



NORTHEAST
KINGDOM
HUMAN
SERVICES

We're all about being human.

NKHS ANNUAL REPORT



Moving Forward Together



We're all about being human.

The past year has been a year of transition for Northeast Kingdom Human Services. When the year began July 1, 2021, Paul Bengtson was our Interim Executive Director, the mental health services were on provisional designation status and we were in the middle of the search for a new Executive Director. When the year ended June 30, 2022, Kelsey Stavseth was our new Executive Director, our mental health services were awaiting final word on designation status and we were in the last stages of developing a new strategic plan. (Spoiler alert: On August 9, we received notice that the Department of Mental Health had fully re-designated us with minor deficiencies!!)

In between there lies a story of challenge, reflection, introspection and change—a coming together of staff, administration and Board to listen, to engage and to move ahead with new commitment to our mission and to each other. It is a story of hard work, owning our past and creating our future. Our workforce has not grown even as the need and demand for our services has. This has required the examination of how we do things and the exploration of other ways to do them while maintaining our core services. The heroes and heroines of this story are the dedicated staff of NKHS, who contribute to this process of change as they give their best working with clients and partners and supporting each other.

The Annual Report is an opportunity to share and highlight our progress and successes in the past year. It offers the community a measure of what we are and

who we serve through pictures, graphs and vignettes. It acknowledges our partners and our work with them, inviting additional collaboration. It reminds us of what we have accomplished, even when we feel overwhelmed with what still needs to be accomplished. It is not the full story but a series of snapshots of an organization that is growing and changing and the staff and administration that make it possible.

As a non-profit corporation, NKHS has no members and no shareholders. Yet we are all its members and our communities are the shareholders to whom we answer. The strategic plan, which will lead us into the future, recognizes our commitments to them in its goals to recruit, train and develop a strong workforce, be seen as a leader and dependable partner in the Northeast Kingdom, and become a learning organization and find innovative ways to deliver services and increase access. We will be guided in this process by our mission: To empower individuals, families and communities by promoting hope, healing and support. As we finalize this plan and outline its action steps, I feel hope, I see healing and I appreciate the support of our members and shareholders, our staff and communities.

Sincerely,

Denise Niemira, Board Chair



This past year has been one of change, which can always feel hard, especially amidst the ongoing pandemic, great shifts internally at the agency, and in light of NKHS's recent past. Change can also lead to growth, which is another word I would use to describe this past year and one NKHS intends to continue in the time ahead. Last, I would say this past year has been one of resilience at the agency and community and speaks to the character of everyone who lives and works in the Northeast Kingdom and is a trait we will need moving forward.

It was almost a full year for me as I transitioned to this position at the end of September 2021—giving me just about 9 months in my new position and bringing me back to the Northeast Kingdom, a place I love and feel connected to, deeply. The resounding feeling I have at the end of this year is one of inspiration, support and pride. There is a long list of accomplishments we can tout—some you will see in the coming pages and are worth celebrating. However, it is not the big or noteworthy accomplishments that have left me energized and excited to come to work each day. It is the tireless efforts of staff, people who are receiving services and our community engagement, on a day to day basis, that leaves me with a profoundly entrenched sense of hope, gratitude, and commitment to the work done here, at Northeast Kingdom Human Services.

After an extensive and inclusive strategic planning process we decided that becoming a 'learning organization' was one of our top priorities. To me, this means creating space for people to engage in an authentic, transparent and supportive way. Where encouragement to try new things, reframe mistakes as learning opportunities and identifying individual strengths is embraced. This philosophy is central to our values and flows into our belief that at NKHS, "We're all about being human". If we can lead with this mindset we can continue to accomplish the big, the small and the meaningful in a way that will truly impact our community.

I believe in the work at NKHS because I believe in the staff who work here and the people of the Northeast Kingdom. Not because it is a fanciful hope, but rather as a concrete, observable fact I am lucky enough to see every day I come to work. There is always more work to do, things to learn and opportunities to grow. I wouldn't want to do that anywhere else. To those that work here, please make sure to reflect on the past year and celebrate yourselves, as it is well deserved. To our community, know that we are dedicated to continued improvement and supporting you, in your time of need.

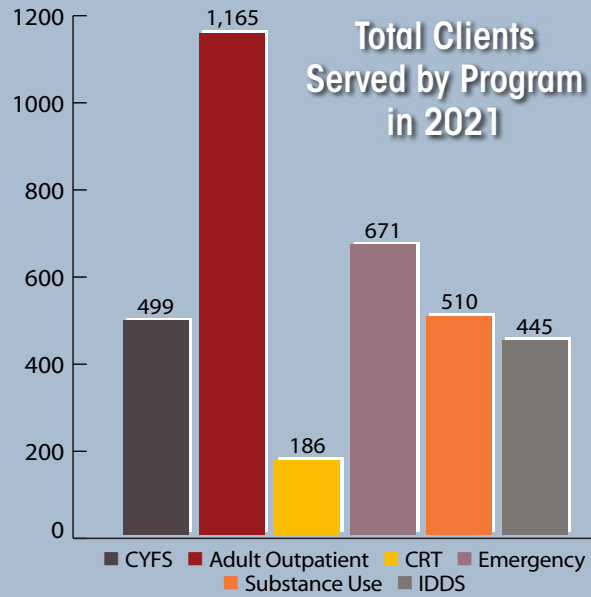
Please take some time to review the stories in this annual report. They are important and representative of the work done, thousands of times over, this past year. Enjoy and celebrate them.

Kelsey Stavseth, Executive Director



Who We Serve

NKHS provided 252,362 direct services to 2,950 clients in 2022.



	Total Number of Services	Total Number of Hours
Child, Youth & Family Services	20,343	24,940
Adult Outpatient	11,138	20,872
CRT Treatment	24,139	20,243
Emergency Services	3,627	2,532
IDDS	189,505	1,991,565
Substance Use	3,610	3,397

NORTHEAST KINGDOM HUMAN SERVICES is a Vermont Designated Agency serving our community by providing mental health and substance use treatment and developmental and intellectual disability services. We serve individuals and families across the lifespan in Caledonia, Orleans, and Essex counties. Throughout the 2022 fiscal year 450 dedicated employees served 2,950 clients by providing 2,552,362 direct services, despite the ongoing challenges of Covid-19 and staffing shortages.

Client Feedback...

- "NKHS has helped me a lot through the years." - Adult Outpatient Client
- "I got exactly the services I was looking for." - Adult Outpatient Client
- "We talk about my struggles and I was kept on topic about how I'm doing and that progress takes time." - Adult Outpatient Client
- "Our case manager met with us and listened to what my child needed. We came up with goals and she helps us reach them. My family feels supported and empowered." - Children's Services Client
- "I feel safe here." - CRT Client
- "I'm so pleased with the services we receive, I have given NKHS number to a few of my co/workers because they were in need." - IDDS Client
- "He gets to access the community and have interactions with people outside of family." - IDDS Client Family Member

NKHS Welcomes a New Executive Director

On September 27, 2021, NKHS welcomed Kelsey Stavseth as its eleventh Executive Director.

In January 2021, the NKHS Board of Directors hired Paul Bengtson as the Interim Executive Director and Carol Boucher as the Interim Deputy Executive Director. The search for a new permanent Executive Director began in April 2021. The Board engaged the services of consultants to help guide the process, and a Search Committee was formed that was comprised of Board members, employees, Standing Committee members, and community partners. Focus groups were conducted to allow clients, employees, and community members to contribute suggestions about the characteristics the new Executive Director should exhibit.

After several rounds of virtual and in-person interviews, the committee submitted its recommendations to the Board and a selection was made. As part of the application process, all of the final candidates had to prepare an essay about why they wanted to lead NKHS and what they would bring to NKHS. In Kelsey's essay he says, "If I were hired as the ED at NKHS I believe that we, together, would build something great."

And so it began ...

As someone who grew up in the area Kelsey has a personal connection to the Northeast Kingdom and cares deeply about the current and future health of its people. Kelsey started his non-profit career over 13 years

ago as an AmeriCorps member. He then joined the Howard Center, where he worked in various positions within the Child Youth and Family Services, Mental Health, and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities departments for over seven years.

After receiving his MBA in Positive Organizational Development, Kelsey worked at the Lund Family Center where he oversaw numerous programs and spearheaded the implementation of a Continuous Quality Improvement process.

Kelsey's strength lies in being person-centered. His core values include community, compassion, generosity and integrity. He feels creating relationships is the best way to achieve healthy, flourishing communities. Having space where everyone feels safe, valued, like they can contribute and be accountable is essential. Since joining NKHS, Kelsey has been focusing on building and re-building relationships.

Stavseth said, "I am delighted to join Northeast Kingdom Human Services and am excited for the opportunity to lead an organization whose values align with my own and is dedicated to serving their community."

Denise Niemira, MD, Chair of the NKHS Board of Directors, said, "The Board is extremely happy to welcome Kelsey as our new Executive Director. We feel he has the right leadership qualities to build upon the work done in the past eight months to make NKHS an organization better able to meet the mental health needs of our community."



Kelsey and partner Julia Vallera.

Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services

The mission of the Division of Developmental Services is to help individuals with disabilities lead fulfilling and complete lives and to be accepted, valued and contributing members of their families and communities. Helping all individuals live, work, and play as respected members of society not only allows for a higher quality of living overall, but it saves taxpayer dollars.

IDDS supports individuals through every aspect of their lives including community access, independent living, accessing medical care, finding and maintaining employment, and pursuing their life-long learning goals. IDDS serves children and adults from birth to end of life who are diagnosed with intellectual disabilities and/or Autism.



Services Include:

- Targeted Case Management
- Shared Living Home Providers
- Respite Care
- Therapeutic Services
- Residential and Staffed Living
- Community and Employment Support
- Crisis Intervention

ELIJAH'S STORY

Elijah is 22 years old and lives with his mother in East Hardwick. He has spent the last 5-6 years happily employed at Willey's General Store and True Value in Greensboro, working 24 hours per week stocking shelves without any assistance or support staff. He has worked independently and has done well with communicating with other employees and customers. Eli was proud to be part of a dedicated team.

Recently, Elijah's mother took a job in Randolph, requiring both he and his mother to move to the Central Vermont area. Elijah does not always do well with change, but he has gained much and is even applying to work at a local grocery store.

Elijah has also gained confidence in driving. He had his driver's permit for two years but was fearful of getting behind the wheel. As a result, he relied on transportation from his family and co-workers. As daily transportation became more difficult, Elijah took responsibility. He knew he needed transportation to continue his job, so he put his fears aside and decided to get his driver's license! Although he was not successful on his first attempt he did not give up. He made another appointment and succeeded, and now he has his own registered set of wheels!



MAKAYLA'S STORY

Makayla has always lived with a shared living provider or a family because she was not supported well enough naturally to be on her own. In July of 2019, Makayla began working with an IDDS Service Coordinator. She was living in a shared apartment with another individual and was supervised 24/7.

In late August of 2019, Makayla moved into her own apartment, but she was still receiving round the clock support by NKHS Direct Support Professionals. At the time, she was unable to do everyday tasks such as light housework because she didn't know how.

Through the support she was receiving, Makayla had the opportunity to grow. Over the past two years she has learned to live independently in her own apartment. She receives supports only three days per week for transportation and medical appointment needs, with only one or two overnight supports. Makayla has grown from being very dependent on her staff and case manager, to living independently, scheduling her own appointments, having some natural supports for medical needs, and being able to honestly advocate for herself accurately. NKHS remains Makayla's payee for the purpose of making sure bills are paid on time and that she has the money she needs.

Makayla has had to face some challenges, but she has persevered, grown, and has been very successful. She is accepting verbal support and no longer depends on physical, in-person support all the time. It is so exciting to see clients like Makayla grow and become successful, contributing members of the community



IDDS Designation

The Vermont Department of Disabilities Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) completed its re-designation process for NKHS Developmental Services earlier this year. The requirements for re-designation are outlined in the Administrative Rules on Agency Designation, which are intended to ensure efficient and high quality services, and to promote and assist a continuous quality improvement process within the designated agencies and statewide system of care.

The report was presented to the Developmental Disabilities State Program Standing Committee on April 21, 2022. The committee submitted a unanimous recommendation to Commissioner Monica White, who concurred and granted full designation to NKHS IDDS, acknowledging the staff and the hard work they do to meet the needs of the people they serve. This extends NKHS' IDDS designation until 2026.



Child, Youth and Family Services

This Program includes both Home and Community, and School-based Services.

FY22 was an exciting year in the Children’s Department. Covid provided challenges as well as learning opportunities over the past two years. As we learned to navigate our world with Covid still posing a concern, the Children’s Department staff returned to the office and re-established our face-to-face service provision.

The Children’s Department hired several new staff members: a therapist in the St. Johnsbury office to expedite our intake process, and new community skills workers for both the Newport and St. Johnsbury offices to provide much-needed social/emotional skills building with identified youth.

Supports children and families received this past year through the Children’s Department included:

- 49 families were provided with financial support for their child(ren) to attend summer camps—totaling over \$11,500
- 15 families were provided financial support for their child(ren) to have horseback riding lessons—totaling over \$3,000
- 5 families received financial support for gym memberships—totaling over \$800
- 7 families received other services and/or visiting their child during in-patient/residential, via gas cards and/or accommodations—totaling over \$1000
- Field trips to VINS, ECHO and Montshire Museum of Science

Home and Community Supports

The Home and Community Support and Stabilization Program provides trauma-informed, strengths-based, and consumer-driven care to families and youth ages birth through 21 in the home, community, and office settings. These services include individualized and comprehensive assessment and evaluation, intensive case management, community skills, respite, crisis intervention, education, training, and consultation. The Early Childhood Program provides services and works with other community partners to make additional referrals and coordinate care. Children’s Integrated Services provides education to caregivers and childcare facilities to support the social and emotional development of children.

School-based Services

The School-Based Services Program provides trauma-informed case management and counseling services in various school settings. School-based staff provide individualized services to support youth in addressing their social and emotional needs to build resiliency, strengthen efficacy, and build skills for addressing identified mental health needs. School-Based Programming provides comprehensive evaluation and assessment, individual and group counseling, behavior modification, transitional services, crisis intervention, training, and consultation.

4 Weeks of Giving

This year the Children’s Department hosted its 2nd Annual Giving Campaign. This special event, 4 Weeks of Giving, asked others to make small handcrafted ornaments for local nursing homes. Pre-packaged craft kits were available to create ornaments and small gifts. Staff were encouraged to engage clients or families in creating a small token from the heart. Collection bins were set up in both the St. Johnsbury and Derby offices to collect the completed projects. In addition to making ornaments, NKHS partnered with NEKCA in Newport to host a toy collection box.

The event ran from November 18 to December 17, 2021. Over 300 ornaments were made and 75 toys were donated. The ornaments were delivered the week of December 20, 2021.



We’re all about being human.

NKHS Leads Community Support for LGBTQ+ Youth

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) youth in Vermont are 4.5 times more likely to have attempted suicide in the last 12 months than their heterosexual peers, and LGBT youth in the Northeast Kingdom are 2-3 times more likely to have attempted suicide in the last 12 months than LGBT youth outside the Northeast Kingdom. This is according to data from the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which measures behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disease, and injury among youth.

After learning NKHS was not eligible to apply for a grant which supported substance abuse prevention in LGBT youth, the CYFS Department began to organize a grassroots effort to engage schools and other community youth organizations. The first organizational meeting in early March 2022, welcomed representation from community members, schools and local law enforcement. The group needed to hear from area LGBTQ+ youth, so they developed a survey for youth to take through a connection made with Outright Vermont (www.outrightvt.org) for students who were affiliated with GSA (Gay Straight Alliance or Gender



Sexuality Alliance) groups.

The group is now the NEK LGBTQ+ Youth Support Team and is excited to distribute their survey to as many youth as possible in the NEK to obtain their confidential feedback. Additionally, youth with lived experience as LGBTQ+ or youth allies are encouraged to join the NEK LGBTQ+ Youth Advisory Board. For more information on joining the NEK LGBTQ+ Youth Support Team and Advisory Board please contact Noreen Shapiro-Berry at NKHS (802) 334-6744, Ext. 2137 or nshapiro-berry@nkhs.net.

Wilderness Wanderers

CYFS launched its new Wilderness Wanderers program, a group of youth who participated in weekly hiking adventures throughout the NEK and New Hampshire. Each youth was provided a backpack, a water bottle and a journal to record their observations, thoughts and feelings with each hike.

Participants were invited to explore the outdoors, learn the benefits of nature on mental health, and engage with peers in a supportive environment. Five hikes were planned throughout northern VT and NH during which present moment strategies were introduced and practiced, such as nature journaling and mindful moments of silence to notice input from the 5 senses. Facilitators also encouraged connection with the natural world through exploration, curiosity, and stewardship, fostered interpersonal relationship skills, and used creative/artistic means to encourage self-exploration.



A total of nine youth, ages 10–15 years, participated in at least one hike and up to five NKHS staff provided support.



The CRT program is designed to serve consumers who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness. The role of CRT staff is to assist consumers with day-to-day functions in an effort to facilitate community reintegration and increase independence. It is CRT's mission to fully support consumers in the community, while serving as ambassadors for addressing and breaking down stigma of mental illness. CRT staff are often crucial liaisons between the consumer and a variety of community partners such as primary care doctors, family members, landlords, etc. This effort helps the consumer to achieve a higher level of holistic health and functioning. The CRT program works to create bridges between the consumer and the community as a whole in an effort to improve quality of life and increase independence for each consumer served.

How does the CARE Bed Garden Grow

When the CARE Bed began their gardening project they never imagined it would be such a huge success. It didn't take long to reap the benefits of this therapeutic and healthy project!

The gardening project came to life when NKHS received a Rise VT Amplify Grant. The grant provided resources to encourage healthy activities. On the tail end of COVID quarantine, the CARE Bed was in search of a project that would provide physical activity for clients. Many of the clients are used to physical work, and being cooped up inside was wearing on them.

The grant was used to purchase seeds and seedlings. These were planted and watered daily by dedicated CRT clients. More supplies soon were purchased and garden boxes were built to enlarge the garden. Before long, a full garden was in bloom!

Over the course of the past two summers, clients have harvested beans, peppers, cucumbers, squash, tomatoes, watermelon, and cantaloupe. Some of the produce was used to create goodie baskets, including dilly beans and blueberry lemon jam, which were delivered to community partners to create awareness about the CARE Bed.

CARE Bed manager, Jenn Heroux-Bachand said, "It's wonderful to have the ability to do something like this. It feels really good!"

The following services are offered:

- *Service Planning & Coordination*
- *Community Support & Integration (individual and groups)*
- *Representative Payees*
- *Housing Support & Coordination*
- *Psychiatric Assessment & Medication Management*
- *Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) services and additional peer supports*
- *Crisis Supports*
- *Family-based Intervention/Supports*
- *Physical Health Coordination*
- *Wellness Activities*
- *Individual & Group Psychotherapy*



The Adult Outpatient Department has a focus and philosophy around providing co-occurring treatment.

Our Adult Outpatient Program includes comprehensive assessment and evaluation and incorporates the use of standardized measures to support the clinician and consumer in identifying strengths and needs. Services are trauma informed, strengths based, and consumer driven. In addition to providing individual and family counseling and psychiatry, we also have collaborations with community partners to provide consultations, trauma evaluations, risk assessments and psychotherapy services.

The following services are offered:

- *Co-Occurring Recovery Navigators and Case Management*
- *Reach Up Case Management*
- *Collaboration with Outreach Enhanced Emergency Case Management*
- *Collaboration with DCF Family Services and Lund Services*

- *Individual and Group Therapy*
- *Elder Care*
- *Psychiatric Medication Management*
- *Hospital Diversion*

Despite the workforce shortages and the Covid-19 Pandemic, NKHS Adult Outpatient and Substance Use programs have been fortunate enough to bring aboard five new therapists over the last year.

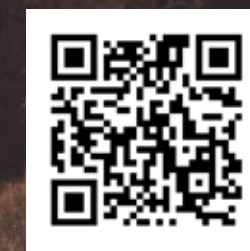
Throughout the year, as the pandemic continued, the AO team worked remotely conducting therapy sessions via telehealth and phone. Group therapies were conducted using a hybrid model, combining both in-person and zoom clients to effectively meet clients' needs. In FY 2022, there were 9,004 telehealth services provided by the AO and SA teams.

Impaired Driver Rehabilitation Program (IDRP)

Alcohol and drug prevention programs help support communities to grow in wellness and health. IDRP is a State of Vermont program designed to provide education on substance abuse and driving under the influence (DUI). The program is designed to help individuals learn how to prevent future problems related to alcohol and drug use and is required to reinstate driving privileges after being convicted of driving under the influence. NKHS offers a weekend IDRP Program to eligible participants. Throughout

the year, as the pandemic continued, NKHS offered the IDRP program online. This allowed the program to continue to meet an important public need and made access to the program easier while also keeping participants safe.

Scan the QR Code (below, left) with your cell phone app for more information on the IDRP Program.



Emergency Services

At NKHS, we offer services around the clock, 365 days per year.



NKHS has emergency services teams and specialty teams who are on call and ready to assist in individual or community wide crises. These screeners evaluate people in crisis in the office, at local hospitals and in clients' homes. When screeners evaluate a person in crisis, offering the least restrictive environmental aspects while keeping the individual and community safe are a priority. Emergency Services provides immediate assistance to individuals in crisis 24 hours a day. Our clinicians respond to all calls as requested. NKHS Emergency Services also helps arrange more intense levels of care as needed, such as a hospital or short-term crisis bed.

The Direct Impact

A 911 report about a suicidal female prompted a co-response of law enforcement and an NKHS Mental Health Crisis Specialist. While there, the MHCS was able to de-escalate the female and work through some emotional regulation, assess the root of the trigger, and create a space in which the individual felt comfortable to be vulnerable without any fear of consequence. She was able to open up for the first time about childhood trauma and how it affects her quality of life. This prompted a home safety plan, and the individual did not need to go to the hospital to be assessed by the Emergency Services team. The woman agreed to connect with a therapist to address her trauma and, most importantly, reported she looked forward to it.

NKHS assisted a male who historically did not have a positive relationship with law enforcement. When the man's wife called and reported that her husband's mental health was declining and the family was feeling unsafe, the MHCS was able to help by allowing the man to speak about traumas and his flashbacks. After de-escalation and assessment, a proactive plan was created that included check-ins with the man and his family. Since then, calls from the individual have been routed to the MCHS. Law enforcement presence has not been needed and the individual has now reconnected with VA Services.

Milestones in Emergency Services

FY2022 marked the one-year anniversary for two of our Emergency Services programs: The Lifeline and the Embedded Mental Health Crisis Specialist.

THE LIFELINE

In 2021, NKHS began supporting the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline in Vermont.

- ▼ From July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, the NKHS Emergency Services Lifeline Team answered **2,023 phone calls**.
- ▼ The text and chat option for the Lifeline kicked off on April 1, 2022. During the first quarter of service (April 1 through June 30, 2022), NKHS answered **360 texts and/or chats**.
- ▼ Thanks to **Four Pines**, a philanthropic supporter of suicide prevention in the NEK through the **Vermont Community Foundation**, the Lifeline program was able to begin a new initiative, which enabled call responders to provide follow-up calls to check in on callers.
- ▼ In preparation for the roll out of **9-8-8**, two emergency services staff attended the Train the Trainer program for ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training). **ASIST** is a two-day training that provides suicide first aid and is evidence informed to support program effectiveness. NKHS now has two trainers, with the plan to add more. All Lifeline staff are to be trained in this method, along with other crisis responders at NKHS in the coming months.
- ▼ The Lifeline prepared for the roll out of **9-8-8**. The new, shorter number will make it easier for people to remember and is a step towards a transformed crisis care system in America.

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS SPECIALIST

The Embedded Mental Health Crisis Specialist (MHCS) program also completed its first year of operation and has yielded many positive results, creating a space for law enforcement and mental health to work in a more collaborative way. This specialized program partners with Vermont State Police and mental health, with oversight by both the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Mental Health.

- ▼ During FY2022, the Mental Health Crisis Specialists completed a total of **362 interventions**.
 - **70.99% were Adults (age 18-59)**
 - **19.34% were children (age 0-17)**
 - **9.67% were older adults (age 60+)**
- ▼ NKHS has two MHCSs embedded within the State Police barracks, which enables a quicker response.
- ▼ **33%** of the 362 interventions prompted a co-response of law enforcement and MHCS, addressing aspects of criminal, safety and mental health concerns. The MHCS responds to locations across the service region with or without law enforcement. MHCS and law enforcement collaborate to provide well-rounded services to the community. Collaboration can take place on the phone, in-person, via email, or in the cruiser en-route to a scene.

Total number of individuals impacted by services provided by MHCS, including 544 adults and 248 children:

792

- **40% of interventions were completed at the barracks**
- **39% at individual's home**
- **14% in the community**
- **7% at the emergency department, NKHS, local school, or primary care office**

Licensed Residential Services

At NKHS, we offer services around the clock, 365 days per year.

The IDDS Licensed Residential Program provides comprehensive supports to individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in group home settings. Comprised of five Residential Care Homes and Therapeutic Community Residences located throughout the Northeast Kingdom, the program helps individuals with significant support needs lead normal and complete lives and to be accepted, valued, and contributing members of their families and communities. Our homes provide individualized, compassionate, and specialized care that seeks to enhance our residents' quality of life in the least restrictive setting.

Our services include:

- 24-hour individualized support and supervision
- Service Coordination
- Nursing Oversight
- Medication Management
- Special Care Procedures
- Therapeutic Diets
- Clinical and Behavioral supports
- Community integration and support

JUSTIN'S STORY

A little over a year ago, Justin and his Parkway House roommates moved to their new home in the heart of downtown St. Johnsbury. Despite some initial apprehension, Justin has flourished in his new community, enjoying all that it has to offer. He conveyed, "Staff encouraged and supported me to meet people, which gave me the strength to face the world and its challenges. I like being more independent."

With newfound confidence and opportunities, Justin wanted to give back to his community. Using his vast knowledge of his Abenaki Heritage, he has taught two classes at the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum during their summer education series. The attendees were excited to learn about the Abenaki culture and enjoyed playing Native American instruments, learning tribal dances, and hearing Justin's spirited retelling of traditional Abenaki stories.

Justin has become friends with several people at a neighboring retirement community, bringing them fresh vegetables from his garden and the occasional visit from his dog, Izzy. He has made an especially close friend there who is delighted by his stories and their conversations. Friendship knows no age boundaries!

Justin says, "The people in my community make my spirits soar like an eagle." As he continues to flourish at the Parkway House, the possibilities for Justin are endless.



Improving Consumer Care & Outcomes



In 2022 NKHS implemented a new electronic health records (EHR) system. This new system launched in June, and will allow for smoother processes and access to data for a magnitude of reports. It will help enhance the care we provide to our consumers and will allow us to continue to grow. Most importantly, it is more efficient and user friendly. The new system will allow remote access, which means our Direct Service Professionals (DSPs) will be able to use the system and access information in the field. Our Emergency Services staff will also have access to real-time information, which will assist them in the field.

This long awaited change is very exciting and required an exceptional amount of work to implement the conversion. The process included multiple phases, and the IT department added an Implementation Specialist and three new positions which are dedicated to implementing, training, and maintaining Credible.

CREDIBLE LAUNCH DATE: JUNE 1, 2022

CURRENT NUMBER OF CREDIBLE USERS: 277

TRAINING: OVER 1,500 HOURS

IMPLEMENTATION PHASES: Credible Tour • Data Gathering • Configuration • Testing and Training • Go Live!

Helpful Consumer Resources

Tools to help our community members improve their care.


Last year nearly 450 employees provided case management, community and home supports, residential care, psychiatry, medication management, individual therapy, group therapy, vocational supports, school based counseling, emergency care, and respite services for 2950 clients who may be challenged by conditions affecting mind, body, and spirit. We offer outreach and consultation services to communities, schools, and businesses in our service area. Crisis in-

tervention services are available twenty-four hours a day every day of the year. Services are provided regardless of an individual's ability to pay.

We are always seeking ways to help individuals better understand services, access them, and improve the quality of care. This year NKHS has been working on helpful consumer resources.


CONSUMER GUIDE

This Consumer Guide was created to help individuals become familiar with the programs, practices, and services of Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS). The guide provides an overview of services provided and shares information individuals should consider if they are receiving services or plan to receive services from NKHS. To view the Consumer Guide, scan the QR code.



AUTHORIZATION TO DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION

Individuals have a right under HIPPA to access their health information. Providing individuals with easy access to their health information empowers them to be more in control of decisions regarding their health and well-being. Consumers can now access the "Authorization to Disclose Health Information" form on the NKHS website to make this process easier.



HARM REDUCTION PACKS

Harm reduction packs are meant to provide basic harm reduction supplies to lower risks and to keep individuals safe from the risks associated with drug-use and other risky health behaviors. Harm reduction is effective in addressing the public health epidemic involving substance use as well as infectious disease and other harms associated with drug use. It can also help connect individuals to overdose education, counseling, and referral to treatment. Free packs are available by contacting NKHS.

Harm reduction packs include:

- Substance fentanyl test kits
- Antiseptic wipes
- Mask
- Overdose supplies (Narcan)
- Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation shield
- Written educational materials and recommended resource



Moving Forward Together - NKHS Strategic Plan FY25

In January 2022, NKHS embarked on a mission to create a new strategic plan, which would align with the mission, vision, and goals of the agency. NKHS hired a consultant to lead the process. Greg Hessel of Re-Generation Resources is a professional trainer, facilitator, and consultant. For over 20 years Greg has been coaching individuals, building teams, and aligning organizations.

Plans and goals help us have shared understanding of where we are going and how we get there. "Ultimately, a strategic plan is our guide to the future," said Kelsey Stavseth, Executive Director, "and I am very hopeful and optimistic about the plan we will develop."

A Steering Committee was created to offer input and ideas. This committee was comprised of staff, supervisors, and a Board of Directors. It was important to have an inclusive and engaging process, with input from people across the agency to create a plan that was meaningful and actionable.

A Kick-Off Meeting was held in February to launch the strategic planning process, which included interviews with staff, leaders, and Board members, as well as standing committee members and community partners. A climate and culture survey was customized and administered for NKHS staff, and a consumer focus group was conducted. The committee met on a monthly basis to discuss information and data and to formulate the plan.

The new strategic plan, designed as a three-year plan, outlines three major goals:

1. Recruit, train, develop and retain a strong workforce

2. NKHS is seen as a leader and dependable partner in the Northeast Kingdom

3. Become a learning organization and find innovative ways to deliver services and increase access

The plan was presented to the Board of Directors in June. The Senior Leadership Team will steward the plan, ensuring frequent review, which is necessary for successful implementation. Reports will be available to the board and all staff as a way to promote transparency, invite feedback, and track progress.



NKHS in the News...

Just scan the QR code with your cellphone to read each corresponding news article!



Lifeline - Dialing in to Stop Suicide

Lifeline is an accessible resource for suicide prevention. **If you or someone you know are in crisis call the national suicide prevention lifeline (lifeline) at 1-800-273-talk (8255), or text the crisis text line (text hello to 741741). both are free and available 24/7.**



At a Breaking Point: Vermont's Community-Based Support Providers Need Help—Now

This 7D Brand Studio story features the amazing staff at NKHS who are working extremely hard during difficult times to meet the needs of the communities we serve!



Kingdom Access Television featuring Kelsey Stavseth

Join Kelsey Stavseth, NKHS Executive Director, from the KATV Studio as he is interviewed by Barry Waldner. This enlightening conversation offers insight into NKHS—where we've been and where we're going under Kelsey's leadership.



How the Pandemic Has Changed Us

Terri Lively and Rose Aldrich discuss the impacts of the pandemic on mental health and what it looks like if you need to reach out for help for a mental health crisis. Join them from the KATV Studio.



Community Engagement

Working within our communities and building sound partnerships is vital for NKHS. We participate in community partner meetings, consumer-focused events, and other community events, representing both our employees and those we serve. We also provide important trainings and informational outreach to partners and the community members we serve. Our leadership and staff can be seen throughout the state, especially across Orleans, Caledonia, and Essex counties. You might even see us having a cup of coffee with a consumer or community partner at a local coffee shop. Connection to those we support, those who support us and our community is a fundamental part of what we do!



Where you will find NKHS:

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Caledonia Child Advocacy Center
- Documentary Film Screenings
- Habitat for Humanity
- Job Fairs
- National Council for Mental Wellbeing
- North Country Hospital
- Northern Collaborative
- Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital
- Northern Counties Health Care
- Northern Vermont University
- NEK! Prosper
- One Care Vermont
- Out of the Darkness Walk
- QPR Training
- St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce
- St. Johnsbury Community Hub
- Umbrella, Inc.
- Vermont Care Partners
- Vermont Community Foundation
- Vibrant ONE
- Virtual Town Hall Forums

Community trainings provided by NKHS:

- Therapeutic Options
- QPR Gatekeeper Training
- Trauma 101
- Becoming a Shared Living Home Provider
- Suicide Safer Pathways
- Mental Health First Aid
- Zero Suicide Training (in partnership with the Center for Health and Learning)

Staff Recognition

For over 60 years employees at NKHS have been serving the Northeast Kingdom and those who cope with the challenges of mental health, addictions, and developmental and intellectual disabilities. NKHS is grateful for our dedicated employees and the work they do.



Patricia L. Rhodes Award:
Ruth Marquette
QA/QI Administrator and Agency Grant Writer



NKHS Leadership Award:
Steve Fish
Director of IDDS Administrative Services



NKHS Call to Action Award:
Ashley Wheeler
EMR Implementation Specialist

NKHS Wellness Committee

Congratulations to the NKHS Wellness Committee! The Vermont Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports has once again presented NKHS with the Gold Award for Worksite Wellness. This top honor is given to organizations for outstanding worksite wellness programs and initiatives. NKHS has received the Worksite Wellness Award every year for the past 16 years!



Celebrating Years of Service

Joanne Sanville	39 years
Carol Breen	37 years
Tammy Dupuis	33 years
Cathy Etheze	33 years
Kathy Monty	25 years
Tonya Newland	25 years

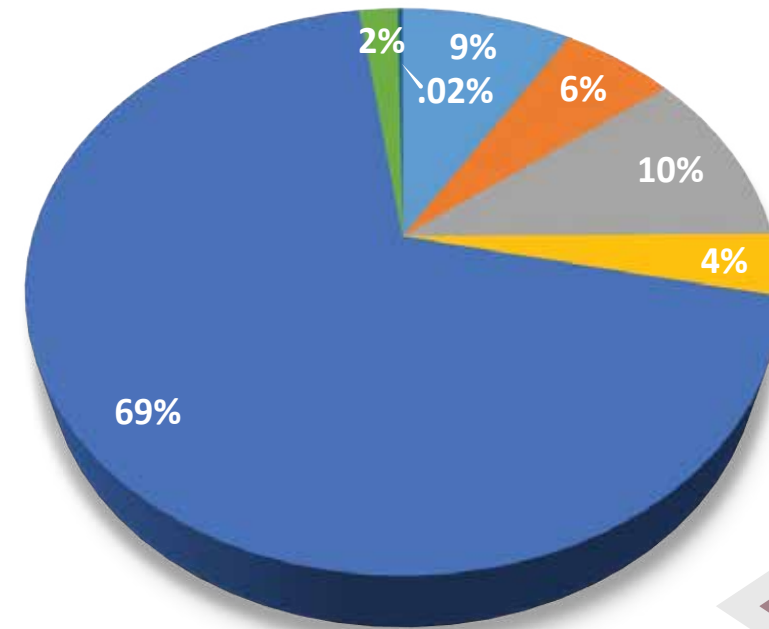


Members of the NKHS Wellness Team with Dr. Mark Levine (Commissioner of Health). Pictured R to L: Carol Breen, Dr. Levine, Heidi Broome, and Claire Roberts.



Financial Data 2022*

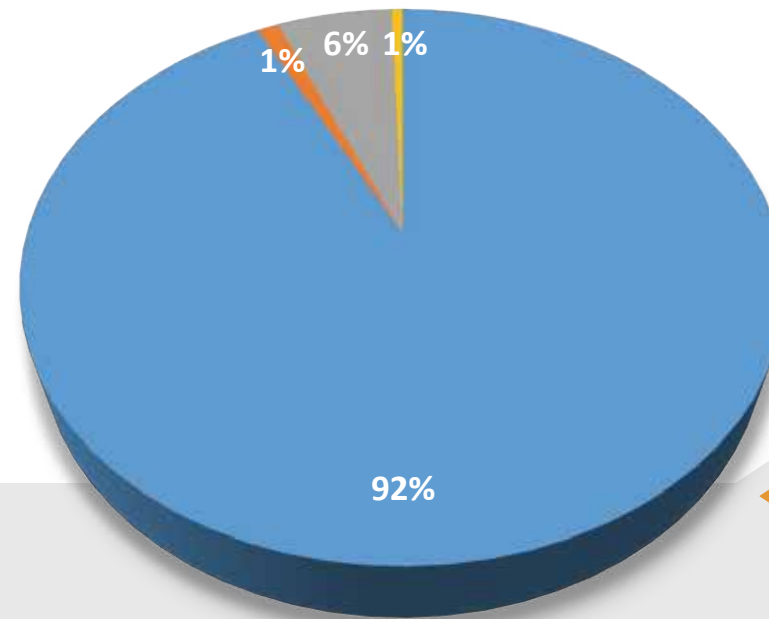
Although the COVID-19 pandemic continued to present challenges in providing services, NKHS is pleased to end the fiscal year successfully.



Expenses by Category

- Developmental services
- Substance abuse, prevention & treatment
- Administration
- Children services
- Adult outpatient services
- Community rehabilitation & treatment
- Emergency services

TOTAL EXPENSES \$43,831,899



Revenue by Source

- Medicaid
- Other patient fees
- Grants & contracts
- Local & other

TOTAL REVENUES \$45,743,136

*Unaudited financials for fiscal year 2022 from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022



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