

Baileyville, Maine: Driving Community-Led Solutions

Background

According to the Washington County 2021 Health Profile, residents have a number of challenges that contribute to poor health, such as:

- More residents do not have health insurance (12%) when compared to the state (8%);
- 32% of residents travel more than 30 miles from their home for primary care, compared to the state (20%); and
- More adults and children live in poverty than across the state.

The list goes on, but the data is only one part of the story.

In 2021, the Baileyville Town Council formed a Community Health Ad Hoc Committee. This committee conducted a community assessment, including a survey of 131 middle and high school students and more than 150 adult residents. Overall, 22% of the town's 1,318 residents took part in the survey, and the results reflected the data from its health profile and indicated the community's priorities.

Since then, Baileyville has focused on responding to resident's priority needs. With assistance and support from MCD Global Health (MCD), a public health nonprofit established in 1966 and headquartered in Hallowell, Maine, as well as funds from a \$500,000 challenge grant from Point32Health Foundation, Baileyville has made progress toward improving the health, wellness, and quality of life for its residents.

The Catalyst

Baileyville, and the surrounding area, are benefiting from an additional \$1.5 million in funding. AOS 90 launched a pilot telebehavioral health program for students and staff in the Woodland Elementary and Jr/Sr High Schools in February 2022, a high-ranking need identified during the earlier community assessment. The program was successful and reached capacity by the first month of launch, giving 10 students access to behavioral health services via telehealth. Soon after, parents of students asked for access so that their children could continue existing relationships and have fewer interruptions to class time.



A laptop used for telehealth services for students at Woodland Jr/Sr High School.

The program expanded to PreK-8 schools in Princeton and East Range in September 2022 where school-based service navigators now connect students to services. More telehealth equipment has been deployed, and, in fall 2022, school nurses were trained on how to use the equipment to increase access for and connect students with their established health care providers from school, when appropriate.

Mission & Vision

Improve the health, wellness, and quality of life in small rural towns through service, advocacy and community involvement.

Bring resources to Washington County, Maine, to assist towns with fewer than 5,000 residents that are located more than 10 miles from a hospital. Resources will support local community-led initiatives to improve health and well-being, removing systemic barriers to address the social determinants of health.

Partners

Baileyville town leaders and residents, AOS 90 superintendent and school faculty and staff, Community Caring Collaborative, Aroostook Mental Health Services, St. Croix Regional Family Health Center, State Rep. Anne Perry and Senator Marianne Moore, occupational therapy and leadership from IGIC, Point32Health, Healthy Acadia, University of New England, Maine DHHS Rural Health Transformation task force, National Digital Equity Center, and more.

What's Next?

This action has fueled interest and has expanded into nearby communities, including the ongoing activities listed below:

- Work in Baileyville has grown into communities served by schools in Princeton and East Range where a community perspectives survey took place in fall 2022.
- Now, the four schools have dedicated staff who help students navigate telebehavioral services provided through AMHC and St. Croix RFHC. The program is on track to meet the goal of 80 children served this year. Also, the service navigators are launching new programs in East Range and Woodland Jr/Sr High School to address food insecurity.
- The Community Caring Collaborative is conducting outreach and listening sessions in northeastern and coastal areas of Washington County to find other opportunities where local actions can be grown.
- The National Digital Equity Center will offer in person and virtual courses on topics related to using online resources, increasing access to and saving money with internet access, and more, in collaboration with the Community Health Ad Hoc Committee and Washington County Adult and Community Education.
- The town received federal funds for a new playground.
- AOS 90 received a grant from the Maine Department of Education to support enrichment learning opportunities and use resources to connect students with hands-on learning and job training opportunities while still in high school.
- The community is restarting an adult education program.



Some of the partner members (from top-left to bottom-right): Christina Cutting (Heywood); Jada Morrison (AMHC); Carrie Brown (St. Croix); and Joslyn Houle (Heywood). Not pictured: Charlotte Grass (AMHC) and Christina Roussel (AMHC).

Funding

This work is possible thanks to the \$500,000 challenge grant from Point32Health Foundation that led to additional matching funds being raised, totaling resources of nearly \$2 million. Matching funds came from: Maine Health Access Foundation, Bingham Program, USDA RUS Distance Learning and Telehealth, Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, and Pull Up Fund.

Lessons Learned

Community engagement is important to successful and sustainable solutions. When local residents take the lead and have access to assistance and guidance from organizations, projects can last a long time.

A small, flexible, upfront investment that supports community-driven solutions can create more resources that can continue helping such engagement.

Having policy and decision makers being part of the process is important in motivating municipalities and residents to take on leadership roles, as well as showing care and understanding about meeting the needs of communities through such work.

Learn More

Patricia Metta, AOS 90 Superintendent: super.a@aos90.org

Kate Perkins, MCD Global Health: kperkins@mcd.org

