



2021 Provider of the Year Awards

The Provider of the Year Awards are presented to three New Hampshire individual or agency members (one prevention focused, one treatment focused and one recovery focused) whose exceptional delivery of services to the community sets a high standard of quality and impact in the substance use and behavioral healthcare field. While the nominees serve as exemplary models overall, particular focus may be given but not limited to: board excellence, programmatic evaluation and impact, fundraising, innovation, and collaboration with other entities. These organizations demonstrate ways in which they set the bar for effective nonprofit strategy, execution, and lasting community impact.

Prevention Provider Nominees

- **Lisa Vasquez** – Lisa Vasquez is the Behavioral Health Strategist at the City of Nashua Division of Public Health and Community Services, serving and supporting the New Hampshire communities of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Lyndeborough, Mason, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, Pelham, and Wilton. Lisa oversees 'Beyond Influence' which seeks to create an environment where all youth and young adults receive support from their families, social networks, and communities to achieve their maximum potential. Lisa has facilitated the Mayor's Opioid Task Force since 2016. Lisa has worked to pull together community partners and organizations to work collaboratively to respond effectively to this crisis. While serving as a leader on the community-based research project, "Community Conversation: Understanding Substance Use Disorder in Greater Nashua, NH", she conducted interviews with people who were actively using and in recovery to learn more about barriers to care. Lisa created a Substance Use Disorder and Language training to educate the community on understanding how the brain is impacted by substance use and learning the difference between helpful and unhelpful language regarding substance use disorders. Lisa has presented this training dozens of times to community members, partners, new staff, and stakeholders.
- **South Central Public Health Network** – The South Central Public Health Network (SCPHN) is a collaborative of partner agencies that are working to enhance and improve community health and public health services across the region. The South Central NH Public Health Network partner organizations include Granite United Way, Center for Life Management, Greater Derry Community Health Services, Community Alliance for Teen Safety, Parkland Medical Center and The Upper Room, a Family Resource Center. Purpose of The Navigator: We encourage you to reach out and get help! The purpose of this resource navigator is to shed light on the services available in the South Central region. At the onset of the pandemic, SCPHN identified a need to pivot to virtual outreach to support individuals and families experiencing the increasing effects of opioid use disorder and partnered with the Network4Health, Derry Community Access Media, community service providers and members to present a virtual reading of the play *A Wider Circle* by Mary Ellen Hedrick, which was followed by a community discussion on



the topic of **The Opioid Crisis Effect on Families**. This program is part of New Hampshire Theatre Project's Elephant-in-the-Room Series® <https://www.nhtheatreproject.org/> which presents play readings and community conversations about subjects that we, as a society, often have difficulty discussing. Network4Health and the SCPHN had planned to bring the play to the Derry area but because of COVID, the planning shifted to offering it virtually. Partners felt the topic was of such importance there had to be a way to accomplish this. In October of 2020, the reading was offered virtually with the assistance of DerryCAM's technology. Community members had the opportunity to ask questions of a local panel at the conclusion of the reading. The panel members were: Chuck Hemeon, Derry EMS Director; Natasha Smith, Drug Court CRSW, Revive Recovery Center; Dean Robbins, LCMHC, MLDAC; and Cyndi Wood, a Mom who lost her son to an overdose. Through a cooperative agreement with the NHTP the license to offer the reading was extended for a month so more people would have the chance to view it. This cooperative effort was a demonstration of the strength of local and regional partnerships and the SCPHN's continued commitment to provide resources to those in need despite unanticipated challenges.

- **New Futures** – New Futures has always been seen as innovative in the world of public policy and advocacy. With great leadership, staff, and volunteers, they listen to the voices of the communities they pledge to represent. New Futures' campaigns have consistently worked to engage with marginalized communities and have effectively elevated the voices of people who are often not heard in the legislative process. New Futures chose to meet the challenges of this past year head on. They placed health equity at the forefront of every policy action they took to ensure that all Granite Staters would have a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. New Futures' Five-Point Plan sought to address the COVID-19 pandemic, improve racial health disparities for historically marginalized groups, and ensure all Granite Staters are healthy now and into the future. This year, New Futures worked with individuals, families, and communities across New Hampshire to ensure state funding for tobacco prevention, alcohol enforcement and substance use treatment and recovery, among other critical programs. New Futures joined with a variety of partners and stakeholders to support the expansion of treatment and recovery services over tele-health and fought to preserve investments in family supports and services to help mitigate toxic stress among children than can contribute to substance misuse later in life. In recent years, our country has had to take a long hard look at several deep-seeded cultural issues that have been problems for generations. In listening to the voices most impacted by policies, New Futures has innovated and laid out a common-sense evidence-based strategy for legislative action and community engagement to create a bright future for everyone in New Hampshire.



- **Makin' It Happen-** Makin' It Happen (MIH) is the regional public health network (RPHN) contractor for Greater Manchester and a non-profit prevention organization focusing on the primary prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD) which supports youth and adults. Early last March, MIH saw an immediate need for information to be disseminated around emerging issues related to the pandemic and created a 9-week, virtual and interactive series titled, "I'm okay, are you okay?". MIH continued to support youth and families dealing with the emotional issues around cancelled sports, proms, and graduations, facing loss of employment or work from home challenges, childcare, and meeting their families and their own needs. MIH continues its work facilitating the Greater Manchester SUD Collaborative which consists of over 40 organizations. The SUD Collaborative also provides analytics on the SUD landscape and trends in access to services, overdose responses and drug fatalities in the region. This work has been expanded over the last year to include a "Recovery Ready Community" approach including the Recovery Friendly Workplace program to educate businesses and reduce stigma in the workforce. In the Fall of 2020 MIH was retained by the City of Manchester to increase capacity and produce a strategy for the region for comprehensive harm reduction. The strategy was completed in December of 2020 and endorsed by the Mayor of Manchester and the City's Health Department. MIH has been working with stakeholders in the area to implement the strategy making harm reduction more comprehensive and encompassing best practices. Wrapping wound care, primary care, mental health, insurance access, vaccinations and testing around traditional needle exchange services increases the support for people walking towards better health, treatment and ultimately recovery.

Treatment Provider Nominees

- **Better Life Partners** - Founded in 2018, Better Life Partners' (BLP) mission is "To help any underserved individual achieve a healthier life filled with belonging, love, and purpose". BLP, which was built to bundle medical and behavioral care for chronic disease, transformed its substance abuse treatment model given COVID shelter-in-place rules and began providing care through virtual visits. They also compiled a thorough list of resources including phenomenal webinars, informational links, medication guides, and provider forms. BLP delivers community-based and virtual medical and behavioral health care, providing their members with easy and fast access to treatment in the right place for them. BLP's "whole person" care is built upon deep community partnerships. They partner with local organizations to provide harm reduction and integrated medical, behavioral, and social care, working together with mission-driven community organizations, treatment providers, and public health organizations to bring better care to the people they serve. Better Life Partners has been highlighted in multiple publications at the state and national level for their innovative and collaborative approaches to



serving underserved populations living with Opioid Use Disorder. They were named one of 2021's Best Tech Startups in New Hampshire by the Tech Tribune. BLP offered community-facing trainings on several topics including COVID-19, telemedicine, and overdose prevention. Their low-barrier access to MAT proved to be a life-saving intervention when the COVID-19 pandemic hit NH. Low-barrier access to buprenorphine has proven to reduce overdose rates around the world and is likely a factor in NH's flattening the overdose curve. With collaborative initiatives around the state, they are expanding their reach and will soon be expanding the services they offer to meet the needs of more people.

- **VFR – Forge Veteran & First Responder Healthcare (VFR)** has been the leader in treating substance misuse/abuse/dependence and the mental health concerns of active-duty service members, Veterans, and First Responders for the past 4 years. Throughout this time, Forge VFR has earned a distinct reputation and the trust of departments, agencies, and organizations across New Hampshire. Forge VFR made history with a first-of-its-kind partnership with the Veterans Administration and created and facilitated wellness workshops and trainings geared toward the states' first responders. These programs were developed as a preventative tool to support increased awareness around topics such as burn-out, compassion fatigue, and compound PTSD within ambulance companies and fire and police departments. VFR's team of dedicated clinical professionals are beyond compare and genuinely care about, and are dedicated to, this mission. The level compassion and professionalism is demonstrated each and every day through the work they do and the trust the community has in them. Since its inception, VFR has formally served over 500 Veterans and First Responders, along with countless others through outreach and wellness workshops and trainings. Over the past two years VFR has integrated a full telehealth option allowing many more to join in VFR's programs and benefit from their trainings. Over the next year, VFR intends on continuing to grow its programs across the state and region as they increase their telehealth options and open new programs in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York.
- **Riverbend Community Mental Health –** Riverbend has been in existence for over 50 years and offers comprehensive behavioral health and addiction treatment services to children, adolescents, individuals, and families in central New Hampshire. A wide range of services are provided to meet the needs of individuals experiencing Substance Use Disorder such as Intensive Outpatient Program, Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT), family services, individual, couples, family counseling and New Hampshire Adult Drug Court. The design of Riverbend's treatment model allows treatment providers to work together under the cooperative umbrella of a single strategy to address the needs of individuals in a whole person approach. Clinicians within the agency are trained providers in Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), which is an evidence-based practice to support the parent child relationships that may have been impacted by traumatic experiences. CPP is a treatment model that can be utilized to support families impacted



by parental substance misuse. Riverbend hosts the “I’m Listening” radio show segments on their new home with iHeart Media and NH Today with Chris Ryan on Tuesday mornings at 7:15AM on WGIR (AM 610) or on demand at <https://soundcloud.com/user-9237577/sets> to hear the latest segments.

Recovery Provider Nominees

- **Revive Recovery** – Revive Recovery Center (RRC) is a Peer Recovery Support Center that strives to “meet people where they’re at”, no matter where they are at. This was put to the test when the pandemic hit, but it gave RRC the opportunity to showcase their dedication and advocacy to their participants. The Peer Recovery Support Services they provide can be accessed by anyone at any time. A few of the essential services Revive has to offer include: One-on-one and group coaching sessions for individuals honoring ALL Pathways in Recovery; they are part of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Mobile Response Team; they offer Youth Alternative Peer Groups (YAPG); they offer a 14-week Parenting Journey in Recovery course; they play a key role in the Hillsborough County South Adult Drug Court Program, along with Rockingham Drug Court and Manchester Drug Court; they run the Syringe Service Alliance of the Nashua Area in collaboration with the Nashua Public Health Department. Revive has been a cornerstone of the City of Nashua since 2016 and continues to expand to meet the needs of the recovery community and the community as a whole. They have always excelled in the ever-evolving field of recovery as they continue to discover new avenues so no one seeking help or services is left behind.
- **Granite Pathways – Strength to Succeed program** - The Strength to Succeed Program (STS) at Granite Pathways is a collaborative approach to support parents and relative caregivers. STS is a voluntary program based on a trust-based model of peer support from staff who have lived experiences. Strength to Succeed is uniquely leading the way by building a model of peer recovery support for families involved in child protection services. The program provides parent-partners who are certified recovery support workers to parents with DCYF involvement due to Substance Use Disorder, Mental Health or Chronic Neglect. STS can also provide a Family Peer Support Specialists to provide in-home peer support for relative caregivers and reunified families, encompassing understanding addiction and recovery, how to parent in recovery, developmental stages of children, educational supports and navigating the child welfare system. Family Peer Support Specialists are trained in evidence-based practice models including Nurturing Families and PASTA (Parenting a Second Time Around) workshops. They can also provide trainings on DCYF involvement, addiction 101, 5 Stages of Change, How Addiction Affects the Brain, Creating Connections with Families in Recovery and Treatment and Recovery Pathways to other organizations in the state. The Strength to Succeed Program was nominated as the Recovery Partner of the Year



based upon first-hand accounts of the incredible service provided to vulnerable families in New Hampshire.

- **Keith Howard** – Keith Howard, Executive Director of Hope for New Hampshire Recovery has worked to ensure recovery supports were offered to the community throughout the pandemic. At the outset of the Pandemic, Keith immediately recognized the needs of his program participants and the negative impact that social isolation could have on their recovery. Keith quickly pivoted programs to meeting outside, finding ways to handle social distancing while still supporting the social and emotional needs of those in recovery. Keith ensured safety for the recovery community while working to meet the needs of individuals. Through his efforts and leadership, Hope for NH has continued to remain a safe space for individuals interested in recovery. Keith provides a creative lens to the recovery services offered on site. Creativity is a strength of this recovery provider bringing art, music, games, writing and so much more to the hands of many people. A holistic approach is offered, including opportunities and services such as yoga, meditation, and acupuncture which support improvement in not only an individual's recovery but also for their overall daily life. As Co-Chair of the Governor's Recovery Task Force, Keith works to be a positive community partner who continually seeks to enrich connections and opportunities.
- **Greater Seacoast Community Health – SOS Recovery** - Since 2016, SOS Recovery has been serving all of Strafford County, parts of the seacoast, and rural areas of NH, the mission of SOS is to reduce stigma and harm associated with substance use by providing low barrier access to safe space and peer- based supports for people in all stages of recovery. SOS's three recovery community centers are in Rochester, Dover and Hampton and serve hundreds of individuals and families each year. SOS also serves as an important bridge for people between treatment and re-entry into the community or between the criminal justice system and re-entry into the community. In 2020, they launched "Peer-Strength" to provide peer recovery supports to individuals in rural sections of Coos, Cheshire and Northern Strafford County who are justice involved through tele-recovery supports. This is one on one supports offered using a web-based platform capable of secure video, phone, chat and messaging and individuals only need a smart phone to connect with supports. SOS responded rapidly to the COVID-19 pandemic, going digital within a few days. Working with Goodwin Community Health, SOS operated a mobile "medically assisted treatment and recovery" program which provided access to buprenorphine inductions and recovery support service while public transportation was shut down and many providers were not accepting new patients. During this time, SOS also pivoted quickly and was able to offer its annual "Innovations in Recovery Conference" virtually, the states only peer recovery conference. SOS also launched a Recovery Support Service line which is available 7 days a week from 9am – 6pm. The support line accepts phone as well as text and supports individuals and families as well as Recovery Friendly Workplace sites.