

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the State of Maine Mail System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

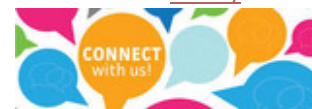
Downeast Public Health Council May 2025 Newsletter



- [Public Service Recognition Week](#)
- [Older Americans' Month: Flip the Script on Aging](#)
- [Bird/Avian Flu \(H5N1\)](#)
- [Lyme Disease Awareness Month: Don't Let a Tick Make You Sick](#)
- [Events/ Trainings](#)
- [News](#)
- [HANs](#)

Next Downeast Public Council Meeting
Friday, May 16, 2025
10:00 - 12:00 PM
Eagle Hill Institute, Steuben

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



Public Service Recognition Week



Public Service Recognition Week (May 4 - May 10) recognizes the devoted people who work tirelessly to help and enhance our communities. From public health workers to emergency responders, these

[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 Zaroni,

people play critical roles in keeping our communities safe, healthy, and thriving.

What does public service mean?

- Putting community first
- Responding to local needs
- Building partnerships
- Finding solutions
- Supporting each other

Public servants work to protect community health, respond to emergencies, support vulnerable populations, connect individuals to important services and improve their quality of life.

Who are public servants?

Individuals that are employed by the government at any level (federal, state, local) who are responsible for providing services to the public such as:

- Elected officials: president, senators, representatives, mayors, city council members and state legislators, etc.
- Appointed officials: boards members and commissions, head of government departments and judge, etc.
- Civil service employees: police officers, firefighters, teachers, public works staff and administrative staff, etc.

Public health workers support Maine communities by:

- Monitoring community health trends
- Providing health education
- Responding to health crises
- Ensuring safe drinking water
- Promoting illness prevention
- Encouraging healthy behaviors.

Learn more about the different public health workers at [Maine CDC](#).

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](#)

[Washington County](#)

Events/ Trainings

May 2025

[Alzheimer's Association Education Program](#)

May - June

[Rural Health Capital Resources Training Series](#)

May 13 & 14

[PER 211: Medical Management of Chem, Bio, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive Events](#)

May 16

[Dermoscopy and Skin Biopsy Training](#)

Older Americans' Month: Flip the Script on Aging



FLIP THE SCRIPT ON AGING: MAY 2025

Older American's Month is an opportunity to change how society views, discusses, and deals with aging while empowering people to confront prejudices and debunk myths.

Recent data (2022-2023) showed substantial growth in older age groups in Maine, this growth in older adult population is leading to a growth in older workforce, which grew from 6.9% to 8.2% of those 65 years and older.

What is Ageism?

Ageism is the term used to describe the prejudice against older people due to unfavorable and false perceptions that are deeply embedded in our culture and frequently go unnoticed, which continue to cause major issues and result in older persons being treated unfairly.

Ageism can take several forms:

- Prejudicial attitudes.
- Discriminatory practice.
- Institutional policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs.

Ageism occurs in different levels:

- Systemic Ageism
- Internalized Ageism
- Interpersonal Ageism
- Institutional Ageism

May 28

[AWR-228 Community Resilience](#)

May 29

[AWR-379 Coastal Hazards
Awareness](#)

June 9 & 10

[HIV/ Hepatitis C Testing Training](#)

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

[USDA Distributes Oral Rabies
Vaccine for Wildlife in Northern
Maine](#)

[Impact of Expiring Health
Insurance Tax Credits on Maine](#)

[Mental Health Awareness
Month: Prioritizing Well-Being for
All Mainers](#)

[Affordable Health Coverage at
Risk: Mainers Speak Out on
Expiring Tax Credits](#)

[Impact of Federal Medicaid
Proposals on Maine](#)



How to challenge these stereotypes:

- Education about aging.
- Intergenerational contact.
- Education on self-efficacy in aging and encouraging physical activity for middle aged adults.
- Expand opportunities for older adults.
- Policies and laws to reduce or eliminate ageism.
- Campaigns.

What you and your organization can do:

1. Start by using the [recommended language](#) in speaking and writing communications related to older adults:

- Older people/person or older adults instead of senior, elder, senior citizen or elderly.
- Aim for specificity; people over 60, woman in her 60s.
- Provide context when discussing age.
- Ask for specific age range when officials or organizations use words like seniors or elderly.
- Do not use the term "the elderly" to reference a group.
- Describe the person as the person wants to be described; ASK!

2. Interrupting ageism [tips](#).

3. Enroll in the [Leadership Exchange on Ageism](#).

[Measles Cases and Outbreaks](#)

HANs

[Expanded Measles Vaccination Recommendations for Domestic Travel](#)

Skin Cancer Awareness Month

Melanoma Monday- May 5

In the United States, an estimated 9,500 Americans receive a skin cancer diagnosis each day; the prevalence of skin melanoma in Maine has been rising, and many of these malignancies are avoidable.

Quick facts:

- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S. that occurs in all ages and skin tones.
- Melanoma is the most serious type of skin cancer.
- UV rays can damage unprotected skin in 15 minutes.
- Protection is still needed against UV rays even if it's cool and cloudy.
- Melanoma can develop under and around nails.
- Learn the ABCDEs of Melanoma [here](#).

Risk factors:

- Lighter skin tones, burns or reddens easily and freckles.
- Blue or green eyes.
- Blond or red hair.
- History of sunburns or

4. Find out if there is [ageism in your organization](#).

5. Enroll in the [Age-friendly Public Health Systems Recognition Program](#) as an organization or an individual.

Resources:

[Maine Council on Aging](#)

[National Council on Aging](#)

[Administration for Community Living](#)

[Older Adults Resources in Maine](#)

tanning.

- Family history of skin cancer.
- Personal history of skin cancer.
- Older age.

Prevention:

- [Practice safe sun](#).
- Reapply sunscreen.
- Stop tanning.

When detected early, melanoma has a 99% 5-year survival rate:

- [Monthly skin self-examination](#) and [record your spots](#).
- See a dermatologist yearly: [find a dermatologist near you](#).

Can you spot skin cancer?
[Take the quiz!](#)



National Nurses Week May 6 - 12

National Nurses Week honors healthcare professionals who provide essential services like preventive care and chronic disease management, bridging gaps in access to care, and advocating for better health outcomes, especially in rural areas, ensuring culturally competent care.

Bird/Avian Flu (H5N1)



Avian flu, another name for bird flu, is a respiratory illness brought on by an infection with an influenza virus that is often seen in birds. Domestic birds including chicken, ducks, guinea hens, geese, and turkey can contract avian flu, which usually infects wild water birds like ducks and geese. Additionally, they can infect other wild animals such as cattle, foxes, seals, and cats.

Although avian flu viruses often do not make humans sick, illnesses have happened to people who frequently come into contact with wild birds, livestock, or poultry.

[Current situation in the U.S.:](#)

Until now there has been 70 human cases in the U.S. with 1 death. 41 of these cases were exposed to cattle, 24 to poultry farms, 2 to other animals and 3 unknown sources of exposure. H5N1 has been detected in 12,842 wild birds in 51 jurisdictions, over 168 million poultry affected and 1,021 dairy herds affected.

Current situation in Maine:

Despite the high risk of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Maine, no human cases have been reported. To continue monitoring both domestic and wild birds, the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry is collaborating with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and USDA.

Quick Facts:

- Avian flu viruses are different from human seasonal influenza viruses.
- Human infections with avian flu have ranged in severity from mild to severe.
- Most human cases of bird flu in the U.S. have remained mild and most had known exposure.
- Clinical samples from people suspected of bird flu are tested at state public health lab first, and then shipped to CDC for confirmation if positive.

Due to the lack of a commercially available vaccine, there is currently no recommendation for people to get vaccinated against bird/avian flu; rather, precautions should be taken to avoid exposure:

1. Avoid sources of exposure such as direct and unprotected contact with wild birds, sick or dead animals, avoid raw dairy products, avoid cross-contamination of food items, fully cook poultry and wash hands after handling raw eggs or poultry.
2. If you are an Avian flu Responder: use PPE, wash hands, change clothes and [track your symptoms](#).
3. If you work with domestic or wild animals: practice

We encourage our community to:

- Thank a nurse in your life.
- Learn about the vital role nurses play in public health.
- Support initiatives that strengthen nursing education and practice.
- Share stories about how nurses have made a difference.



Air Quality Awareness Week May 4 - 10

The term "air pollution" refers to any chemical, physical, or biological factor that alters the atmosphere's inherent properties and contaminates both indoor and outdoor spaces. Significant morbidity and mortality are caused by respiratory and other disorders brought on by air pollution.

According to WHO data, nearly everyone on the planet breathes air that is high in contaminants and exceeds [recommended levels](#).

Globally, the climate and biosphere of the planet are intimately related to air quality. Numerous factors that contribute

good biosecurity, look for signs of illness in birds, report sick or unusual deaths to USDA (**1-866-536-7593**) or [State Veterinarian's Office](#), Follow [USDA Guidance for Poultry Producers](#)

4. If you are a hunter: dress game birds in the field, wear gloves, wash hands and follow [USDA Guidance for Hunters](#).

Resources:

[Maine DACF](#)

[Maine CDC](#)

[U.S. CDC](#)

[USDA Defend the Flock](#)

Lyme Disease Awareness Month: Don't Let a Tick Make You Sick



to air pollution also produce greenhouse gas emissions.

Particulate matter and ground-level ozone pollution are rising due to climate change. Because of the combined impacts of particle pollution and ozone, researchers estimate that the number of premature deaths in the United States will increase by 1,000 to 4,300.

What organizations can do?

-[Building Resilience Against Climate Effects](#) framework allows health officials to develop strategies and programs that help communities prepare for health effects of climate change.

-[Air Quality Flag Program](#) that helps create public awareness of outdoor air quality conditions.

Under the Clean Air Act and state law, the [Maine Department of Environmental Protection](#) carries out air quality initiatives. Throughout Maine, the DEP licenses emissions from big facilities, monitors air quality, and makes compliance, assistance, and inspection visits.



Hepatitis Awareness Month
Hepatitis Testing Day
May 19

As the weather in Maine warms up, it is the perfect time to remind communities to protect themselves from tickborne diseases.

Health care providers in Maine reported more than 3,200 cases of Lyme disease in 2024 (data as of April 10, 2025).

Make tick prevention a habit and encourage others to do so too:

- **T: Take** and use an EPA-approved repellent. Use DEET, picaridin, IR3535 (Ethyl butylacetylaminopropionate) or oil of lemon eucalyptus on skin. Use permethrin on clothing only.
- **I: Inspect** your [whole body for ticks](#) daily and after outdoor activities. Check family members and pets too.
- **C: Cover** your skin with light-colored long sleeve shirts and pants. Tuck pants into socks.
- **K: Know** when you are in tick habitat and take precautions in areas where ticks may live.
- **S: Shower** when you get home to remove crawling ticks. Put clothes in the dryer on high heat for 15 minutes before washing to kill ticks on clothes.

What to do if you get a tick bite?

1. Remove the tick quickly: [use a tick spoon or fine-tipped tweezers](#).
2. Check for symptoms: fever, chills, fatigue, headache, muscle or joint soreness, [bullseye rash](#).
3. Call a health care provider.

Learn more about Lyme Disease [here](#) and Lyme Disease Awareness Month [here](#).

Research Participants

In the United States, thousands of people are infected with viral hepatitis without knowing that they have it, posing a serious threat to public health. In Maine, the total number of hepatitis cases has decreased.

Types:

1. Hepatitis A is a mild, short-term vaccine preventable illness that is transmitted feco-orally.
2. Hepatitis B is a vaccine preventable illness that is transmitted through body fluids (blood, semen, childbirth). It can cause liver damage, liver cancer and death. There is no cure for it but treatment helps reduce or delay complications.
3. Hepatitis C is a serious health condition that can be contracted by blood, sex, childbirth, and other means. A curative treatment is available, however there is no vaccine to prevent it.

[Testing sites in Maine](#)

[Free Hepatitis Vaccination in Maine](#)

[Hepatitis C link to care form](#)

Aroostook Public Health District is hosting a free HIV/Hepatitis C Testing Training ([Registration](#)).



Needed!

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:

hkmoha3@liverpool.ac.uk.

Note: **Participation is voluntary.**



World No Tobacco Day May 31



Epi/Infectious Disease Corner

Infectious Diseases Data:

[Infectious Disease Dashboard](#)

[Maine Influenza Surveillance](#)

"Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is.... Life is good when you are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you"
Pope Francis 1936-2025

Sources: ACL, Maine DAFS, APA, Maine Council on Aging, WHO, U.S. CDC, EPA, Maine DEP, Maine CDC, Maine DACF, USDA, AAD, Skin Cancer Foundation.





Questions?
[Contact Us](#)

STAY CONNECTED:



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:

[Manage Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Help](#)

This email was sent to kawther.mohamed@maine.gov using GovDelivery Communications Cloud on behalf of: Maine Department of Health & Human Services · 109 Capitol St · Augusta, ME 04333

