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TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay)

Penquis Public Health Council Meeting

Wednesday 8/5/2026

9am – 10:30am

[Zoom](#)

MINUTES

Attendance:

Sue Mackey Andrews, HHH/Maine Highlands; **Alsina Brenenstuhl**, Dover-Foxcroft; **Brianna Bryant**, Substance Use Prevention, Bangor Public Health; **Hanna Bouchard**, Community Health Coordinator, Northern Light Mayo and Seabasticook Valley Hospitals; **Becca Boulos**, Maine Public Health Association; **Jamie Comstock**, Health Promotion Manager, Bangor Public Health and Community Services; **Robin Carr** (she/her), Bangor Public Health – Substance Use Prevention; **Matt Dexter**, Executive Director, Chris B. Fund; **Jane Danforth**, Director of Grants and Community Wellness, Millinocket Regional Hospital; **Matt Donahue**, CEO, Heart of Maine United Way; **Leona Downing**, MSN, RN, Health Director, Penobscot Nation Health Department; **Jaemye Duggan**, Helping Hands; **Jessica Fogg**, DL, Maine CDC; **Cynthia Grass**, Public Health Nursing Supervisor, Maine CDC; **John Hudak**, Director, Office of Cannabis Policy; **James Jarvis**, Doctor, Northern Light; **Heidi LeBlanc**, Chief Operating Officer, Penquis; **Maria**, CourageLives; **Rachel Plaisted**, Librarian, MLS; **Alexis Soucy**, Director of Media & Stakeholder Relations, Office of Cannabis Policy.

9:00am – Welcome Jessica Fogg, District Liaison, Maine CDC

9:05am – Election of Steering Committee Members

Steering Committee elections were conducted by poll vote during the meeting. The following members were re-elected to the Steering Committee:

- **Jane Danforth**, Director of Grants and Community Wellness / Project Director, Thrive Penobscot, Millinocket Regional Hospital
- **Heidi LeBlanc**, Chief Operating Officer, Penquis
- **Matt Dexter**, Executive Director, Christine B. Foundation
- **Matt Donahue**, President & CEO, United Way (SCC Representative)

The following member was elected to the Steering Committee (new):

- **Hanna Bouchard**, Community Health Coordinator, Northern Light Seabasticook Valley and Mayo Hospitals

The Steering Committee also elected its officers by poll vote. The following officers were re-elected:

- **Chair:** Jennifer Laferte-Carlson, Community Health Manager, Northern Light Acadia Hospital
- **Vice Chair:** Jamie Comstock, Health Promotion Manager, Bangor Public Health and Community Services

9:10 a.m. – Office of Cannabis Policy

Presenters: John Hudak, Director, Office of Cannabis Policy (OCP); Alexis Soucy, Director of Media and Stakeholder Relations, OCP

John Hudak

- Provided an overview of the Office of Cannabis Policy and its role in regulating Maine's Adult Use and Medical Use cannabis programs.
- Reviewed key differences between the Adult Use and Medical Use programs.
- Noted that additional informational documents will be shared with members following the meeting.
- Explained that regulatory oversight differs between the two programs, and that some medical cannabis products are subject to fewer regulatory requirements than adult-use products.

Alexis Soucy

- Presented OCP's statewide public education campaigns:
 - **Unclouded**
 - **Let's Talk Cannabis**
 - **Let's Talk Cannabis Maine Parents**
- Shared information on the free locking cannabis storage bag campaign.
 - Goal is to distribute approximately 12,000 storage bags through public health partners this year.
 - Information on participating retailers will be provided.
- Noted that OCP is interested in partnering with local organizations on education and prevention efforts.

Discussion

- Maine currently has 117 individuals under age 18 with medical cannabis certifications.
- State law limits minors to non-inhalable cannabis products.
- OCP does not currently provide formal guidance for school administrators or professional licensure boards.
- OCP can address concerns regarding unauthorized use of commercial branding and trademarks on cannabis products.

Resources

- Office of Cannabis Policy: <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/ocp/>
- Let's Talk Cannabis Maine: <https://www.letstalkcannabismaine.com/>
- Unclouded Maine: <https://www.uncloudedmaine.com/>
- Note: See attachments with provided handouts

9:40 a.m. – Cannabis Policy and Public Health

Presenter: Rebecca (Becca) Boulos, Executive Director, Maine Public Health Association

Presentation Highlights

- Discussed cannabis policy through a public health lens.
- Noted that THC potency has increased significantly over time.
- Shared Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) data indicating approximately one in five adolescents report cannabis use.
- Reviewed impacts of youth cannabis use, including:
 - Effects on executive functioning.
 - Increased anxiety and depression.
 - Elevated risk of serious mental health conditions among susceptible individuals.
- Discussed accidental ingestion of edible cannabis products by children and associated health risks.

Policy and Prevention

- Expressed support for requiring testing in Maine's medical cannabis program.
- Discussed concerns about:
 - High-potency products.
 - Lack of serving size standards.
 - Packaging and products resembling common foods.
 - Overconsumption of edible products.
- Highlighted concerns that minors may enter medical cannabis dispensaries when accompanied by an adult.
- Reviewed MPHA efforts to:

- Promote safe storage education.
- Work with healthcare providers.
- Educate the public through media campaigns.
- Advocate for evidence-based cannabis policy.
- Discussed environmental health considerations related to cannabis cultivation, including indoor air quality and mold.
- Encouraged members to share community and school experiences with legislators to help inform policy discussions.
- Members discussed connecting Becca Boulos, Alexis Soucy, and John Hudak with Dr. James Jarvis of Northern Light Health for future collaboration.

Contact

- Rebecca Boulos: Rebecca.Boulos@mainepublichealth.org

10:20 a.m. – Member Updates

Robin Carr – Bangor Public Health (Bangor SUPs)

- Shared information about the upcoming **Alcohol Reset Challenge** workplace wellness campaign.
- Program encourages participants to reduce or eliminate alcohol for one month.
- Supported by the Maine Comprehensive Cancer Program.
- Employers receive a ready-to-use toolkit and participant incentives.
- Contact: robin.carr@bangormaine.gov

Matt Donahue – Heart of Maine United Way

- Announced updated Maine ALICE data is now available.
- Shared information about:
 - Storytelling workshops
 - Board Leadership Development Program applications.
- Resources:
 - ALICE in Maine: <https://www.unitedforalice.org/introducing-ALICE/maine>
 - Board Leadership Development Program: <https://homeunitedway.org/board-leadership-development/>

10:30 a.m. – Adjournment

- Members were encouraged to email Rachel or Jessica with ideas for future meeting topics / discussions.
- **Next meeting:** November 4, 2026, 9:00–11:00 a.m. Eastern Time.
- Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/87591568912>

Meeting ID: 875 9156 8912