

About the Community Needs Assessment

Approximately every four years, United Way of the Greater Seacoast (UWGS) undertakes an extensive community needs assessment process. Our goal for this effort is to take a snapshot of the social service needs of the 47 communities UWGS serves in Rockingham and Strafford counties by:

- Identifying and collecting needs-based data from a variety of sources at the national, state, county and local levels.
- Engaging in key community leader interviews to test the research data against their "on the ground" perspectives.
- Presenting findings to the public and asking for feedback at 7 forums throughout the Greater Seacoast region in order to prioritize needs based on what the community perceives are the topics of greatest importance to our community.
- Fielding a 500 random-dial phone survey in partnership with the University of New Hampshire Survey Center

United Way used the 2004 community assessment to identify and prioritize the community's needs with the goal of creating long-lasting changes by addressing the underlying causes of problems, not just addressing the symptoms. Results from the 2008 assessment will be used to benchmark success, and ensure that focus remains correct.

The assessment is also often used to help agencies plan for and deliver services when they cannot afford to conduct assessments of their own, and as a proven resource in grant requests for non-profits seeking alternative sources of funding.

About the role of Exeter Hospital and its operating affiliates

For the 2008 Community Needs Assessment, Exeter Hospital, and its operating affiliates: Core Physicians, Exeter Healthcare and Rockingham VNA, are serving as a sponsor and partner. Thanks to a gift of \$17,000, the 2008 needs assessment was able to include the UNH Survey Center phone survey. Exeter Hospital and its operating affiliates conduct a community needs assessment every 5 years. Partnering with UWGS for the 2008 Assessment will enable Exeter to gain insight about community needs from a broader perspective, and allow for greater benefits resulting from this collaborative effort to reach the community. Exeter will share data and information gathered from the 2008 Assessment with its other collaborators Lamprey Health Care, SeaCare Health Services, Seacoast Mental Health and Families First Health and Support Center.