

# PENQUIS DISTRICT: Public Health Preparedness

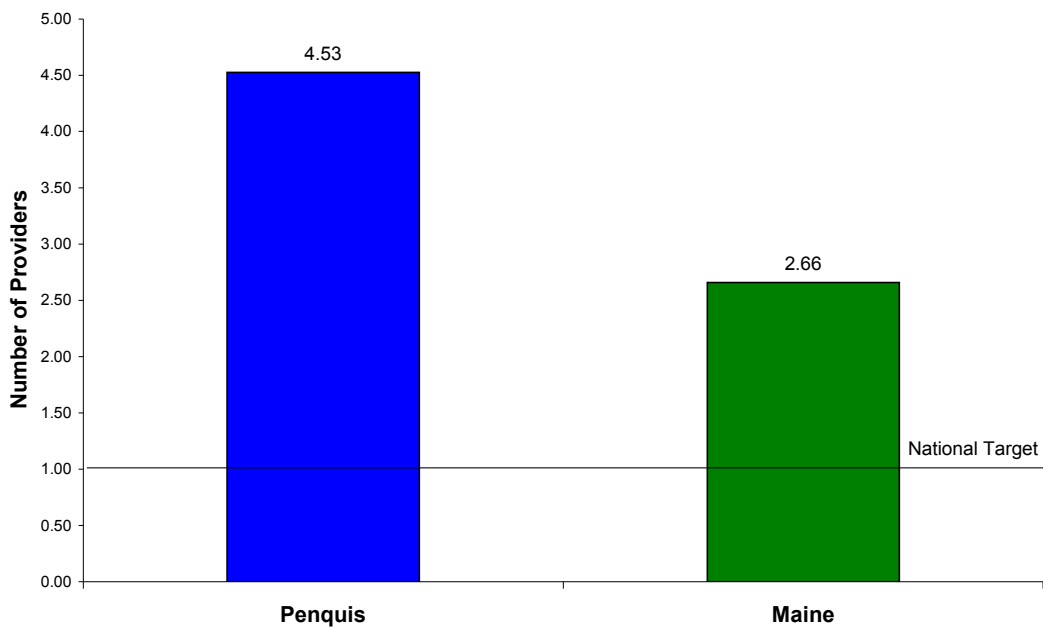
## Sentinel Provider Influenza Surveillance Program

The Maine CDC and a group of primary health care providers statewide participate in the federal CDC’s Sentinel Provider Influenza Surveillance Program. Influenza viruses are constantly evolving and cause substantial illness and deaths every winter. Sentinel Providers based in health clinics, private practices or hospitals across Maine help monitor the local impact of influenza. These data are reported and, combined with other types of flu data, helps guide influenza prevention and control activities, vaccine strain selection, patient care, and detection of new illness-causing organisms, such as the A:H5N1 avian flu strain.

Sentinel Providers report the total number of patient visits each week and number of patient visits for influenza-like illness by age group (0-4 years, 5-24 years, 25-64 years ≥65 years). These data are transmitted once a week to a central data repository at the federal CDC. In addition, Sentinel Providers can submit specimens from a subset of patients to the State Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory for virus isolation free of charge. Sentinel Providers receive feedback on the data submitted, summaries of regional and national influenza data, and a free subscription to the federal CDC’s *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* and *Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal*. Sentinel providers are a critical component of Maine’s Influenza Surveillance program, increasing our ability to protect the public’s health.

The federal CDC has a target of 1 Sentinel Provider for every 250,000 population. In addition, Maine has a target of 1 Sentinel Provider per county and 1 for each Metropolitan Standard Statistical Area (MSMA).

Number of Sentinel Influenza Provider, per 250,000 Population



Source: Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program