

Public Health Council of the Upper Valley

Partner Meeting

January 16, 2026

See list of attendees at the end of the notes.

Topic: Community Health Improvement Plan: 2026 to 2028

Alice Ely & Cara Baskin

Presentation slides and video recording available.

General Discussion: Strategy Impact on Priorities (Access to Care, Basic Needs, Older Adult Support)

Key Points

- Center people directly affected in planning and decisions.
- Address the interdependence of access to care, basic needs, and older adult supports holistically.
- Involve first responders (including police) in strategy development.
- Towns recognize these issues but often lack structure/capacity to respond—strategies can help close that gap.
- Track upcoming policy, funding, and eligibility changes (next few years); consider a dedicated group to monitor them.
- Well-planned strategies build in flexibility to adapt as conditions shift.

Overall: Emphasize inclusive, interconnected, adaptable approaches to strengthen these priorities amid evolving external factors.

Key Themes from Breakout Sessions (as available):

#1 Expanding Community and Municipal Engagement Discussion

Current Challenges

- Silos and separation among municipal boards, volunteers, and roles.
- High turnover, part-time/underfunded staff, and limited capacity.
- Municipal groups are consistently overwhelmed.
- Difficulty identifying relevant contacts and clearly communicating public health roles/resources.

Vision of Success

- Collaborative meetings focused on joint problem-solving.
- Open, efficient communication lines to quickly find the right municipal contact.
- Targeted, relevant connections (e.g., warm handoffs) rather than broad outreach.
- Clear, digestible overview of available public health supports.
- Public health positioned as a helper: “How can we support your role / take tasks off your plate?”
- Low-pressure, bite-sized engagement with long-term mutual benefits.

Ideas & Contributions

- Leverage existing conveners (municipal leader groups, RPCs, newsletters, EMDs, town managers) to share information and build connections.

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- Prioritize ongoing dialogue with affected communities.
- Develop clear descriptions of public health roles and explore low-burden formats (e.g., quarterly meetings framed around municipal needs).
- Align with existing related efforts to avoid duplication.

Core shift: Move from fragmented, burdensome outreach to smarter, supportive, mutually valuable relationships that reduce load while improving collaboration and resource access.

#2 Improved Referral Pathways & Resource Communication

Challenges

- Clients experience frustration, repeated bouncing, and high effort for low results.
- Stigma around behavioral health/substance use; limited proactive outreach and literacy.
- Referrals often stall (no direct follow-up or initial contact from providers).
- Inconsistent internal/external communication about services; platforms like Unite Us only effective with good input/transparency.

Vision of Success

- Clients access services with minimal effort and zero frustration – faster, direct, seamless.
- Clear, proactive understanding of services and access; strong shared commitment/transparency.
- Direct provider engagement (e.g., joint first calls, peer journeys recognized).
- Care coordinators/direct staff effectively communicate available supports.
- Everyone at the table uses shared systems; reduced drop-off and bouncing.
- Engage the people with the ability to make change.

Contributions

- Transportation supports (limited hours, for enrolled clients, appointments, via CHWs/partners).
- Potential fast-tracking for treatment-related needs.

Core shift: From frustrating, fragmented referrals to proactive, transparent, client-centered pathways using direct outreach and shared tools for efficient, low-friction connections.

#3 Increasing Access to Community-Based Care

- Think about how to take services to where people are **and** where they are most comfortable.
- Making sure people know what is available is as important as making it available.

#4 Building Resilient Funding Approaches that Reward Collaborative Work

- Recently, some organizations have lost funding for valuable programs or find their missions are at risk. Are there innovative ways we can continue to support the work? For example, PHC or other organizations holding funds for rapid response or vulnerable programs.

#5 Advancing Innovation

- Lean into the gestalt of caring for each other's organizations and work by seeking greater integration. Together, we can solve many of our own problems.

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Topic: JobForward's Steps to Success Program

Ira Racoma, Macey Mullen & Matt McKenney

Presentation slides available.

Next Meeting:

Friday, March 20, 2026, 9:00 to 11:00 am

Location: 71 Heater Rd, Lebanon at Hypertherm

Or Join with Teams on your computer, mobile app, or room device:

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 216 396 094 557 75

Passcode: GD77ug7H

PHC Partner Meeting, January 16, 2026 (Virtual Only)

Attendees:

Baskin	Cara	PHC/GUVIST
Bergeron	Stephanie	WCBH
Boutwell	Mark	Senior Solutions
Caron	Maryann	APD
Chiocchio	Stacey	Hypertherm/HOPE Foundation
Cote	Neva	VDH
Desilets	Rebecca	City of Lebanon
DuMont	Sean	Reproductive Freedom Fund of NH
Ely	Alice	Public Health Council of the Upper Valley
Esdon	Jim	Injury Prevention Center, Dartmouth Health
Fedrizzi	Rudy	VDH/WRJ
Granitsas	Peter	Hartford Restorative Justice Center
Griffin	Heather	Listen Community Services
Griffin	Suellen	PHC Board of Directors
Harding	Laurie	Community Nurse Connection
Harper-Schiehl	Ella	VDH/WRJ
Hender	Ellen	Vital Communities
Hillhouse	Courtney	Building Bright Futures
Hopkins	Allison	Mt. Ascutney Regional Commission
Kollisch	Donald	Community Nurse Connection
Kreis	Nancy	Dartmouth Health
LaRoche	Kendra	Special Needs Support Center
Mason	Peter	Headrest
Mayfield	Brett	Hartford Town Health Officer
McKaig	Courtney	MAHHC
McKenney	Matt	
Muller	Macey	UNH

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Olmstead	Suellen	CCBA
O'Neil	Peggy	WISE
Racoma	Ira	JobForward
Seidler	Susan	Stepping Stone & Next Step
Stockwell	Ashley	Couch Family Foundation
Tecca	Martha	SHaRE
Vasconcelos	Kathleen	GCSCC
Williams	Kym	TDI
Wnuk	Susan	Belknap Merrimack Community Action (WIC)
Zhang	Angela	UVEAR/DCARHE