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July 2025 Newsletter - Downeast Public Health Council

Maine Department of Health & Human Services sent this bulletin at 07/08/2025 12:02 PM EDT

**Downeast Public Health Council
July 2025 Newsletter**



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- [National Minority Mental Health Month](#)
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**Infectious Disease
Epidemiology Program**



The Infectious Disease Epidemiology program is a program under the Maine CDC- Division of Disease Surveillance. It works to monitor and prevent infectious diseases in Maine. Infectious diseases are very common worldwide and in Maine. These diseases are caused by certain viruses, bacteria, fungi, or parasites.

Maine CDC Field Epidemiologists and Regions:

1. Aroostook and Downeast: [Maura Lockwood](#)
2. Penquis: Stacie Poulin
3. Central: Devin Myles
4. Mid Cost: Megan Kelley
5. Western: Sarah Bly (Supervisor)
6. Cumberland: Emer Smith
7. York: Craig Rothfuss

Functions of a Field Epidemiologist:

- Outbreak Investigations
- Individual Investigations
- Consults
- Laboratory Coordination

Data Highlights:

- COVID-19 cases are the highest among respiratory illnesses in the state, the Downeast region with 893 in Hancock County and 467 in Washington County.
- Lyme disease cases are the highest vector borne illness in Maine with 382 in Hancock County and 101 in Washington County. The tick populations

**Next Downeast Public
Council Meeting**

Friday, July 18, 2025

10:00 - 12:00 PM

Zoom

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



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[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

Final 2025 CHNA Reports:

[State of Maine](#)

[Hancock County](#)

and infection rates can vary over both large and small geographic distances.

- 46.4% of the ticks submitted and tested were positive for Lyme disease in Hancock county while 33.3% in Washington county. Access the [UM Tick Surveillance Program Report](#).

Disease Reporting:

Disease reports from community practitioners and laboratorians constitute the basis for effective public health prevention and intervention efforts. Diseases can be reported by physicians, physician assistants, infection control practitioners, clinical microbiologists, extended care facility nurses, administrators, nurse practitioners, clinical office staff, and others, whose efforts are critical in maintaining public health in Maine.

- **24-hour reporting line 800-821-5821 and disease.reporting@maine.gov.**
- [Updated Notifiable Diseases and Conditions List](#).
- [Disease Reporting](#).

More information:

[H5 Bird Flu: U.S. Current Situation](#)

[Measles U.S. Cases and Outbreaks](#)

[Maine Infectious Disease Dashboard](#)

[Maine Influenza Surveillance](#)

[Annual Report 2023 Reportable Infectious Diseases in Maine](#)

National Minority Mental Health Month



Mental health includes the emotional, psychological and social well-being that affects how an individual thinks, feels, acts, handles stress, relate to others and make choices. Throughout the life span, mental health is as important as physical health.

Data shows that:

- 20% of adults in the United States experience mental illness every year.
- 25% of adults in Maine have a mental health condition.
- Over 50% of State Mental Health Agencies (SMHA) clients served in Maine were White (2023).
- 17.3% of these agencies clients were Black or African American.
- The majority of SMHA clients served were non-Hispanic 68.5%, while 15.2 % were Hispanic.

Improving the mental health of members of minority group can be done by ensuring that policies and

[Washington County](#)

Events/ Trainings

July 4

Independence Day

July 16 & 17

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

August 26 & 27

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

[PHEP training and exercise calendar](#)

News

[Maine CDC Prepares for Active Mosquito Season](#)

[Maine CDC Issues Additional Advisories for Freshwater Fish Consumption Due to PFAS Contamination](#)

[Celebrating Student Creativity and Public Health: 2025 Lyme Disease Poster Contest Winners](#)

[Protecting Privacy: How CoverME.gov Keeps Information Secure](#)

HANs

[Tuberculosis Reporting and Billing Updates](#)

[Seasonal Arbovirus Updates for Health Care Providers](#)

[Updated Rule for the Control of Notifiable Diseases and Conditions](#)

National Park and Recreation Month

Honoring park and recreation professionals who positively impact the lives of millions, by enhancing parks and recreation programs that foster lasting friendships, memories, and strengthen family connections.

National Parks may improve health and wellness by:

- Boosting physical activity
- Increasing connection to nature
- Encouraging mindfulness
- Creating chances for social interactions
- Inspiring curiosity and learning
- Promoting empathy

Planning tips:

1. Pick a park: [search for a park](#).
2. Plan ahead: check [NPS app](#) and [pack essentials](#).
3. Visit the park.

Parks Canada Summer

programs related to mental health include and address:

- Best practices for social determinants of health, data on mental health, and the historical, social, and cultural factors impacting racial and ethnic minority groups.
- Perspectives, ideas, and decision-making from racial and ethnic minority groups at all stages of programming – from planning to evaluation.
- Evaluation and monitoring activities to assess progress towards health equity and elimination of racial disparities.
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate, inclusive, and respectful educational materials and communication activities.
- Partnership activities to fill gaps in expertise and ensure diverse representation.

Healthcare systems also have a responsibility in improving the mental health of minority groups by:

- Screening patients for depression and other mental health conditions and referring patients to accessible mental health care services.
- Making mental health educational materials available to all patients during their appointments, via patient portals, and in waiting rooms.
- Ensuring mental healthcare services are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

More information:

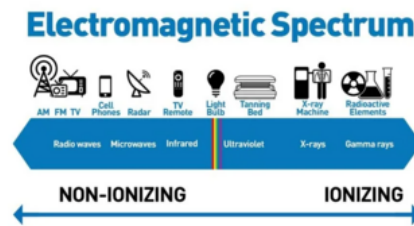
[Mental health](#)

[Minority Health](#)

[NAMI Maine](#)

[SAMHSA Report](#)

UV Safety Awareness Month



Summer brings sunshine and outdoor adventures, but it also means increased exposure to UV rays, making skin protection more important than ever.

What is UV?

Ultraviolet rays or radiation is a type of electromagnetic radiation, which is a type of energy that spreads as it travels. UV radiation exposure can occur naturally from the sunlight, which is the main source of both UVA and UVB rays that can damage the skin. There are also artificial sources of UV radiation such as sunlamps, sunbeds, phototherapy, black-light lamps, welding arcs, and others.

UV rays Risks?

Exposure to UV rays whether from the sun or other sources is a major risk factor for all types of skin cancer. The risk is higher for people with weakened immunity,

Have the most Canadian summer! From June 20 to September 2, enjoy **FREE** admission to Parks Canada destinations, including national historic sites, national parks and national marine conservation areas. **No pass required!** Plus, take advantage of a 25% discount* on Parks Canada-managed camping and overnight accommodations. **More information [here](#).**



Zero HIV Stigma Day

July 21

A day specifically dedicated to challenge the impact of stigma, which persists despite biomedical advancements in HIV prevention and care.

HIV stigma is the negative attitudes and beliefs about people with HIV. It is the prejudice that comes with labeling an individual as part of a group that is believed to be socially unacceptable.

Talk about HIV

Talking openly about HIV can help normalize the subject and provides the opportunity to correct misconceptions and help others learn more about HIV.

Ways to Stop

As complicated as HIV stigma is, a lot of small things can be done that have a tremendous impact. Committing to positive changes in our communities can help end HIV and eradicate HIV stigma.

Educate Others

Make a difference in stopping HIV stigma by learning more about HIV and sharing the knowledge with others, in-person or through social media.

Learn more:

[Stigma language guide](#)

[Stigma and HIV](#)



World Hepatitis Day (WHD)

July 28

personal or family history of skin cancer and if they have large or several moles on their skin.

What organizations can do?

- Encourage sun safety among your employees and provide sun protection when possible.
- Use tents, shelters, and cooling stations to provide shade at worksites.
- Schedule breaks in the shade and allow workers to reapply sunscreen throughout their shifts.
- Create work schedules that minimize worker's exposure to the sun and heat. For example, schedule outdoor tasks for early morning instead of noon, and rotate workers to reduce their UV exposure.
- Include sun-safety information in workplace wellness programs. The National Cancer Institute's [Evidence-Based Cancer Control Programs website](#) lists sun safety programs for outdoor worksites.
- Teach outdoor workers about the risks of exposure to UV rays and the symptoms of overexposure.
- [Protect yourself and your families from the sun.](#)

Learn more:

[UV Index](#): forecasts the strength of UV rays each day. If 3 or higher in your area protect your skin from harmful rays.

Test your [Sun Safety IQ](#)

[Know your cancer risk](#)

[Skin self-exam](#)

[Find a Dermatologist near you](#)

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.

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. The researcher will contact you with further information.

PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

WHD is recognized annually on this day, the birthday of Dr. Baruch Blumberg, who discovered the Hepatitis B virus in 1967. He also developed the first Hepatitis B vaccine two years later. Dr. Blumberg won a Nobel Prize in 1976 for Physiology or Medicine.

Viral hepatitis affects more than 300 million people worldwide and causes more than 1 million deaths yearly despite effective vaccines, prevention strategies and medications.

What is hepatitis?

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver that can be caused by toxins, certain drugs, some diseases, heavy alcohol use, bacterial and viral infections.

The most common types of hepatitis in the United States are **Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C**. These unrelated viruses spread from one person to another through different routes.

Learn more: [Hepatitis](#)



PREPARE AND RESPOND TO MEASLES: CHECKLIST FOR SUMMER CAMPS



"Summertime, and the livin' is easy, Fish are jumpin' and the cotton is high, Oh, your daddy's rich and your ma is good-lookin', So hush little baby, don't you cry."

From *Porgy and Bess* by George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Sources: U.S. CDC, Maine CDC, hiv.gov, SAMHSA, NAMI Maine, ACS, U.S. EPA, AAD, NRPA, NPS, Parks Canada.



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