

# SEACOAST PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK

*Annual Report 2021-2022*



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## ABOUT US



The mission of the Seacoast Public Health Network (SPHN) is to strengthen public health partnerships in emergency preparedness, community health, and substance misuse prevention in order to better serve our communities. Two primary roles of the SPHN are to coordinate regional planning and to develop networks of effective action to support that mission.

We serve the following 23 towns that make up Eastern Rockingham County:

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Brentwood     | Newmarket     |
| East Kingston | Newton        |
| Epping        | Newington     |
| Exeter        | North Hampton |
| Fremont       | Nottingham    |
| Greenland     | Portsmouth    |
| Hampton       | Raymond       |
| Hampton Falls | Rye           |
| Kensington    | Seabrook      |
| Kingston      | South Hampton |
| New Castle    | Stratham      |
| Newfields     |               |

1 SPHN courtesy photo

2 "Waves". Canva element. (2022).

# Meet The SPHN Staff



**Name** Paula Smith

**Title** Director, Southern NH AHEC and Contract Administrator, Seacoast Public Health Network

**What do I do for SPHN?** As the Contract Administrator I am responsible for financial and program management of SPHN, providing staff with support, technical assistance and resources to achieve work plan deliverables. I also act as a liaison with the Southern NH AHEC to collaborate on training opportunities. I am interested in promoting education, equity and a culturally competent health and public safety workforce.

**What do I do in my spare time?** I am an avid swimmer, reader and kayaker and enjoy being outdoors with family and friends.



**Name** Maria Reyes

**Title** Continuum of Care Facilitator

**What do I do for SPHN?**

The Continuum of Care Facilitator conducts a continuum of care assets and gaps analysis with on-going updates. The COC works across the Continuum of Care from prevention, early intervention on treatment, recovery, overdose prevention and health promotion.

**What do I do in my spare time?**

I love to be in the outdoors observing wild life. My favorite time of the year is autumn which ignites my passion for fly-fishing in NH mountain streams.

# Meet The SPHN Staff



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**Name** Julia Meuse

**Title** Public Health Emergency Preparedness Manager

**What do I do for SPHN?** I recently started my role as the PHEP Manager in March 2022 but have been on the SPHN team since 2018. I coordinate the public health emergency preparedness initiatives and assist in overseeing the Medical Reserve Corps and CHW programs. I also provide support to PHAC meetings and activities.

**What do I do in my spare time?** I enjoy golfing in the summer and skiing in the winter. I also like walks on the beach and trying new restaurants.



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**Name** Samantha Areson

**Title** Substance Misuse Prevention Coordinator (SMP)

**What do I do for SPHN?** As the SMP for the Seacoast Region, my main focus is to educate, promote and partner with local schools, organizations, coalitions and community members. This includes educating the dangers of drug and alcohol use on the adolescent brain, increasing healthy coping skills in responding to stress, as well as preventing suicide and educating on the warning signs and risk factors that contribute to suicide.

**What do I do in my spare time?** I enjoy adventuring to find new and interesting places to take pictures of as well as cuddling on the couch with my family puppy when I visit New Jersey.

# Meet The SPHN Staff



**Name** Julie Irwin

**Title** Seacoast Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator

**What do I do for SPHN?** As the MRC Coordinator I coordinate volunteer recruitment, trainings, activities, and vaccine clinics for the Seacoast Public Health Network. I also will be educating our communities in family and individual preparedness.

**What do I do in my spare time?** I work full time as a Paramedic for Exeter Hospital ALS but in my free time I love spending time with my boyfriend, friends and puppies! I enjoy going to the beach, gym and trying new restaurants and adventuring!

**Name** Yosita Thanjai

**Title** Community Health Worker (CHW)

**What do I do for SPHN?** My goal is to conduct outreach within the community, to educate, and provide different types of supports to increase access to quality health care in the Seacoast area. As I am new to the role, I look forward to getting to know the community members along with creating connections between them and the healthcare providers. I am excited to be organizing community engagement activities to promote social determinants of health and reduce barriers to COVID-19 vaccination.

**What do I do in my spare time?** During the warmer months, I enjoy doing all outdoor activities. My favorites are biking, camping, kayaking, and tennis. During the winter, I love to stay in and bake desserts.



# Public Health Advisory Council



## Public Health Advisory Council (PHAC)

The mission of the Seacoast Public Health Network (SPHN) is to strengthen public health partnerships in emergency preparedness, community health, and substance misuse prevention in order to better serve our communities.



### THE ROLE OF THE PHAC

Identifying regional public health priorities based on assessments of community health; guiding the implementation of programs, practices and policies that are evidence-based to meet improved health outcomes; and advancing the coordination of services among partners.

#### FOR INQUIRIES, KINDLY CONTACT US AT:

Contact Maria Reyes for more information on the Public Health Advisory Council or to become a member.

[mreyes@seacoastphn.org](mailto:mreyes@seacoastphn.org)

[www.seacoastphn.org](http://www.seacoastphn.org)



### SPHN PHAC Members/Partners

#### **Kathy Bates**

UNH Institute on Disability

#### **Celeste Clark**

Raymond Coalition for Youth

#### **Jay Couture**

Seacoast Mental Health Center

#### **Linda Haskins**

Community Advocate/ Support Group Leader

#### **Kevin St. James**

Rockingham County Commissioner

#### **Greg White**

Lamprey Health Care

#### **Claudia Tobon**

Launch Now/Geskus Studios

#### **Diane Fontneau**

Seacoast Mental Health Center

#### **Dr. Darren Guy**

Exeter Hospital

#### **Lindsey Messina**

Austin17 house

#### **Eileen Marousek**

Portsmouth High School

#### **Emily Morrison**

Office of Chris Pappas

#### **Peter Fifield**

Wentworth Douglass Hospital/Doorway

#### **Glen Badger**

Assisted Living Locators

#### **Hershey Hirschkop**

Seacoast Outright

#### **Haeley Morin**

UNH Cooperative Extension

#### **Jules Johnson**

Magnolia House

#### **James Murray**

Town of Exeter

#### **Jennifer McGowan**

Exeter Hospital

#### **Rebecca Throop**

Seacoast Mental Health Center

## 2021-2022 Updates



# Public Health Emergency Preparedness

The 2021-2022 year has been filled with many Covid-19 response activities. SPHN participated in the State of NH's Booster Blitz events in December and January and vaccinated over 2000 individuals at each clinic. SPHN also held many school based vaccination clinics with the help of Lamprey Health Care staff and Fire/EMS partners.

One of the most notable clinics over the past year was on a salt cargo ship that docked in Portsmouth this spring. The international ship had been at sea for over 7 months and a lot of the crew members were unvaccinated or only partially vaccinated against Covid-19. PHEP Manager Julia Meuse, Incident Commander Scottlyn Schuler, Hampton Falls Fire Chief Jay Lord, and Hampton Falls Fire Department staff went on board the ship to vaccinate.



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Over the next year SPHN will continue with Covid-19 response activities and return to many PHEP initiatives and activities that were priorities before the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 2021-2022 Updates



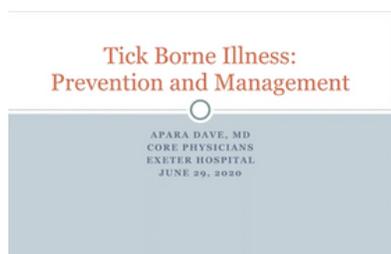
# Tickborne Illness Prevention

SPHN's funding from the Building Resiliency Against Climate Effects grant finished in September 2021. As part of our last year of the grant we worked with Entomologist Rachel Maccini from UNH Cooperative Extension to create online modules to be available beyond the funding period of the grant. We created two online modules with Rachel, one for the general public and one for camp counselors. Dr. Aparna Dave's live presentation was also turned into an online module available on the Southern NH Area Health Education Center's website. All 3 educational modules can be accessed below.

**Educational Module for Clinicians:** <https://www.snhahcec.org/strategies-for-preventing-and-managing-tickborne-illness.html>

**Educational Module for Childcare & Camp Counselors:**  
<https://extension.unh.edu/ticks-camp-counselors/>

**Educational Module for General Public:** <https://extension.unh.edu/ticks-public/>



## 2021-2022 Updates

# Medical Reserve Corps

The MRC and COVID Teams continue to be involved in Covid-19 response. We had well over 1,000 volunteers initially sign up for the Seacoast area that were vetted through the state and then donated their time at Covid Clinics throughout the region alongside area fire departments and National Guard members. During these clinics we had over 195.5 hours of volunteer efforts and 229 volunteers who were strongly committed. The roles at these clinics included vaccinators, vaccinator assistants, data entry, registration, screener, traffic control, observer, non-medical roles which varied per clinic and backup rolls to all positions. These volunteers have been fiercely dedicated and have answered the call to help their communities.

In addition to the Covid Teams working diligently in the area we have purchased new CPR equipment to meet updated American Heart Association (AHA) standards and are excited to get our new CPR instructor program up and going this coming year! We hope to reach as many individuals as possible with the importance of CPR!

The first Tuesday of every month SPHN holds a zoom training centered around Emergency Preparedness. The MRC training officer has done an amazing job with a variety of topics this year to include – Covid update/where are we today, fire prevention, cold weather training/incident response, self care training, women's health/emergencies and heart health! One of our continued goals will be to integrate our amazing volunteers into the community in addition to emergency responses. We have an amazing group and are looking forward to helping our communities grow even stronger.



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1 Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/NHDepartmentOfHealthAndHumanServices>

2 Retrieved from <https://www.phe.gov/mrc/unit-leader-resources/Documents/MRC-IdentityGuide-508.pdf>

## 2021-2022 Updates



# Substance Misuse Prevention

Samantha Areson, our new Substance Misuse Prevention Coordinator was hired in March of 2022. Samantha created a social media campaign about Take Back Day to get the word out, and reached over 300 people. Twelve Police departments in the Seacoast Region participated and over 1400 pounds of prescription drugs were collected!



**Saturday, April 30, 2022 | 10 a.m - 2 p.m.**

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Samantha and our new CHW Yosita attended the "Save a Life Tour" event at Epping High School. This event educated the student about the dangers of drinking and driving. They handed out Deterra packs, as well as information about prescription drug drop off boxes in the area, and mental health support.

Samantha also attended the HB1598 hearing about the legalization of marijuana in New Hampshire at the State House in Concord on April 20th. With a sea of red for prevention in the crowd, the bill was not passed!

Our Substance Misuse Prevention Coordinator continues to work on projects surrounding harm reduction, prevention, and mental health/suicide prevention for our community.



1 Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/NHDepartmentOfHealthAndHumanServices>

2 SPHN courtesy photo

## 2021-2022 Updates



# Community Health Worker & Social Determinants of Health

### N95 Project

Our Community Health Worker, Yosita Thanjai, was hired in the beginning of April 2022. As an activity to reduce Covid-19 infection rate in the community, one of her first deliverables was the N95 Project. Yosita facilitated communications with libraries in the Seacoast area and was able to establish connections with them by delivering N95 masks to meet community needs of more protection from Covid-19. To date, total of nine (9) libraries have been engaged and SPHN distributed 4,320 masks into the community!



### CHW Networking Session

SPHN hosted the first ever Seacoast Community Health Worker Networking Session on June 10th, 2022 via Zoom. This event provided an opportunity for CHWs in the area to connect and share their experiences as well as challenges they have seen in the communities. A lot of information was shared in the group such as CHW certification, different outreach strategies, and other training needs. SPHN also facilitated a discussion on Covid-19 and shared materials on vaccination outreach.

An evaluation for participants was completed after the meeting and the feedback was very positive. Everyone enjoyed getting to know each other and sharing resources to better the services and expand knowledge as community health workers. Our goal is to learn from each other, share resources and avoid duplication of efforts. Yosita is excited to utilize the new resources she learned from the meeting and is looking forward to host another networking session in the upcoming year!

## 2021-2022 Updates



# Raymond Coalition for Youth

The Seacoast Public Health Network provided funding and technical support for RCFY Vaping prevention initiative. The main objective identified by the coalition was to educate young people and the community on the dangers of vaping. This year RCFY addressed youth vaping concerns by providing health related resource bags to 331 students at Raymond High School and conducted a survey regarding vaping. RCFY reported 97 students participated in the survey.

### Survey Results

- 86% of students who participated in the survey did not engage in vaping activities.
- 98% of the student body received education on the danger of vaping.
- 58% have a loved one who vapes
- 44% of students do not use a bathroom at school due to fear someone is vaping in the bathroom
- 6% of students reported they want to quit vaping.



*"This was such a great event; people in the community were coming to us and thanking us for what we were doing. It was so nice to be noticed for doing something good."*

– Student

## 2021-2022 Updates



# SoRock Coalition for Youth: Trades Expo



The Seacoast Public Health Network sponsored the SoRock Coalition Trade Expo to promote alternative career opportunities for students attracted to the trades. The First Annual “Gearing Up for Success” Trade Expo held at Sanborn Regional High School included Sponsors from SoRock, Seacoast PHN, Sanborn Career Pathways Program, and Plaistow Area Commerce Exchange. The project goal is to provide a wide variety of career path options and apprenticeship opportunities during high school.

Thirty-five career paths were represented including Unions, Carpentry, Roofing, Painting, Community Colleges, Apprenticeship, University Trade School (Gas, HVAC, Oil Burner, OSHA, Welding) Mechanical Trades, Electrical HVAC, Plumbing, Gas, Insurance, Bus Driving (Coach), Marines, Army, Navy, National Guard, and Air Force, as well as YMCA, Fire, Police, Health Care, Aviation, Travel and Beauty.

The vendors reported the Trades Expo to be a valuable resource for the community. The Trades Fair event attracted more than 900 students! All vendors requested more information on connecting to the school for student internships, career speaking opportunities and student volunteers. This provides real live experience for students to build their confidence.



## 2021-2022 Updates



# SoRock Coalition for Youth: Suicide Prevention Activities



SoRock Coalition for Youth presented the NH 988/I Care Initiative to student art classes at Sanborn High School. SoRock provided repurposed yard signs so students could create their own unique artwork with impactful mental health messages. Students engaged in meaningful conversation around the key messages of the campaign, “Stay Connected”, “Ask and Listen”, “Know the Signs”, and “Find Help”.



On May 12, Sanborn Regional High School Art students displayed over 100 hand painted Mental Health Awareness yard signs on the library lawn with their peers. SPHN and NH Dept. of Health/Human Services (DHHS) were present. Here is what Sanborn HS Art Teacher had to say about the project: “Mental Health is pivotal right now. When SoRock Coalition asked Sanborn Regional High art students to spread awareness about mental health resources and reduce stigma, we immediately got to work”.



## 2021-2022 Updates



# Austin17 House: College/Trade Series

**Seacoast Public Health Network is pleased to support the College/Trade Exploration Series launch:**

Over the last nine months the Austin17House has been working to develop a program for high school seniors and young adults to explore college and trade opportunities year-round. The funding from the Seacoast Public Health Network allowed us to create, implement and produce an alternative career pathway opportunity for young adults.

The College and Trade Exploration Series is a seven-week series where high school students and young adults (18 to 25) partner with a college and trade exploration mentor to learn and apply the tools and resources needed to pursue their career path of choice while also receiving the necessary financial support to follow these dreams. By the end of the seven weeks participants have all the tools and resources they need to apply for their school or career pathway of choice.

Funds from the PHN also allowed Austin17 House to create an in-depth, College and Trade Exploration Series mentorship curriculum, that anyone could utilize and implement in their own organization, facility or at the Austin17House. This curriculum also includes a database of local trades and businesses that have been vetted for youth and young adults to utilize in their career exploration process.



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**“Employment and education are key to addressing social determinants of health.”**

## 2021-2022 Updates

# Magnolia Recovery House

This year Seacoast Public Health Network (SPHN) collaborated with Magnolia House to create a community garden to unify its residents in a shared project to increase health and wellness skills. SPHN provided funding support to purchase tools, soil, and gardening products. Magnolia House residents filled out surveys to identify their risk and protective factors to help make better life decisions. Stressors identified by clients include lack of transportation, the need for stable housing, legal issues, family stress and other concerns.

The Director of Magnolia House reiterated that the Magnolia House strives to provide a calming and soothing environment. The Director and residents take “pride in offering residents a quality program”. “You will not find bunk beds or beat up furnishings! “We firmly believe starting your day in a home environment that you are proud of is the foundation of self-esteem development”.



Luz Mercado, an MPH student in the Department of Population and Family Health at Columbia School of Public Health did research on The Role of Community Gardens during the COVID-19 Pandemic- *“Among individuals who are currently experiencing a loss of connection and increased isolation from COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, community gardens are essential for improving mental health. Community gardens such as The Village continue to provide community residents the ability to connect and socialize. Even though interactions occur in a socially distanced fashion, engagement in the community garden has provided individuals with a much-needed outlet for social and emotional support during this pandemic.”* (February 2021).

## 2021-2022 Updates

# Young Adult Strategies

The Seacoast Public Health Network utilizes the evidence based program from the National Wellness Institute-Resiliency and Health Consciousness training. The SPHN provided two trainings to Community Health Workers during 2021-2022

Covid-19 has been especially challenging among health care workers, young adults and others across the life span. The overwhelming sense of loss, isolation from family/friends, missed special events, and uncertainty was universal among all.

The most impactful response from the participant's training was recognizing they had the power to reframe how stress affected them. The audience practiced the Positive Coping Cycle "Stress-Evaluate-Cope", and shared their insights with peers, which many could relate. The training encouraged people to look for the unforeseen benefits such as self-care, "Uplifts" to improve mood and other tools to promote health and connection to others.

## Young Adults Concerns - Opportunities

During 2021-2022, young people continued to report increased anxiety, depression, and isolation, as Covid-19 surges continued to affect people of all ages.

Young Adults (18-30) expressed serious concern over the lack of affordable housing, the rising cost of living and increase substance misuse. SPHN reached out to Youth/Young adult serving organizations including Austin17 House, Magnolia Recovery House, YMCA Exeter and local coalitions to provide young adults and families with support and resources. Our partners focus on opportunities that arose under the pandemic such as a strong workforce and emerging state housing units for the young adult workforce. This renewed optimism helped young people see a brighter future.



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## 2021-2022 Updates



# 9-8-8 New Hampshire Mental Health, Substance Use and Suicide Response

I Care NH 988 is a mental health, substance use and suicide response initiative of the NH Dept. of Health and Human Services and the NH Suicide Prevention Council. NH 988 will be active as of July 16, 2022. Over the past year, SPHN collaborated with DHHS Suicide Prevention Initiative and disseminated over 1,500 I Care Rack Cards throughout the region. The SPHN collaborated with local coalition partners to assist with the dissemination of I Care Rack cards and 988 youth led projects.

### New Hampshire Rapid Response vs. National 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

	 Someone to call, text or chat	 Can deploy mobile crisis teams	 Connection to local resources and appointments when needed	 Services in NH
 <b>New Hampshire Rapid Response</b> Call/Text <a href="tel:833-710-6477">833-710-6477</a> Chat <a href="http://www.nh988.com">www.nh988.com</a>	✓	✓	✓	✓
 <b>National 988 SUICIDE &amp; CRISIS LIFELINE</b>	✓			

**NH Rapid Response and 988 are both available 24/7 and anonymous**  
 Calls and texts to 988 are routed by area code. A call from an area code outside of New Hampshire will reach a call center in the state with that area code.  
**For a local response every time, call NH Rapid Response.**



## 2021-2022 Updates



# Suicide Prevention-Columbia Screening

The Seacoast Public Health Network in partnership with the Southern New Hampshire Area Health Education Center held an hour and a half long training on May 5 called "My client said they are thinking about suicide, now what? Examining the Use of the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale in New Hampshire". Presenter Dennis Walker, MSW, LICSW, VP of Clinical Operations for Emergency Services & Intake at Seacoast Mental Health Center, Inc., talked about how the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale uses plain language questions used by anyone to identify risk for suicide and helps to assess the level of support the person needs.

There were 137 attendees present at this virtual training. Of the 95 attendees who responded to the post evaluation survey, 87 attendees (94.73%) agreed and strongly agreed that the information presented in this training is important. Seventy-eight (78) attendees (82.11%) agree and agree strongly that their knowledge has increased on the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale. SPHN and SNHAHEC will continue to offer training on this topic next year.

	Past Month
1) Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?	
2) Have you actually had any thoughts about killing yourself?	
If YES to 2, answer questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 If NO to 2, go directly to question 6	
3) Have you thought about how you might do this?	
4) Have you had any intention of acting on these thoughts of killing yourself, as opposed to you have the thoughts but you definitely would not act on them?	High Risk
5) Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself? Do you intend to carry out this plan?	High Risk
Always Ask Question 6	Lifetime Past 3 Months
6) Have you done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life? <small>Examples: Collected pills, obtained a gun, gave away valuables, wrote a will or suicide note, held a gun but changed your mind, cut yourself, tried to hang yourself, etc.</small>	High Risk

**NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE**  
1-800-273-TALK(8255)  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Any YES indicates the need for further care. However, if the answer to 4, 5 or 6 is YES, **immediately ESCORT** to Emergency Personnel for care, call 1-800-273-8255, text 741741 or call 911.

**DON'T LEAVE THE PERSON ALONE. STAY WITH THEM UNTIL THEY ARE IN THE CARE OF PROFESSIONAL HELP**

## 2021-2022 Updates



# Seacoast Phone Connect Program



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The Seacoast Phone Connect Program was created in partnership with the Portsmouth Coordinated Response to Substance Use Disorder to serve people in the seacoast region who could not afford a cell phone. The program was aimed at increasing access to services such as telehealth, counseling visits, and recovery support meetings along with supporting access to basic needs such as food, employment, and social connection. Twenty-one people initially participated in the program and fifteen were still involved at the end of the program in June 2022.

Clients responded to a questionnaire about how having a phone improves their health and life needs.

"Phone helped me to find jobs."

"A phone helps me to find food and other resources"

"Without a phone I would go to the public library or borrow a phone or computer from friends or family"

1 Retrieved from <https://www.aliexpress.com/item/2251801520782030.html?gatewayAdapt=4itemAdapt>  
2 "Support". Canva photo. (2022).



## 2021-2022 Updates

# Naloxone Distribution

As the pandemic evolved, the NH Prescription Drug Monitoring Initiative (NHPDMI) indicated an increase in drug overdose and mortality. The group with the highest overdose/mortality rates continues to be the 30-39 age group. To reduce this trend the SPHN and the Doorway began an aggressive Naloxone distribution in the seacoast region, distributing 432 kits to community partners.

In early 2022, NHPDMI data indicated a continued increase use of Fentanyl/Opioids and other substances. One strategy to prevent overdose mortality is for opioid users to test for Fentanyl in the drugs they are using. Test strips provided to our partner organizations is an example of early intervention to mitigate overdose. As of June 2022, 323 people have died in NH from these substances.



### **SPHN distributed 328 Naloxone (Narcan) kits to the following agencies:**

- Safe Harbor, Portsmouth NH
- Lamprey Health Care, Newmarket and Raymond NH
- Seacoast Mental Health Center, Exeter and Portsmouth NH
- Raymond for Youth Coalition, Raymond NH
- The Haven, Portsmouth NH
- Magnolia Recovery House, Hampton NH
- Crossroads House, Portsmouth NH
- Mt Prospect Academy, Hampton NH
- SAU16 School District, Exeter NH

# CHIP Summary



The following graphic outlines our public health priorities and goals and objectives for 2019-2022. SPHN staff continuously work on improving these health priorities in the Seacoast region.

The Seacoast Public Health Network will be extending it's current CHIP through the next year. We will start our new CHIP process after the State's Health Improvement plan is released so we can align regional and state priorities.

## SPHN Community Health Improvement Plan



"The greatest wealth is health" Virgil



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**A big thank you to all Seacoast Public Health Network community partners!**