



**Executive
Committee
2026**

**Angela Fochesato,
Chair**
Executive Director,
*Beth C. Wright Cancer
Center*

Helen Burlock
Maine Hospice Council
President

**Maria Donahue, SCC
Rep**
Community Health
Director
*Healthy Acadia
(Hancock)*

Michael Farrell,
CEO
*St. Croix Family
Regional Health Center*

Andrew Sankey
Director
*Hancock County
Emergency
Management Agency*

**Kawther
Mohammed**
Public Health Educator
Maine CDC

Alfred May
District Liaison
Maine CDC

**Downeast Public Health Council
Friday, May 15, 2026: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Minutes**

Location	Name	Organization
Eagle Hill Institute	Angela Fochesato	Beth C. Wright Cancer Resource Center
	Dante Zanoni	Community Caring Collaborative
	Rod Tirrell	Eastport Health Care
	Andrew Sankey	Hancock County EMA
	Al May	Maine CDC
	Kawther Mohamed	Maine CDC
	Maura Lockwood	Maine CDC
	Helen Burlock	Maine Hospice Council
	Danielle Day	Mount Desert Island Hospital
	Tamara Wilson	Next Step Domestic Violence Project
	Rebecca McCabe	Bureau of Motor Vehicles-Medical Unit
	James Markiewicz	Maine CDC
	Kelly Barnes	Maine DHHS
	Julie Daigle	Healthy Acadia
	Debbie	Beth C. Wright Cancer Resource Center
	Becca Boulos	MPHA



Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Council Business Minutes of March 20, 2026 Meeting
- Public Health Legislative Bills
- Annual Epidemiology Report
- Tobacco Treatment Discussion
- DEPHC 2025-2030 Infrastructure Plan
 - Committee 2025-2026 Strategies: Chronic Disease Prevention; Mental Health; Older Adult Health and Safety; Emergency Operations and Preparedness.
- Action Steps
- Adjourn

Minutes of Meeting

- **Welcome and Introduction**
 - Angela Fochesato welcomed all to the meeting.
 - Attendees were asked to write their names in the attendance sheet, and the agenda was distributed to the attendees.
 - Mission of the Council: Promote the health of all our communities by providing public health information, coordination, collaboration, and advocacy.
 - Vision of the Council: Downeast Maine Communities are among the healthiest in the state
 - 2026 Meeting Dates and Time: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.
 - January 16; March 20; May 15; **July 17**; September 18; and November 20.
- **Council Business**
 - A motion to accept the May 20 Meeting minutes was called- Andrew Sankey made a motion and seconded by Maura Lockwood: none objected.
- **Public Health Legislative Bills: Becca Boulos, MPHA**

The Maine Public Health Association is a non-profit, advocacy, training and networking coalition with over 1000 members. The member benefits include participating in sections, conference discounts,



mentoring program and many more. The MPHA also hosts Healthy Maine Talks Podcast and other events. One of the DEPHC members- CCC's The Connection Initiative has recently been recognized and awarded a Public Health Award.

MPHA's approach to policies is partially through lobbying but mainly advocacy in statewide working groups such as Maine Council on Aging, Maine Obesity Advisory Council, Healthy State Collaborative and others. At the state level, MPHA has 6 policy priorities- public health funding, local public health efforts, Wabanaki self-determination, tobacco burden & harm reduction, medical cannabis testing and safer housing.

With regards to the Legislative session- MPHA weighted on more than 100 bills with key wins including- tobacco tax, local boards of health, safer housing and others. Other bills in progress are safer medical cannabis, recognition of Wabanaki self-determination and fund for a healthy Maine. They also played defense on several bills such as the clean indoor air, privacy bill, voting laws, gun safety and equal rights. There are also 4 other federal policy priorities that MPHA have- public health funding, workforce, public health authority and healthcare access. This is being approached by forming the Healthy States Collaborative to ensure that messaging is aligned and consistent and through the APHA Action Board.

Continued focus areas:

- FY27 appropriations
 - Medical Cannabis Rescheduling
 - Vaccines
- **Annual Epidemiology Report: Maura Lockwood, Maine CDC**

Maura started by providing a brief overview of the Division of Disease Surveillance, how the Infectious Disease Epidemiology program fits within the division and how they are organized. There are 7 field epidemiologists covering the 8 districts. A field epidemiologist day to day responsibilities include- outbreak and individual investigations, consultations and lab coordination. A new Infectious Disease dashboard is up and running on the Maine CDC website and includes current and aggregate data on infectious diseases.

The presentation focused on four diseases:

 - Measles- to date there has been 1,814 cases in the U.S. compared to 2025 with 2,288 for the full year. There have been 5 measles



cases in Maine so far with one hospitalization but no deaths.

Measles is a reportable disease and is to be reported immediately- this report triggers a response from the Maine CDC epidemiologist.

- Tuberculosis- a rise in TB cases across the state has been noted. It has been projected that Maine will have 3 cases, however through March 2026- 5 cases have been reported.
- Mosquitos- there are 45 mosquito species in Maine, however only 3 arboviruses are endemic; Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus, Jamestown Canyon Virus and West Nile Virus.
- Lyme Disease (Tick Talk)- there are 14 tick species in Maine, however only 4-5 types of ticks bite and 3 types of ticks are endemic in Maine.

For each of the diseases, an overview of the transmission mechanism, signs and symptoms and prevention strategies was given.

- **Tobacco Treatment Discussion**

Tobacco use and lung cancer in Maine and Downeast data were presented:

- Washington county has the highest rates for tobacco related cancers, smoking during pregnancy, lung cancer cases, cigarette smoking among adults and environmental tobacco smoke exposure compared to Hancock and Maine.

The approach to tobacco usage among adults and specifically pregnant women was discussed and how to improve health outcomes. There is a new program that has been introduced in Maine; Baby and me Tobacco Free that provides support through telehealth and they were open to expand by building support groups or 1:1 with the possibility of FQHCs hosting this initiative. Discussions included:

- How do hospitals use resources for patients within their facilities to support their efforts in smoking cessation?
- How to best align with the Healthy People 2030 goals and objectives?



- Are we able to track patients through providers on smoking habits?
- If individuals smoking habits are a mechanism to cope with stressors? What are the triggers for smoking? What is the alternative?
- Promoting smoking cessation support in shelters, cancer resource centers, navigators, etc.
- Incorporating smoking cessation into doula training programs.
- Educational materials for pregnant individuals that include the benefits of smoking cessation and how does it look like short-term and long-term.
- Feedback has been collected and given about Maine QuitLink on rural needs and gaps. Suggestion to expand services by geography, addressing stressors and options for group support vs 1:1.

Attendees were asked to reflect back on the issue and approaches and report on what their organization is doing about smoking in adults and what the council should focus on in order to address this issue.

- **DEPHC 2025-2030 Infrastructure Plan: Committee Strategies**

For this section of the meeting, we had our four committees present a status update of their work, reminding everyone of their goals and objectives and their focus for the next 6 months:

- **Primary and Secondary Prevention of Chronic Diseases**

Angela Fochesato

- Goal: All people in the district will be aware of the risk that chronic disease cause and educated on the benefits of early detection through preventative screenings.
- Objective: Increase equitable access to preventive screening by equipping providers, navigators, public health staff and patients with knowledge and practice.
- Focus on:
 1. Planning for lunch and learns, focus groups and workshops
 2. Translation contract for all materials by collaborating with the state



3. Navigation coalitions: an avenue to support collaboration, resource guides and cancer resource centers.
 4. Translation to the native tongue for Native Americans.
- **Emergency Operations and Preparedness Committee** Danielle Day for Andrew Sankey
 - Goal: all healthcare entities meet CMS requirements for emergency preparedness and planning.
 - Objective: Increase % of CMS-regulated healthcare facilities in the Downeast that meet requirements by 100%.
 - Focus on:
 1. Continuing to support organizations in updating their plans- hospitals, home health, hospice, long-term care facilities, community organizations, etc.
 2. Assessing the current need for training and exercise.
 - Aligning these activities with the work being done at the HCC and the MRC.
 - **Mental Health Committee** Al May for Clem Deveau
 - Goal: all mental health services will be coordinated across all providers, transitioning to CCBHC model.
 - Objective: Increase % of healthcare facilities that have been educated and trained on the CCBHC model.
 - Focus on:
 1. Plan a forum on CCBHC services
 2. Assess current mental health initiatives of the RHTP for potential use in Downeast.
 3. Collaborate with the Office of Injury and Violence on suicide prevention.
 - **Older Adult Health and Safety Committee** Dante Zanoni & Helen Burlock
 - Goal: improve the quality of life for all older adults in Downeast Maine.



- Objective: Increase % of older adults knowing about primary care, oral health and prevention services by 50%.
- Focus on:
 1. Create a comprehensive checklist and field guide for services in Washington and Hancock counties
 2. Develop a methodology to distribute checklist/field guide- suggestions included in churches, civic organizations, providers, CHWs and others who serve older adults.

Attendees were encouraged to reach out to Al May if they want to participate and align their work with the committee's work.

- **Action Steps**

- Join one of the committees and participate in the work being done by registering your interest here:
<https://forms.office.com/g/87vXWv6xwv>
- Next meeting will be on July 17th, location: TBD
- If members or attendees have any suggestions, they can reach out to Al May at alfred.may@maine.gov, Angela Fochesato at angela@bethwrightcancercenter.org or Kawther Mohamed at kawther.mohamed@maine.gov.

Meeting adjourned at 12:06 pm

Next meeting

When: Friday, July 17, 2026: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Where: TBD