

Maine-Health Care Coalition: Downeast Chapter

Draft Vision: Downeast partnerships that illuminate the path to resilience

Draft Mission: Prepares health care delivery systems to respond to emergencies and disasters.

MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 13, 2026

Time: 1:00 PM - 2:30PM

Location: Zoom

Attendance

Clement Deveau AMHC	Luke T. Putnam Calais Community Hospital	Stacy R. Knapp Maine DEP
Christine Day Washington county EMA	James Hoke Birch Bay Retirement Village	Michelle Tuttle Regional Medical Center at Lubec
Deborah Block MDI Hospital	Marie Lipscomb American Red Cross	Rod Tirrell Eastport Health Care Inc.
Robert Groesbeak Brooklin Fire Department	Marc O'Neill Maine Veterans Home	Maria Donahue Healthy Acadia
Michael Farrell St. Croix Regional Family Health Center	Elizabeth Churchill Pleasant Point Health Center	Danielle Day MDI Hospital
Andrew Finch Maine CDC- PHEP	Kawther Mohamed Maine CDC	Alfred May Maine CDC

Leadership

Chapter Chair
Danielle Day
MDI Hospital

Chapter Vice Chair
Alfred May
Maine CDC

Chapter Representative
Danielle Day
MDI Hospital



Your active participation is crucial for the success of the meeting. Thank you for your commitment.



Agenda

- Welcome and attendance.
- Review of previous meeting minutes
- ME-HCC Downeast Chapter HVA Workplan Progress.
- Air Quality Overview
- 2025 National Health Care Coalition Conference

Minutes of Meeting

Opening and Business Items

- Danielle Day welcomed all members to Maine-HCC Downeast Chapter.
- Attendees were requested to put their names in the chat for attendance purposes, meeting was recorded for note taking purposes.
- A review of the previous meeting minutes was done and motion to accept them was called, made by Michelle Tuttle and seconded by Rod Tirrell, none opposed.
- The meeting agenda was presented and reviewed.

District Chapter Workplan Progress, Kawther Mohamed and Al May:

- An overview presentation of the workplan was given and the progress made with regards to the first priority- Wildfires.
- During the past year the district chapter hosted a subject matter expert from the Maine Forest Service and was followed with an in-person wildfire tabletop exercise using a simulator last fall.
- A review of the action steps for the second priority- Air Quality was given and the timeline expectation for the activities related to the action steps.
- Al provided an overview of the upcoming events and trainings scheduled in 2026: [Maine Healthcare Cybersecurity Series](#) in February 11 and March 4, 2026 (Bangor).

Ambient Air Quality and Monitoring in Maine, Stacy R. Knapp:

- Stacy is the director of the Division of Air Quality Assessment in the Bureau of Air Quality of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.
- The DEP is divided into different Bureaus: Air, Land and Water.
- More details about Air Monitoring can be found in the Annual Air Monitoring Plan 2026 and the Five-Year Assessment of Maine's Ambient Air Monitoring Reports.
- There are three types of air quality data: Air Quality Index (AQI), National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and Ambient Air Guidelines (AAGs).
- AQI is used to forecast air quality where good and moderate are not so concerning, when it tips into the Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (USGs) people start to exhibit symptoms, where as we rarely see unhealthy in Maine (was seen once only in 2025).
- In Maine, focus is on ozone and particulate matter (PM) as other pollutants are rarely seen.
- Smoke from wildfires are mainly linked to PM pollution, but recently in 2023 it has been linked to Ozone as well.
- The Air Quality forecasters have three staff meteorologists that update the AQI daily and takes wind patterns into consideration.

Minutes of Meeting

Air Quality...continued....

- The Max Daily Maine AQI calendar for 2025 was presented and forecasts for which ever pollutant is higher whether Ozone or PM.
 - During the winter time, home heating and sanding/salting roads are a source of pollution, we do see vehicle pollution but not as much or expected.
 - NAAQS are EPA regulatory values to determine exceedance or attainment. If values reach non-attainment, local/state jurisdictions need to develop plans and changes to control the pollutants. NAAQS is linked to the AQI and tips over to USG when air quality exceeds the limits triggering EPA. . Criteria pollutants include carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide.
 - AAGs is a non-federal and non-regulatory standards that measure chronic, long-term exposure assuming an individual is exposed for 24 hours, 365 days for 70 years (life-time exposure). The are conservative guidelines for hazardous air pollutants, that presents values that help determine if a concentration warrants further investigation. It allows for a risk management discussion on how to reduce exposure in a meaningful way.
 - Maine is working on a study of petroleum tanks and monitoring them for a risk assessment. The DEP and Maine CDC work together to determine exposure and possible health risks.
 - Other monitoring: atmospheric deposition for mercury and acid rain; aeroallergens; monitoring cruise ship harbor emissions in Bar Harbor and Portland as air pollutants can cause haze that impacts the visual view of a landscape.
 - Why do DEP monitor? Monitoring is performed to meet NAAQS standards and backing air quality permits for industrial sites.
 - What do DEP monitor?
1. Ozone: there is good and bad ozone, the good ozone is found up in the air while the bad ozone is closer to the ground. In Maine most ozone is transported long distances by wind from other areas along the cost- across the Gulf of Maine and hits costal areas like Acadia National Park where highest levels of ozone have been found at 2 am suggesting its source in non-local emission. Ozone effects those with chronic lung conditions such as asthma, emphysema and chronic bronchitis, and healthy individuals by causing scratchy throat and other symptoms. Ozone also affects the ecosystem making vegetations less robust and slow growing. Ozone is monitored in 13 sites managed by DEP and 2 tribal sites. 3/13 sites are year-round monitoring sites in addition to the tribal sites. Ozone season monitoring is April 1st to September 30th, however monitors are kept until October due to changing weather and higher temperatures. The Maine trend data shows ozone levels going down over time as it is affected by temperature and wind transport, however Maine has exceeded ozone concentration maximum of 70ppb, five times reaching 93ppb in 2025. During times of poor air quality, meteorologists notify national parks of the AQI and in turn put out warning labels for parks visitors at the entrance.
 2. Aeroallergens: a new monitoring in collaboration with Maine CDC that act as a means of forewarning people with respiratory illness of possible triggers for asthma and other respiratory diseases. There are two types of monitoring equipment one is AI mediated (Pollen Sense) and the other is manual (Rotorod) with 5 monitors across the state assessing pollens, dust and mold. Two of these monitors are year-round. It offers a chance for individuals with allergies to calibrate themselves and the data will be available on Maine Tracking Network site in Spring 2026.

Meeting Minutes

3. Particular Matter (PM): There are two types of PM (10 μ m and 2.5 μ m) and the difference between them is their size and the part of the lung or airway they impact. The sources of PM are dust and chemicals from licensed facilities, construction sites, unpaved roads, fields, smoke, stacks or fires. Other sources are from the atmosphere as a result of complex chemical reaction from sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emitted from power plant, industries and automobiles. In the winter PM are emitted from home heating, road sanding and nocturnal inversion trapping pollution near the ground. Summer PM pollution is mainly from wildfire smoke, while year-round PM pollution is from engine exhaust. There are 10 continuous PM10 monitoring sites while 5 Federal Reference Method, 10 continuous, 2 continuous tribal monitors for PM2.5. Maine had several moderate and USG days specially in the summer that was linked to the fires, however these days were well below than the NAAQS but higher frequencies on individual days.
- Wildfires smoke affect air quality and not just PM but a lot of other pollutants. As we have been having warmer and drier weather, there is an increase risk of wildfires in number and area. And as plume aged and moves downwind: ozone increases.
 - 2023 wildfires smoke from Canada: late May fires in Nova Scotia impacted Maine and other parts of New England causing high levels of PM2.5 concentrations detected in Northern Maine.
 - Overall Maine has the best air quality in the country with Bangor being one of the cities listed/rated 'A' for ozone and short term particle pollution and lowest year-found particle levels.

2025 National Health Care Coalition Conference,

Danielle Day:

- Danielle provided some great examples of activities performed by other health care coalitions who are set up differently: state, NGOs, non-profit or for-profit organizations. The model a coalition are set have impact on the activities that can be performed and depend on the funding present.
- AI-pocalypse Preparedness- Navigating Emergencies with Tech: using AI Chatbot for organizing and developing TTX scenarios.
- Geospatial Insights: Hazard vulnerability and community based asset mapping. Visualizing exposure risks, relationship to hazards, access to resources and many more. Could be useful for Community Health Needs Assessment for our Downeast.

Meeting Minutes

...continued...

- Empowering Leaders in Crisis: Novel training strategies for executive success.
- Meeting of Equals: Emergency management experts debriefing executives, navigators to guide executives to make decisions based on risks, pitfalls, etc.
- Crisis Management: describing healthcare emergency managers as technicians vs navigators-- make sure decision makers are educated to make good decisions. Consider Scenario-based Leadership: think of leadership as the pilot and the EM manager as the navigator (big picture and outside the box).
- Building and Sustaining a Comprehensive Coalition Initiatives: every coalition is run differently some state, NGOs, profit or non-profit organization. The model a coalition is set as impacts the work you can or can not do and is dependent on funding. Use of a phased approach around an identified infrastructure gap: planning & training-- exercises-- implement recommendation-- increase branding & disseminate information.
- Return on Investment of Preparedness: consider disruption to justifiable costs-- impacts on patient safety & health outcomes-- impacts on cost and quality.

Information:

- Air Quality Index: <https://www.airnow.gov/aqi/aqi-basics/>
- Air Quality Forecast: <https://apps.web.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/dep/air/aqforecast/index.pl>
- Maine Tracking Network: <https://data.mainepublichealth.gov/tracking/home>
- AirNow Fire and Smoke Map: <https://fire.airnow.gov/>
- State of the Air 2025 Report: <https://www.lung.org/research/sota>
- Maine DEP: www.maine.gov/dep
- DEP, Bureau of Air Quality, Division of Air Quality Assessment Director: Stacy R. Knapp
stacy.r.knapp@maine.gov

Outcomes

- Next meeting is on Tuesday, April 14, 2026 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, location will be confirmed later.
- A table top exercise on air quality will be organized for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:37 pm.