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**August 2025 Newsletter - Downeast Public Health Council**

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## Downeast Public Health Council August 2025 Newsletter



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### National Health Center Week



Every August, the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) sponsors National Health Center Week (NHCW) to celebrate and increase awareness of America's 1,400 Community Health Centers (CHCs).

**Community Health centers** strive to provide supportive services like education, transitional, and transportation, together with other services that help individuals stay well, such as pharmacy, dental, and behavioral health care. Regardless of financial situation or health insurance status, health centers offer complete primary care to everybody who attends. They are also the preferred healthcare providers in their community, meeting the medical needs of over 31 million patients in more than 14,000 locations across the United States.

**Maine's Community Health Centers** are dependable centers for all-inclusive, easily accessible care that addresses community needs and enhances health outcomes for its communities. The network of Community Health Centers in Maine extends east to Lubec, west to Rangeley, and as far north as Fort Kent and as far south as North Berwick. Each year, more than 200,000 patients (one in six Maine residents) are served by these service locations.

#### Next Downeast Public Council Meeting

**Friday, September 19, 2025**

**10:00 - 12:00 PM**

**TBD**

For Council information, please contact [Al May](#)



[Downeast Public Health Council Facebook Page](#)

[Maine CDC Downeast District Website](#)

To become a member of the Downeast Public Health Council please fill out our [Membership Application](#).

#### Downeast Public Health 2025 Priority Committees

**Prevention Committee:**  
Angela Fochesato, Chair

**Older Adult Health and Safety Committee:** Dante Zanonii, Chair

**Emergency Operations and Response Committee:**  
Andrew Sankey, Chair

**Mental Health Primary Care Education Committee:** Tracy Parker, Chair

#### 2024 Ongoing Topics

Health Literacy

Palliative Care and Hospice

Maternal and Child Health

#### Final 2025 CHNA Reports:

[State of Maine](#)

[Hancock County](#)

- Community health centers create economic possibilities in the communities they serve by giving locals jobs and training, lowering total health care costs, and improving the health of their patients and communities.
- There are \$24 billion in annual savings for the health care system when a local approach to healthcare is combined with a focus on comprehensive preventive care.
- Patients and health care consumers make for at least 51% of Community Health Center governing boards. Community health centers are frequently the biggest local employer.

**Federally Qualified Health Centers in Downeast Maine:**

- Washington County
  - East Grand Health Center, Danforth
  - St Croix Regional Family Health Center, Princeton
  - Eastport Health Care, Eastport and Machias
  - Regional Medical Center Heathway, Lubec and East Machias
  - Harrington Family Health Center, Harrington
- Hancock County
  - Bucksport Regional Health Center, Bucksport and Ellsworth
- Both Counties
  - Maine Mobile Health Center

**More Information:**

Find a health center in Maine [here](#).

Visit [211maine.org](#).

[August 3 - 9, 2025 "Community Health Center Week" in Maine](#)

## National Immunization Awareness Month



National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) is observed in August each year to raise public awareness of the importance of vaccination, highlight the benefits of vaccination for people of all ages, and encourage people to talk to a trusted healthcare provider about keeping up-to-date on their vaccinations. In addition, it is a chance to highlight the efforts of healthcare providers and public health groups to encourage prompt vaccination and protect individuals of all ages from diseases that can be prevented through vaccination.

NIAM acts as a crucial reminder to schedule follow-up appointments and vaccinations, particularly the significance of the measles vaccine in light of the outbreak in a number of U.S. jurisdictions.

[Washington County](#)

**Events/ Trainings**

August 8

[Pleasant Point Health Fair](#)

August 19 & 20

[HIV/Hep C rapid testing training](#)

August 26 & 27

[MGT-348 Medical Preparedness & Response for Bombing Incidents](#)

August 27

[Building Policy, Supporting Families: Advancing Breastfeeding Initiatives Together Webinar](#)

August 29

[Combating HIV/Hep-C/STI Stigma Training](#)

October 9 & 16

[ICS 100- Introduction to the Incident Command System](#)

November 6 & 13

[ICS 200- Incident Command System for Initial Response](#)

[PHEP training and exercise calendar](#)

**News**

[Maine CDC Shares Tips to Prevent Getting Rabies from Bats](#)

[Celebrating 60 Years of Medicaid: MaineCare's Impact on Maine](#)

[Maine CDC Identifies First West Nile and Powassan Virus Cases of the Season](#)

[Federal Budget Reconciliation Law Now in Effect: Impacts on MaineCare, SNAP & CoverME.gov](#)

**HANs**

[Bicillin L-A Recall and Recommendations for Syphilis Treatment](#)

[Local Powassan Virus and West Nile Virus Activity](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations](#)

[Maine DEP Issues Extended Air Quality Alert for Northern Maine Until July 16](#)

[HIV and Other Infectious Disease Testing in Pregnant Persons](#)

**World Lung Cancer Day**  
August 1

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related

## What healthcare providers can do?

Research has consistently shown that healthcare providers are the most trusted source of vaccine information for parents and patients.

- Participate in educational opportunities with CDC's [Immunization Education and Training](#).
- Create a welcoming supportive space in your practice where patients and parents can ask [vaccine questions and voice concerns](#).
- Employ [proven strategies](#) to encourage parents and patients to maintain current vaccinations.
- Post easy to read [immunization schedules](#) for parents and patients and display them [on your website](#).
- Utilize resources like [PneumoRecs VaxAdvisor Mobile App](#) to assist you in making vaccine recommendations.
- Provide clear and accurate information about the most recent vaccine recommendations, including [COVID-19 vaccines](#) and [RSV vaccines](#).

## What parents and caregivers can do?

- Speak to your doctor, nurse or other healthcare providers to make sure you and your family are protected against deadly infections by catching up on routine vaccinations.
- Engage with your child's physician or nurse as they return to school this fall to ensure that they catch up on any missed well-child visits and recommended vaccines ([birth - 6 yr](#) and [7 yr - 18 yr](#)).
- Always remember to take care of yourself too! Make sure to receive any vaccines you need to stay healthy. Visit CDC's [recommended vaccinations for adults](#) to see which vaccines might be right for you.

### Resources:

[U.S. CDC Educational Resources](#)

[Immunization Resources for Healthcare Providers in Maine](#)

[Recommended vaccinations by age](#)

[Measles cases and outbreak](#)

[Get Your Immunizations Records – Docket](#)

[Vaccine finder](#)

[Get Vaccinated in Maine](#)

## Breastfeeding Awareness



deaths worldwide (1 in 5 deaths) where 85% of the cases are caused by smoking.

Studies show that lung cancer screening reduces deaths in heavy smokers. Screening can be done using low-dose CT to detect cancer at an early stage where treatment can improve survival rates.

Data shows that lung cancer screening is lower in Washington county than the state average. Additionally, the rate of new cancer cases, deaths and smoking are all higher in Washington county compared to Hancock and the state rates.

[Beth C. Wright Cancer Resource Center](#)

[MaineHealth Lung Cancer Care](#)



### Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

Children's eyes can change rapidly as they grow. As part of their routine checkups, a pediatrician typically does children's vision screenings and if any indications of visual issues are discovered, they may recommend that the child see an ophthalmologist for a comprehensive eye examination.

Vision issues may impact a child's performance in school. Consequently, eye exams and therapy can enhance learning, testing, behavior, self-confidence, and class involvement.

### Tips to protect children's vision:

- **Eating healthy diet** rich in fruits and vegetables containing necessary vitamins and minerals.
- **Limiting screen time** each day and taking frequent breaks to protect vision.
- **Getting enough sleep** could make it easier for children's eyes to recover from everyday use and exposure from environmental irritants.
- **Spending time outdoors** allows children to look at distant objects, helps them remain physically

Each year in August, **National Breastfeeding Month** is celebrated in conjunction with **World Breastfeeding Week** and **Black Breastfeeding Week** to promote and support breastfeeding as the best source of nutrition for a baby. It's also a time to recognize breastfeeding as a powerful foundation for lifelong health, development, and equity.

### Data:

- 1 in 4 infants are exclusively breastfed as recommended by the time they are 6 months old.
- Low rates of breastfeeding add more than \$3 billion a year to U.S. medical costs for the mother and child.
- Three-quarters (75%) of Black infants are ever breastfed, which is below the national average of 84%.
- Breast feeding initiation is lowest among infants of Black mothers (73.6%) in 26 states including DC.
- The percentage of babies who start out breastfeeding increased from 73% in 2004 to 84% in 2021.
- The percentage of births in hospitals with recommended maternity care practices that support breastfeeding increased from 3.8% in 2010 to 28.9% in 2021.

### Benefits of breastfeeding:

- Infants who are breastfed have lower risk for asthma, severe lower respiratory disease, obesity, type 1 diabetes, acute otitis media (ear infections), sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), gastrointestinal infections and necrotizing enterocolitis.
- Mothers who breastfeed can have a lower risk for high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, ovarian cancer and breast cancer.

### What organizations can do?

- Collaborate with hospitals to find possibilities and implement initiatives that will enhance breastfeeding-friendly maternity care practices.
- Provide employers with the tools and technical support they need to abide by state and federal laws pertaining to lactation or breastfeeding support in the workplace.
- Collaborate with subject matter experts to plan and conduct breastfeeding teaching and support programs.
- Support breastfeeding during childcare hours.
- Provide comfortable settings where mothers can express milk or breastfeed on-site.
- Provide culturally appropriate breastfeeding services to populations most at risk of not breastfeeding.
- Create public spaces that actively promote, protect, and facilitate breastfeeding.
- Provide family-centered lactation care that attends to a variety of needs, including the availability of healthy and affordable food and other elements of their infant's feeding experience.
- Create a care coordination system that begins during pregnancy and continues throughout the weaning stages.

### Resources:

[Breastfeeding Guidelines](#)

[Breastfeeding FAQs](#)

- active and get essential Vitamin D.
- **Using protective eyewear and sunglasses** can prevent about 90% of eye injuries from sports and other activities and sunlight (UV rays).
- **Getting regular eye exams** that allows eye doctors to follow children's vision through development and if any changes occur, they can treat and manage it quickly.

### Resources:

[Protecting your child's vision](#)

[NEI for Kids](#)



### Safe + Sound Week

August 11-17

Every August, Safe + Sound Week is celebrated to honor the accomplishments of workplace health and safety initiatives while providing knowledge and suggestions on how to keep America's workers safe.

The [OSH Act](#) has reduced worker fatalities and reported injuries in the United States by **over 60 percent** in the last forty years (*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*). Nevertheless, over 5,000 workers are killed on the job (14 per day) and more than 3.6 million people experience a serious illness or injury related to their jobs yearly.

Serious illnesses or injuries at work can have a negative impact on organizations in a number of ways, in addition to harming employees and their families.

Benefits of developing a Safety and Health Program:

- **Prevent** workplace injuries and illnesses.
- **Improve** compliance with laws and regulations.
- **Reduce** costs, including significant reductions in workers' compensation premiums.
- **Engage** workers.
- **Enhance** social responsibility goals.

[Breastfeeding Support Quizzes](#)

[CradleME](#)

[Maine WIC Nutrition](#)

## Invitation to Participate

A Master's student is conducting a study on the Utilization of Tele-dentistry in Downeast Maine. If you are a dental professional practicing in Hancock or Washington counties on adults and are interested in participating in this research, please contact: [hikmoha3@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:hikmoha3@liverpool.ac.uk).

Note: **Participation is voluntary.**

\*The current or previous use of tele-dentistry is not a requirement.



Are you a dental professional practicing in Hancock or Washington county?

**A Master's student is conducting a study on Tele-dentistry in Downeast Maine.**

If you are interested and would like to participate contact: [hikmoha3@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:hikmoha3@liverpool.ac.uk)  
The researcher will contact you with further information.

**PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY**

- **Increase** productivity and enhance overall business operations.

All organizations looking for an opportunity to recognize their commitment to safety and health can sign up [here](#) to participate.

[Plan and promote](#) events for your workplace or community.



Preparing and Responding to Measles:  
[Checklist for Early Care and Education Centers](#)

"What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness."

*John Steinbeck, American Writer (1902-1968)*

*Sources: USDA, WHO, U.S. CDC, Maine CDC, OSHA, NIH, ODPHP, Maine DOE, Vaccines.gov, NACHC, MPCA, American Cancer Society.*



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