the voices of those most impacted are centered in the conversation and development of strategies. While we are making good progress, our work will never be done in this area.

As you read through this report, I hope it's clear that people are at the heart of this work and what motivates us to make progress with these initiatives. This is just a snapshot of all the good work happening across our region as a result of strong partnerships within our communities. As we move forward together, we look forward to sharing our progress.

Thank you for taking time to learn about this important work.

In partnership,

Erin Armstrong

Introduction

Annual Report Overview

Adopting an 'Implementation Strategy' and evaluating the impact of our Community Benefit programs is a requirement of our health system's tax-exempt status. This demonstrates our commitment, accountability and effectiveness in addressing our communities' identified health priorities. An annual progress report is best practice for Community Benefit. This report spotlights programmatic highlights, investments made, and collaboration with our key partners to improve the health of our community in 2023.

Prioritization

Two health priority sessions for the 2022 CHNA brought together 140 community members representing 57 different organizations to review data collected. Attendees rated six top priorities via electronic survey based on impact, community readiness, and equity. Following these sessions, CRS researchers analyzed the quantitative and qualitative findings. This led to the selection of the top three Community Health Priorities:

- *Cultural Humility & Inclusive Health Care*
- *Housing*
- *Mental Health & Wellbeing*

The top three health priority findings were presented to the Steering Committee. Steering Committee members considered the following questions for each of the three priorities to inform implementation planning: 1) *What is working well currently?* 2) *Where can our community focus resources to make meaningful health improvements?* 3) *Who should be at the table? Consider inclusion of community stakeholders and groups who have not been engaged to date and how they can contribute moving forward.*

These conversations validated the three top community health priorities. The UVM Medical Center will continue to collaborate with partners at various capacities to address the three additional priorities identified by the CHNA and not being addressed as part of the CHIP:

- *Accessible and Coordinated Care*
- *Food Access and Security*
- *Workforce Development*

ABOUT US

The University of Vermont Medical Center (UVM Medical Center) serves more than 1 million patients across all counties in Vermont and its neighboring states. This includes 175,000 residents in UVM Medical Center's Health Service Area (HSA) of Chittenden and Grand Isle counties.

Every three years, UVM Medical Center is required to complete a community health needs assessment and corresponding Implementation strategy. This effort is facilitated by the Community Health Improvement (CHI) Department and completed in collaboration with community partners.

Summary of Accomplishments

This annual report for calendar year 2023 highlights significant achievements from various teams within Chittenden Accountable Community for Health (CACH).

The Cultural Humility and Inclusive Healthcare Team focused on initiatives such as Cultural Resource Guides, Reflection Friday events, and the Immigrant Health Initiative, promoting inclusive and culturally humble healthcare practices. **The Mental Health and Well-being Team** made strides in youth mental health by addressing challenges, such as a lack of confidential space, resulting in the successful implementation of a “Youth Wellness Pod” at Edmunds Elementary and Middle School. Additionally, they laid the foundation for standardized well-being support across schools through the exploration of the “Engage” platform from CVU. **The Housing Team**’s commitment to community health was evident through initiatives addressing the intersection of housing and mental health, including funding a trauma awareness workshop, and providing a sub-grant for “Tenant Rights and Responsibilities” training in Winooski. These efforts collectively contributed to the overall enhancement of community health and well-being.

Highlights of 2023

- Youth Wellness Pod
- Reflection Fridays
- Cultural Resource Guides
- Housing Team received a \$25k Program Grant from the Community Health Investment Committee which funded the following initiatives:
 - ◆ CVOEO Winooski Tenant Rights and Responsibilities Training
 - ◆ Workshop Series for Mental Health and Housing Direct Service Providers provided by Rhiannon Kim

Investments

On-Site Youth Wellness Pod for Edmunds Middle School: \$20,083.92

To improve access to mental health services in school, CACH purchased a 'therapeutic pod' which was installed at Edmunds Elementary and Middle School.

The Housing Team received a \$25,000 Program Grant from the Community Health Investment Committee. The team has used said funds to provide a sub-grant to CVOEO for the **Tenant Rights Training** and to Rhiannon Kim for conducting the Workshop on Secondary Trauma.

TOTAL: (FY23 and FY24) \$40,083.92

Key Community Partnerships

- Edmunds Elementary and Middle School
- Office Environments
- CACH membership - more than 20 community organizations. For a comprehensive list of each member and their respective organization, please visit cachvt.org/all-team-members.

Work in Progress/Anticipated for 2024

- Secure grant funding to enhance the accessibility of Youth Wellness Pods across various schools in Chittenden County.
- Training for law enforcement personnel on best practices for assisting individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Develop and distribute Cultural Resource Guides.
- Enhance and broaden the utilization of the “Engage” platform.
- Offer DEI community events providing a range of personalized services focused on housing support, education and training.



Calendar Year 2023: Work to Date



Cultural Humility and Inclusive Health Care



GOAL: Access to inclusive, high quality health care in settings where all community members feel safe, respected, and seen.

OBJECTIVES:

- To establish trusted relationships between healthcare providers and patients.
- To address Language Accessibility and Health Literacy needs.
- To support the development of a diverse healthcare workforce.

POPULATIONS OF FOCUS: BIPOC, LGBTQII+, Older Vermonters, People with Disabilities

Calendar Year 2023 Progress Made

● **Developed Cultural Resource Guides:**

- ◆ Quick references for providers to better understand the identities of their patients and how those identities may impact their experience of health care.
- ◆ Available for community partners to utilize.
- ◆ Created through a thorough community outreach plan where each guide is developed and vetted by community members, advocates, and experts in the field.
- ◆ Guides completed to date:
 - ◇ Black Americans
 - ◇ Older Americans
 - ◇ People who are gender diverse
 - ◇ People of Muslim Faith
 - ◇ People living with Substance Use Disorder

● **Reflection Friday sessions:**

- ◆ An opportunity for community members, health professionals, and social service providers to come together for a shared health equity-related learning and networking experiences.

One participant reflected, “An awareness of my own privilege and a reminder that ‘food is medicine/ love’ is a lovely way to frame the questions I ask patients regularly around food insecurity. Not just ‘do you have enough food’ but ‘do you have the means to provide the kind of meals you want to make for your family?’”

- ◇ 39 participants from 10 different organizations gathered virtually to discuss cultural considerations around food – both their own personal experiences and how it impacts people they serve.
- ◇ 100% of post-survey respondents felt that the event was valuable and would attend again.

- Immigrant Health Initiative: In June, **Mohamed Jafar was hired as the first Project Coordinator for the Immigrant Health Initiative** (formerly known as the NAIMH Initiative). With support from the team, an inclusive recruitment and hiring process was completed with over 40 applicants. Health equity and literacy principles were used to write an inclusive job posting that allowed for no education requirements as a barrier to applicants who have diverse experiences. This position strives to center our immigrant community’s feedback and input into the work we are doing at UVM Health Network.
- Health Literacy Environmental Assessment: Identified barriers and improvements at UVM Medical Center. **Using the Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers assessment tool, patient and family advisors assessed the Navigation and Wayfinding of UVMHC through a health literacy lens.** During this assessment, they reviewed overhead signage, consistency in language and icons on directories, printed maps and interactions with volunteers and staff at the Information desks. They were able to identify where there were barriers to health literacy at UVM Medical Center and where improvements could be made.
- Hair Care Equity Project: This quality improvement initiative was a partnership with a subcommittee of the Cultural Humility Team and the UVM Medical Center Racial Equity and Cultural Humility Employee Resource Group. Together they **identified new products to be stocked in the hospital that are appropriate for a more diverse range of hair types and provided both hands on and virtual training opportunities for staff** to learn more inclusive hair care practices.

BY THE NUMBERS

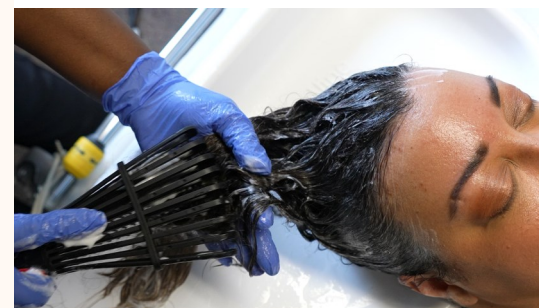
5 Pilot Guides developed with **4** more underway

39 from **10** participants organizations

attended a virtual **Reflection Friday session** to discuss cultural considerations around food

100%

of post-session survey respondents felt the event was valuable and **would attend again**



Partners

- UVM Medical Center
- UVM Health Network
- UVM Children’s Hospital Department of Pediatrics
- Larner College of Medicine
- Building Bright Futures
- Mercy Connections
- Community Health Centers
- CVOEO
- Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi
- Vermont Department of Health
- Vermont New American Advocacy Council
- Planned Parenthood of Northern New England
- Outright VT
- Pride Center
- UVM Home Health and Hospice
- VCHIP
- Braids By Pascale

Resources Invested

Staff in-kind time

Plans to Scale/Future Planning

- Cultural Resource Guides: Expand Guides for new groups identified. Work is underway to embed into EPIC to allow providers easy access. Forthcoming in 2024: Tracking the impact of Cultural Resource Guides; other measures in development.
- Culturally humble training available for the wider community, including a session in the spring of 2024 with Deaf Vermonters Advocacy Services to better support our Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deafblind patients and community members.
- Future Projects planned:
 - ◆ Postmortem Community Education around autopsy processes and procedures and Policy Review Project.
 - ◆ Language Justice Community Education Video collaboration – Poison Awareness, education around when to use the ER vs. Primary Care.
 - ◆ New American Patient Family Advisor Committee/ Wisdom Council developed: This council will be created to teach through storytelling, and give feedback on policies, programs and services. inform UVM by completing surveys and questionnaires, design or review documents, facilities and spaces, and provide UVM with general community support.

Contact Information

- **Kristin Fontaine**, kristin.fontaine@uvmhealth.org
- **Mohamed Jafar**, mohamed.jafar@uvmhealth.org
- **Chrissy Keating**, christina.keating@uvmhealth.org

For more information, visit:
**Cultural Humility and
Inclusive Healthcare Team**
— CACH VT

Housing



GOAL: To foster a resilient community through funding trainings for housing retention and supporting mental health and housing direct service providers.

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide financial support for tenant rights training and community programs.
- Broaden community education on relevant topics, as identified by the Health Priority Team and partners, including secondary trauma and tenant rights.
- Support the wellbeing and resilience of mental health and housing direct service providers.
- Ensure inclusivity in training sessions by actively reaching out to diverse segments of the community and promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment. Empower residents with knowledge about their rights as tenants, creating informed and proactive community members who actively contribute to housing retention efforts.
- Strengthen data collection and evaluation processes to measure the impact of training programs, enabling evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement.

POPULATIONS OF FOCUS: Tenants, Mental Health and Housing Direct Service Providers

Calendar Year 2023 Progress Made

- **Provided sub-grant to CVOEO to conduct the Winooski Tenant Rights training.** CVOEO capitalized on established relationships with tenants and worked in alignment with their current program offerings.
- **CACH evaluated previous community trainings** to determine potential demand and interest. Responded to demand by offering additional trainings and workshop sessions.

Progress on Measures:

- Tracked diverse participation in tenant rights training and community leader involvement.
 - ◆ Five participants attended the Swahili session, 16 attended the Somali session, and four attended the English session.
 - ◆ Obtained post-secondary trauma workshop session survey data and documented attendance for each session to date allowing for a better understanding of the reach and impact of our educational/support initiatives.

- ◆ Total number of attendees for session #1: 18 and total number of attendees for session #2: 14.
- ◆ Post session survey data displays the following:
 - 100% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “I will implement the tools and strategies I learned during the workshop.”
 - 75% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: “My understanding of secondary trauma, burnout, and wellness has improved as a result of attending this workshop.”
 - 50% of respondents rated the workshop as “Excellent” and 37.5% rated the workshop as “Very Good.”

BY THE NUMBERS

Tracked diverse participation in tenant rights training and community leader involvement.

5 participants attended the **Swahili session**

16 participants attended the **Somali session**

4 participants attended the **English session**

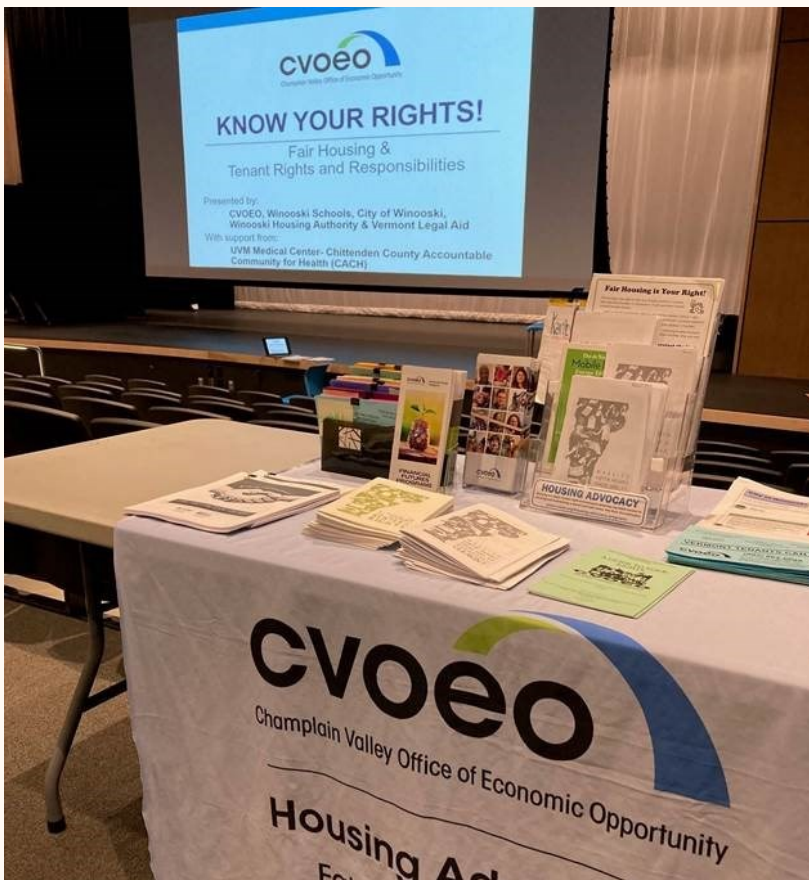
A total of

32

people attended **trauma workshops**

100%

of post-workshop survey respondents agreed with the statement, “**I will implement the tools and strategies I learned during the workshop**”



Partners

- Rhiannon Kim, Love at the Roots, LLC.
- CVOEO, Community Health Investment Committee.
- Individuals with lived experience.

Resources Invested

- The Housing Team received a \$25,000 Program Grant from the Community Health Investment Committee. The team has used said funds to provide a sub-grant to CVOEO for the Tenant Rights Training and to Rhiannon Kim for conducting the Workshop on Secondary Trauma Health Priority Team member's in-kind time.

Plans to Scale/Future Planning

- Completion of the 9-session secondary trauma workshop in 2024.
- Expansion of Tenant Rights training to other towns in the Health Service Area in 2024.
- Research on current and past law enforcement training for best practice supporting unhoused individuals. If research results indicate a lack of or minimal training for law enforcement on this topic then the team will pursue an initiative to provide such training.

Contact Information

- **Thomas Moore**, thomas.moore@uvmhealth.org

For more information, visit:
[Housing Team - CACH VT](#)

Mental Health and Well-being



GOAL: Advance youth mental health support in schools by addressing barriers and promoting standardized well-being supports.

OBJECTIVES:

- Enhance the Youth Wellness Pod at Edmunds through extensive data collection, analysis and continuous improvement activities.
- Extend the Pod initiative to additional schools.
- Integrate the Pod and well-being platform seamlessly into schools.
- Develop a K-8 adaptable well-being platform inspired by the successful “Engage” model.
- Collaborate with CVU to customize “Engage” for K-8 students.
- Develop a comprehensive plan for training educators and students on the standardized well-being platform, ensuring they have the necessary skills to utilize it effectively.
- Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track the usage and impact of the standardized well-being platform, collecting feedback for continuous improvement.

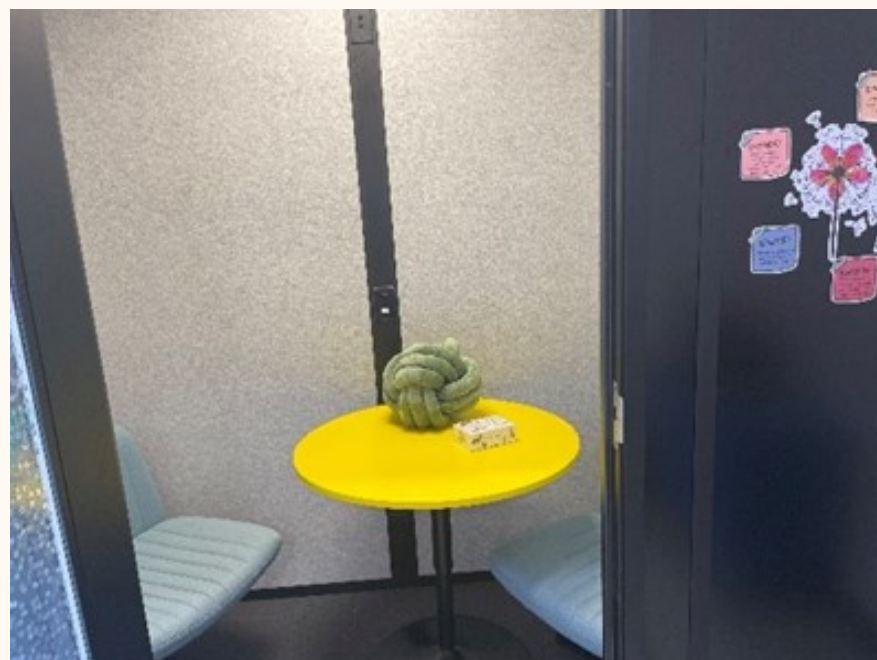
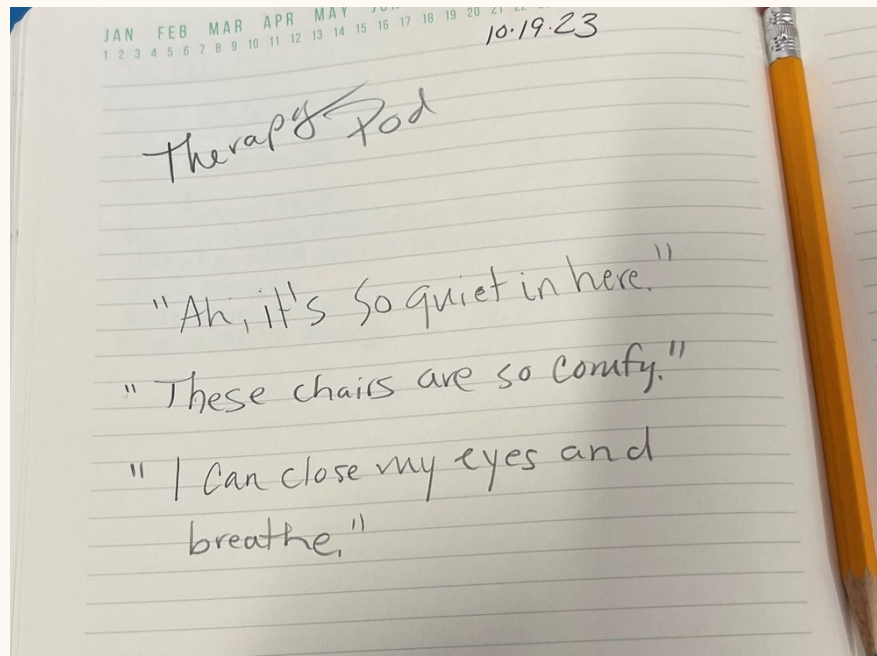
POPULATION OF FOCUS: Youth in Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties

Calendar Year 2023 Progress Made

- **CACH Mental Health and Well-being Health Priority Team evaluated multiple sources of quantitative and qualitative data related to current support for youth mental health in school.** The team identified a recurring barrier to receiving mental health support for youth in school: a lack of confidential space.
- This spurred the **installation of the first of its kind "Youth Wellness Pod" at Edmunds Elementary and Middle School.** Currently in use by multiple providers. Data collection ongoing; data on access to mental health services and more to be displayed in 2024.



- The Health Priority Team has been laying the groundwork for standardized mental health and well-being supports for K-8 students. Uncovering variation in available supports provided to students, the Team sought to identify **a robust platform that could be streamlined across schools and meet identified population-specific needs.**
- Formed a team of professionals who specialize across developmental areas to **customize the Engage Platform.** Worked collaboratively to understand the features and functionalities of the platform.



Partners

- CVU
- Engage data architect
- Office Environments
- Dion Locksmith
- Mental Health Providers
- Edmunds Elementary and Middle School

Resources Invested

- Operational funds used for Pod purchase (allocated by UVM Health Network).
- Community Health Investment Committee Program Grant - \$25,000

Plans to Scale/Future Planning

- Obtain funding for installing Youth Wellness Pods in additional schools.
- Amplify the Engage platform.
- Health Priority Team will work with additional schools identified to install Pods.
- Launch awareness campaigns within schools that adopt Engage. Promote the availability and benefits of the standardized well-being platform, encouraging widespread adoption.

Contact Information

- **Thomas Moore**, thomas.moore@uvmhealth.org

For more information, visit:
[Mental Health and Wellbeing Team - CACH VT](#)

CONTACT

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