

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: July 08, 2025
Time: 1:00 PM - 2:30PM
Location: Zoom

Attendance

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Brian Frutchey <i>Down East Community Hospital</i> | Luke T. Putnam <i>Calais Community Hospital</i> | Becky Siebert <i>Parker Ridge Retirement Community</i> |
| Andrew Sankey <i>Hancock County EMA</i> | Debra Chalmers <i>Yesterday's Children</i> | Michelle Tuttle <i>Regional Medical Center at Lubec</i> |
| Nate Riethmann <i>Maine CDC PHEP</i> | Shelly Bodkin <i>Calais Community Hospital</i> | Christine Day <i>Washington county EMA</i> |
| Rod Tirrell <i>Eastport Health Care Inc.</i> | Deborah Block <i>MDI Hospital</i> | Maria Donahue <i>Healthy Acadia</i> |
| Harden Wisebram <i>Maine Mobile Health Program</i> | Missy Lawrence <i>Eastport Health Care Inc.</i> | Danielle Day <i>MDI Hospital</i> |
| Michael Farrell <i>St. Croix Regional Family Health Center</i> | R. Martin Huysman <i>Maine Forest Service</i> | Amelia L. Rukema <i>Maine Mobile Health Program</i> |
| Joanne <i>Parker Ridge Retirement Community</i> | Alfred May <i>Maine CDC</i> | Kawther Mohamed <i>Maine CDC</i> |

Leadership

Chapter Chair
Danielle Day
MDI Hospital

Chapter Vice Chair
Alfred May
Maine CDC

Chapter Representative
Danielle Day
MDI Hospital



Agenda

- Welcome, attendance and introductions.
- Review of previous meeting minutes
- ME-HCC Downeast Chapter HVA Report, Procedure and Workplan.
- Wildfires Risk and Response
- Maine HAN Functions and Capabilities

Minutes of Meeting

Introductions and Welcome

- Danielle Day welcomed all members to Maine HCC-Downeast Chapter and took a moment to acknowledge the floods in Texas.
- 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, approved by Andrew Sankey and seconded by Rod Tirrell, none opposed.
- The meeting agenda was presented and reviewed.
- A round of brief introductions of attendees was done.

HVA Report, Procedure and Workplan, Al May, Danielle Day and Andrew Sankey

- An introduction of the purpose of the process to create a workplan and setting priorities were presented.
- An overview of the District HVA Procedure was presented and which data was used to set the priorities and create a workplan.
- The HVA analysis report for the Downeast was presented to the attendees which was reviewed to set the priorities.
- A small committee was formed of the Chair, Vice Chair, the district PHE and one Chapter member. The committee looked at the HVA analysis report, the work performed by the DEPHC Emergency Preparedness committee and the importance of Wildfires and Air Quality for the Downeast District to select the priorities and create the workplan.
- A survey was sent after the workplan was created to poll approvals from members.
- The action steps are suggested to be built in within the Downeast Chapter meetings, instead of creating an event specifically for the action steps.
- The plan intends to host subject matter expert for each priority and follow that with a tabletop exercise.

Wildfires, Ranger Martin Huysman:

- Ranger Huysman gave a brief introduction of himself and the department he works for. The department staffs 48 ranges, with 5 field rangers and 1 district ranger in the Downeast District.
- The rangers function is to cover wildfires, law enforcement related to wildfires and fires investigation if human element is suspected, they work closely and cooperatively with local fire departments such Acadia National Park, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and others.
- They usually fall into command role based on the experience gained from working wildfires in Alaska and the West as Maine experience 1 to 2 significant wildfires a year, providing support with operations, logistics and medical sections.

Minutes of Meeting

Wildfires...continued....

- Most modern healthcare facilities are impacted by smoke coming from fires, however rarely catch fires from wildfire flames as they are concrete, but there is a potential for heavy embers showers can build up in areas that are flammable such as corners, roofs, gutters, etc. that consist of wood materials, plant materials, etc.
- Firewise is a resource to help prepare buildings for wildfires, primary landscaping, what is called the ignition zone.

*Questions:

Andrew S.: What are your roles and responsibilities with respect to wildfires in off-shore island areas?

Martin H.: In paper, with organized towns local fire departments are responsible for wildfires suppression until financial resources have been exhausted then the forest rangers takes charge. In the case of unorganized towns the forest service holds the primary responsibility in wildfires protection. Islands are at higher risk for wildfires as individuals burn stuff rather than properly disposing them because of costs. In case of a fire, the responsibility lies on the forest rangers, we utilize the marine patrol, local fishermen boats, construction and helicopters to move equipment and personnel to the islands. We also have evacuation capacity for healthcare facilities, in partnership with LifeFlight.

Andrew S.: What is the short haul program, where forest service meet with emergency medicine?

Martin H.: I am a short hauler, its a helicopter short haul rescue using a harness hooked to a rope below the helicopter, it is usually used for picking injured hikers. It is a unique tool to have and super versatile.

Andrew S.: Short hauler are more flexible in situations or conditions that are restrictive where LifeFlight can't operate.

Martin H.: And we work closely with LifeFlight in providing support for transportation in areas where they can't land.

Andrew S.: What can individuals, home owners and facilities do minimize the risk of fires?

Martin H.: Landscaping, keeping anything that is flammable and the concentration of embers from dumpsters with cardboards, canoes against the side of a home with leaves under them, etc. We do also provide assistance and support prepping houses and clearing things out ahead of an impending fire.

Brian F.: (in chat) Do you have any preventative burns?

Martin H.: Yes, we do conduct blueberry barrens under strict conditions and safety measures as they may expand and build up. There is an option through the state for funding and firewise grants to perform preventative burns for towns.

Maine HAN, Nate Riethmann:

- Nate is the Emergency Communications Systems Coordinator.
- The HAN is a messaging tool that can send emails, messages and initiate calls to members, that is capable of being customized to perform what is needed.
- It does not however provide geolocation alert, but the new system allows messages to be sent regionally based on an address or an organization.
- The system bombards you with messages until you reply with options on availability for a total of three contact attempts (once to each contact number/email you have listed).
- The HAN can be utilized by any organization, and they can be grouped into parent organizations and sub-groups or organizational units such as departments/facilities/branches, etc. with different rights for members: rights to send message and rights to manage users.

Meeting Minutes

*Questions:

Shelly B.: Calais Community Hospital was previously listed on the HAN, can we get CCH back into the system and add the sister hospital Downeast Hospital to the network in order to utilize it for emergency communications between hospitals and FQHCs?

Nate R.: Yes, Maine HAN is capable of doing that, it can be used to send messages to a subset within Calais hospital such as Incident Command or certain staff groups depending on the business rules.

Rod T.: How similar HAN is to Rave, can messages be sent without requiring a response from the recipient?

Nate R.: Yes.

Information:

- Watch the Wildfires and MaineHAN presentations found in the email attachments.
- Visit firewise.org a resource for preparing buildings for wildfires and preventing them from catching fires.
- Sign up for mainehan.org and choose the organization you belong to.
- Contact Nate Riethmann at nathaniel.riethmann@maine.gov for HAN related questions and set up.

Outcomes

- A template for a wildfires annex will be made available to members.
- A short poll will be sent out to all members to gather comments and suggestions on how to best encourage membership attendance and participation.
- Next meeting is on Tuesday, October 14, 2025 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, location will be confirmed later.
- A table top exercise on wildfires or air quality will be organized for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:33 pm.

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