### **VT Schweitzer Fellows Program Session**

December 5, 2022

### **Karen Vastine**

Sr. Community Relations Officer, Office of Government & Community Relations The University of Vermont Health Network

### Molly Lawrence, MPH

Network Community Health Improvement Strategist, Community Health Improvement The University of Vermont Health Network

2022

# **Session Outline (60 mins)**

- Introductions
- Overview fellowship program impact Karen
- CHNA overview and orientation Molly
- CHNA emerging health priorities reflected in work of community partners – Karen
- Community Relations why and what Karen
- Discussion Molly and Karen (20 mins)

# What role do community partners play in having a positive impact on health?

- Direct Service providers know their program participants and the struggles they face invaluable expertise.
- Our best co-conspirators for:
  - o Moving the dial on social determinants of health
  - Meeting the needs of those who are typically under-served in health-care.
- The more we see one another as partners the deeper and more meaningful our impact.

# What service means to us:

- We believe deeply in the power of community and being in service to it.
- Its inspires action, advocacy and 'paying it forward' -
- Personally we both have deeply valued service and our careers have been shaped by work we did as young professionals and those are values we still hold.
- An enriching experience with strong community partners will lead to empowered fellows and GOOD OUTCOMES!

# A quick trip down memory lane!





# **2022 CHNA Process**

Key Considerations & Investments

- Recruited diverse, cross-sector steering committee, work groups and advisors
- Health and wellbeing broadly defined
- Centered the experiences of structurally marginalized communities
- Designed accessible engagement opportunities
- Piloted community member compensation



# **Community Health Priorities**

### Accessible and Coordinated Care

Cultural Humility and Inclusive Health Care

### Food Access and Security

Housing

Mental Health and Wellbeing

### Workforce Development

# **Populations of Focus**

- Those in our community experiencing the greatest inequities and disparities in health, many as a result of the social drivers of health:
  - ✓ Black, Native American, and People of Color
  - ✓ People who are non-binary, genderqueer, fluid, and transgender
  - ✓ People with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
  - ✓ People with disabilities
  - ✓ People who are LGBTQ+
  - ✓ Older adults over 65 years of age
  - ✓ Refugees and newly immigrated individuals
  - ✓ People experiencing poverty or lower socioeconomic status
  - ✓ Youth

# **Cultural Humility and Inclusive** Health Care



# **Cultural Humility and Inclusive Health Care**

Key Findings:

- Lack of language access services
- Lack of diversity within
  healthcare workforce
- Lack of culturally
  humble care



"A healthy community is one where all people have access to quality health care – where they have the information they need to make informed choices. They have access to experts who provide clear info to whomever is asking the questions – where information is communicated in language that is digestible and accessible to everyone." -COMMUNITY LEADER



# **Cultural Humility and Inclusive Health Care**



All Respondents

RESPONDENTS FEELING THAT HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS RESPECT MY CULTURAL IDENTITY BY GENDER IDENTITY



All Respondents



#### Community Health Needs Assessment Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties, Vermont

2022

# Housing

2022

# Housing

Key Findings:

- Concerns: affordability, availability, quality and safety
- Gap between wages and Fair Market Rent:
  - VT minimum wage in 2022: \$11.75/hour
  - 1-bedroom rental:\$22.37/hour
  - o 2-bedroom rental: \$28.85

### COST BURDENED RENTER AND HOMEOWNER HOUSEHOLDS

CHITTENDEN & GRAND ISLE COUNTIES | OVERMONT

YEARS (4 YEAR)	COST BURDENED RENTER HOUSEHOLDS		COST BURDENED HOMEOWNER HOUSEHOLDS	
2015—2019	45.3%	40.7%	19.0%	25.0%
2009–2013	44.8%	41.5%	25.0%	27.3%

source: Secondary Data<sup>18</sup>

### **Local Disparities in Home Ownership**



Community Health Needs Assessment Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties, Vermont



# Housing

- 1 in 6 households experience "severe housing problems"
  - $\circ$  Overcrowding
  - Having incomplete plumbing or kitchen facilities
  - Paying more than 50% of their income for their housing costs

"Housing is an integral part of health. I know of cases where 2-bedroom apartments have 10-person families living there."

-COMMUNITY LEADER



## **Mental Health and Wellbeing**



# **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

# Key Findings:

- Importance of building community and social connections
- Supporting youth around mental health conversations
- Importance of shared culture
- Addressing social isolation







Community Health Needs Assessment Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties, Vermont

# **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

65%

of community survey respondents prioritized increasing mental health services as one way to strengthen health in their community. COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH: "MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE IN MY COMMUNITY"





### **Moving from Assessment to Action**



# **Creating Community-Driven Solutions**

- Developed Year 1 of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CY23-25):
  - o Build on CHNA findings and communityinformed strategies
  - o Creation of 3 Health Priority Teams
- Guide investments
  - \$1 million (annually) Community Health Investment Fund

"It would be to our benefit to approach this work from a racial equity perspective because there can be no health equity or equity more broadly without racial equity."

-COMMUNITY LEADER

# **Top Community-Identified Strategies**

#### **Cultural Humility and Inclusive Health Care**

- Increase provider competencies to better serve diverse patients
- Establish trusting relationships with historically marginalized communities
- Invest in language access services, including medically trained interpreters

### Housing

- Expand wrap around services for people in transitional housing
- Promote cultural humility trainings for housing service providers
- Decrease the gap in livable wages and housing affordability

#### Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Support cultural centers and community gathering spaces
- Engage with youth to understand their needs and increase resources available for them
- Integrate mental health services into all pediatric and primary care clinics

# Discussion

• What questions or reflections do you have related to the CHNA findings?

# **Emerging Health Priorities Reflected in the Work of Our Community Partners**

2022

# **Observations from the 'field' –** the tough news first

- The pandemic has both shown a spotlight on and amplified racial, social and health inequity.
- Many community partners are concerned about housing, food access and mental health.
- Staff turnover and burnout are significant barriers for organizations.
- Community partners, especially those serving unhoused community members, immigrants and refugees have been asked to shoulder public health work.

# **Observations from the 'field' –** encouraging news

- Our community is resilient.
- Partner organizations have found creative ways to collaborate and offer additional support to service users.
- Equity, especially systemic, is more deeply understood now than ever before.
- The response to the CHNA is incredibly encouraging our community is VERY engaged.

# What will make for a successful partnership? INTEREST & ENTHUSIASM + COMMITMENT (Of Resources/Mentor) +**ONGOING ASSESSMENT**

# SUCCESSFUL/IMPACTFUL PROJECT

### **Pre-work:** Dialogue to assess strong partnership potential

- How does my project idea resonate with your organization's values and identified community need?
- The pandemic has been a huge challenge for all, how is your organization fairing? (How is your work-force?)
- Getting started will entail up-front capital how would you suggest we together approach the first couple of weeks?
- Who would be able to serve as a mentor? What is their bandwidth?
- How do you envision regular communication about the project?

# Thank you!

Karen.Vastine@uvmhealth.org Molly.Lawrence@uvmhealth.org

2022





# **Community Engagement & Data Gathering**

#### Key Informant Interviews

• 32 interviews with community leaders and champions

#### Secondary Data

- 70+ community health indicators
- Sourced from: local organizations, state agencies, federal agencies

#### **Community Survey**

• Online survey (available in 12 languages) yielded 3,700+ complete responses

#### Focus Groups

• 5 groups: Abenaki Community Members, Families and Caregivers of Youth Experiencing Mental Health Challenges, Older Adults in Senior Housing, Residents of an Affordable Housing Community, Youth Ages 16-18

#### **Community Priorities Sessions**

• Criteria for rating the six priorities: Equity, Impact, Community Readiness

### **Population Demographic Key Findings**

- The Health Service Area is growing faster than the state as a whole
- Chittenden County is the largest by population size and is the most racially and ethnically diverse county
- 1 in 8 Health Service Area residents are below the federal poverty level
  - 1 in 3 Black or African American Households
- Income and education disparities exist by race and ethnicity



FEDERAL POVERTY STATUS BY HOUSEHOLD RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2015-2019

# UVM Medical Center Community Relations

2022



UVM Medical Center has a long commitment to being a good steward for the community for many of the same reasons as your interest/motivation to be a Schweitzer fellow:

- Deep community impact
- Compassionate care and access
- Making everyone healthier.



- Representing UVM Medical Center at problem-solving tables with community players working at the intersection of health and need such as:
  - Housing, Older Vermonters, Opioid Crisis,
  - Advocacy and advancement of social justice and equity
- Responding to the concerns of neighbors residing close to the hospital and out-patient facilities.
- Liaison to municipalities
- Sponsorship