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February 2025 Newsletter - Downeast Public Health Council

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Downeast Public Health Council
February 2025 Newsletter



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Partner Highlight:
Hancock County EMA



What is Emergency Management?

Emergency management is a key component of government public health safety services developed in the 1970s. Proactive public administrators found that all natural disasters, technology emergencies, and human-caused disasters require the same emergency response procedures in order to save lives, defend property, and protect the environment.

History of Maine Emergency
Management Agency

The Maine EMA was established in 1949 as the Maine Civil Defense and Public Safety Agency, until its name was changed to the present in 1987. The authority of emergency management in Maine comes from the Maine Civil Emergency Preparedness Act ([MRSA Title 37-B, Chapter 13](#)), that requires each of Maine's political subdivisions to appoint an EMA director.

Function of EMA

EMA coordinates emergency operations before and after disasters at all governmental levels and is in charge of planning, prevention, response, recovery, and mitigation to and from disasters. The first line of defense in emergency management is the local government. When many agencies are responding to a threat or disaster that goes beyond the scope of mutual aid or when multiple regional communities are affected by a disaster, EMA coordinates response and recovery.

Hancock County EMA

Next Downeast Public
Council Meeting

Friday, March 21, 2025
10:00 - 12:00 PM
Zoom

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



[Downeast Public Health Council
Facebook Page](#)

[Downeast Public Health Council
Website](#)

[Maine CDC Downeast District
Website](#)

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

Downeast Public Health 2024
Priority Committees

Prevention Committee: Angela
Fochesato, Chair

**Older Adult Health and Safety
Committee:** Dante Zanoni, 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

Events/ Trainings

[PHEP training and exercise
calendar.](#)

February 25-27

[L0105: Public Information Basics.](#)

For more information [contact](#).

No locale in Maine, including Hancock County is immune to natural, man-made or technological disasters. In the event of a disaster, the emergency management program ensures that all emergency response agencies and their personnel are adequately and properly equipped, trained and coordinated. When necessary, county EMA acts as liaison between local governments and the resources of state and federal agencies. Although HKEMA serve as first responders, the agency can not replace police, fire, EMS or other emergency response groups.

HKEMA strives to prevent and mitigate the negative effects of disasters in partnership with Public Safety, the private sector, and government partners, as well as citizen volunteers. They remain prepared by always utilizing comprehensive, perpetually tests and exercised plans and specialized equipment should they be called upon to act in these mission-based functions.

For more information contact **Hancock County EMA Director: [Andrew Sankey](#)**.

National Cancer Prevention Month



Around 2 million Americans were diagnosed with cancer in 2024, and more than 600 thousand died from cancer.

In Washington county, cancer death rate was 190.4 per 100,000 population which was significantly higher than the state rate at 159.9 per 100,000 population. All cancer cases rate in both Washington and Hancock counties (588.7 and 518.6/100,000 respectively) were higher compared to the state's rate at 476.0/100,000.

More than 40% of cancer cases in the U.S. and nearly 50% of cancer deaths can be attributed to preventable causes such as:

1. **Tobacco use** is the leading preventable cause of cancer cases and deaths worldwide and is linked to causing 12 types of cancer including lung cancer.
2. **Excessive body weight** is related to 7.8% of all cancer cases in the U.S. Obesity increases the risk of several types of cancers including breast, colon and uterine cancer.
3. **Alcohol consumption** is responsible for 5.8% of new cancer cases. It is the third leading preventable cause of cancer increasing the risk of at least 7 types of cancer including breast, colorectal, liver and esophagus.
4. **Environmental exposure** to certain chemicals or radiation can damage DNA and cause cancer such as prolonged exposure to UV rays from the sun causes skin cancer, radon gas is the second leading cause of lung cancer and

February 26

[Adult Protective Services - an Overview & Training for LHOs](#)

July 17

[MGT 403: Underserved Populations Preparedness Planning for Rural Responders and Volunteers](#)

News

[CoverME.gov's Fourth Annual Open Enrollment Ends with Record Number of New Enrollees](#)

[Maine DHHS Awarded Nearly \\$17M to Help Support the State's Maternal Health System of Care](#)

HANs

[New Tuberculosis Reporting System](#)

[U.S. CDC: Accelerated Subtyping of Influenza A in Hospitalized Patients](#)

[American Heart Month](#)

Heart disease is the most common cause of death in the United States, but it is frequently preventable. Of the 16 million persons with heart disease, 89,000 in Maine have coronary heart disease.

[Know the difference](#)

Cardiovascular disease refers to all disorders of the heart and/or blood vessels, including coronary heart disease, which includes heart attacks, heart failure, strokes, and peripheral artery disease. Coronary heart disorders are often known as heart disease.

[Heart-healthy living](#)

Heart-healthy living is recognizing your risk, making health decisions, and taking steps to minimize your risk of developing heart disease while also improving your overall health and well-being. By adopting preventative steps, you can reduce your chances of getting heart disease, which can lead to a heart attack.

[10 ways to support heart health](#)

1. Get enough quality sleep
2. Eat better
3. Stop smoking
4. Maintain a healthy weight
5. Be more active
6. Control Cholesterol
7. Manage stress
8. Manage blood sugar
9. Control blood pressure
10. Practice self-care and find social support

arsenic in drinking water increases the risk of bladder and skin cancer.

5. **Infections by certain pathogens** increases the risk of developing certain cancers, pathogens such as h.pylori, HPV, HBC, HCV, HIV and EBV.

Preventing the occurrence of cancer can minimize the burden of disease and the incidence of death. The risk of having cancer may rise or fall depending on genes, lifestyle, and environmental factors.

Cancer can be prevented

- 1. Smoking and tobacco use cessation
- 2. HPV and HBV vaccines
- 3. Avoid excessive sun and tanning
- 4. Healthy diet
- 5. Limit alcohol consumption
- 6. Exercise and physical activity
- 7. Lose excessive weight
- 8. Reduce environmental exposure to arsenic, radon and other chemicals.

For more information about prevention visit [Cancer Prevention Overview](#).

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease that affects the brain and spinal cord and, if left untreated, can be fatal. Rabies is extremely rare in the United States, yet it is widespread in wildlife throughout most parts of the country, including Maine.

Infected animals carry the rabies virus in their saliva, brain, and spinal cord, which is transmitted by bites or scratches. It can also be transmitted directly through a rabid animal's mouth, nose, eyes, or a cut in the skin.

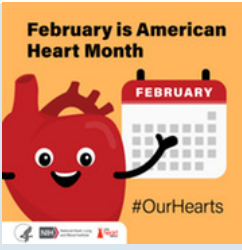
In Maine, rabies can be found mostly in skunks, raccoons, bats, and foxes, but rarely in squirrels, rats, mice, and chipmunks. In 2022, 35 animals tested positive for rabies at the Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL), 43% were raccoons, 26% were bats and skunks. Rabid animals were involved in 20 domestic animal exposures, 6 human exposures and 7 both domestic animal and human exposures. There was only one animal that tested positive for rabies in Downeast Maine.

What to do if exposed?

Rabies
Who should I call?

Who was bitten?	Who did the biting?	
I or a family member bitten by:	Domestic animal	Wild animal
	Your local animal control officer	Your local game warden
My pet or livestock bitten by:	A healthcare provider	A healthcare provider
	Your local animal control officer	Your local game warden
	Your veterinarian	Your veterinarian

Rabies is almost always fatal in humans; however, prompt treatment can help avoid the condition. Even if it is a medical urgency, an individual may delay starting therapy until the findings of animal testing are available or until a domestic animal's 10-day quarantine period has ended.



National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

February 7

It provides an opportunity to improve HIV education, testing, community involvement, and treatment in Black communities. This community continues to be disproportionately afflicted by HIV as compared to other ethnic/racial groupings.

There are more tools than ever available to prevent HIV:

- 1. Safe sexual interaction
- 2. Not sharing needles, syringes or other drug injection equipment
- 3. PrEP and PEP
- 4. Testing

[About HIV](#)

[Ending the HIV Epidemic](#)

[HIV testing](#)

[Get Tested](#)

[HIV treatment](#)

[HIV service locator](#)



National Wear Red Day

February 7

Increasing awareness of heart disease as the primary cause of death among Americans.



National Donor Day

February 14

Over 104 thousand patients are on the National Transplant Waiting List, with 86% of them in

Potential rabies exposure is addressed with PostExposure Prophylaxis, which consists of many injections over a few weeks, including a dose of human rabies immunoglobulin and a series of rabies vaccinations.

Rabies can be prevented

- Avoid contact with wildlife
- Fasten trash can lids
- Do not leave pet food outside
- Bat-proofing your home or building
- Get vaccinated if travelling abroad and a vaccine is right for you (Ask healthcare provider)
- Vaccinating pets and livestock
- Keep pets indoors or under supervision outdoors
- Spay or neuter pets
- Call animal control if a stray animal is spotted.

What are other departments doing?

1. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife provides education and outreach to prevent wildlife conflicts:

- Works with public on wildlife conflict prevention and management strategies.
- Uses hunting and trapping to keep populations of high-risk species healthy (especially raccoons, skunks, and foxes).
- Responds to wildlife conflict and potential rabies exposures. The goal is to protect people, capture, relocate, and/or dispatch the wild animal, and ensure proper handling and testing.
- Assists with transporting of wildlife to Maine CDC for testing when appropriate.

2. Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry provides education about and enforcement of rabies control regulations for domestic animal species:

- Provides education about and enforcement of rabies control regulations for domestic animal species.
- Recommends vaccination of all domestic animals for which there is a vaccine available. This includes indoor cats.
- Provide training to municipal Animal Control Officers. These officers are the first line of defense in rabies prevention and control programs in Maine.

3. USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service works to prevent the further spread of rabies in the U.S.:

- Administers the National Rabies Management Program in Maine.
- Works with Canadian partners to distribute oral rabies vaccine along border with New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario.
- The Maine program primary rabies control goal focuses on limiting the spread of rabies along high risk spread corridors in the eastern U.S. and Canadian border. A phase two goal will focus on raccoon rabies elimination at the local and state level.

4. Maine CDC:

- Provides public education about rabies exposure and prevention.

need of a kidney. 90% of Americans support organ donation, yet only 60% have signed up as donors.

Organs that can be donated include the kidney, liver, lung, pancreas, and intestine (parts of which can be donated while still living). Individuals can also donate their hearts, hands, faces, corneas, skin, and bones.



Important Contacts for Rabies:

-Domestic animal exposure:

- Pets- [Local animal control officer](#)
- Livestock- Department of agriculture, conservation and forestry: 207-287-3701

-Wild animal exposure:

Game warden service dispatch center;

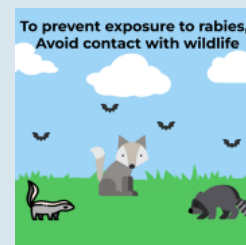
- Augusta: 1-800-452-4664
- Bangor: 1-800-432-7381
- Houlton: 1-800-924-2261

-Rabies exposure: Maine CDC Disease Reporting and Consultation Line (available 24/7):

- 1-800-821-5821
- TTY: 207-287-8016

-Dropping animals off at lab for testing: Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory:

- 207-287-2727



Epi/infectious disease corner:

[New T.B reporting website](#)

[Infectious Disease Reports](#)

"To bring about change, you must not be afraid to take the first step. We will fail when we fail to try." Rosa Parks (1913-2005)



- Provides 24/7 phone line for partners and the public.
- Tests animals at the Maine Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory.
- Investigates exposures and provides advice for post-exposure prevention.

[Evaluation of bites for animal control measures](#)

[Evaluation of bites for PEP](#)

Sources: Maine CDC, U.S. CDC, NIH, [hiv.gov](#), [HRSA organdonor.gov](#), AACR, Maine Shared CHNA, Hancock County EMA.

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