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November 2025 Newsletter - Downeast Public Health Council

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Downeast Public Health Council November 2025 Newsletter



DOWNEAST PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL

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National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness



Alzheimer's disease is a degenerative, progressive illness that affects the brain and causes behavioral abnormalities, memory loss, confusion, and impaired thinking and judgment. Symptoms typically appear gradually and worsen with time, eventually becoming severe enough to interfere with day-to-day tasks.

Individuals with Alzheimer's disease live an average of eight years after their symptoms become apparent to others, while survival times vary from 4 to 20 years.

Data in Maine:

- 30,000 people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's
- 8% of people aged 45 and older have subjective cognitive decline
- 66,000 family caregivers provide essential support to people living with dementia
- 102 million hours of unpaid care are provided by dementia caregivers
- The value of unpaid care provided is \$8 billion
- The cost of Alzheimer's to state Medicaid program is \$297 million

Next Downeast Public Council Meeting
Friday, **November 21, 2025**
10:00 - 12:00 PM

[Eagle Hill Institute, Steuben](#)

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



[Downeast Public Health Council Facebook Page](#)

[Maine CDC Downeast District Webpage](#)

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

Downeast Public Health 2025 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](#)

Risk factors:

- Midlife obesity and hypertension
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking
- Poor sleep
- Diabetes

Smoking and exposure to cigarette smoke raise the risk of Alzheimer’s disease, cognitive decline and cognitive impairment. Middle-aged heavy smokers have a 50% chance of developing dementia in later life. One of the highest rates of Alzheimer’s risk factors in the state area found in Washington County, where the rates are 40.4% for hypertension, 37.9% for obesity, 13.1% for diabetes, **18.1% for smoking**, 29.7% for physical inactivity, and 38.4% for poor sleep.

What is being done?

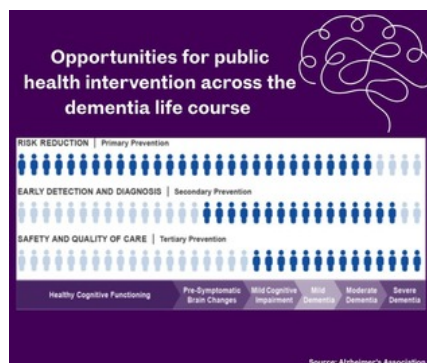
In Maine, Alzheimer’s disease is becoming a more serious public health concern, and its effects are expected to increase. To enhance community health, promote the wellbeing of individuals with cognitive decline and their families, and lower the risk of dementia in all communities, a comprehensive public health approach is necessary.

Maine CDC has received **BOLD** funding to implement strategies that enhance dementia risk reduction efforts, improve early detection initiatives and strengthen community resources.

The [Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map](#) is a public health strategy that is supported by leading subject matter experts, drawn from the most recent evidence-based research and committed to decreasing the risk factors that may contribute to cognitive decline.

Public health programs and interventions are implemented that are able to address Alzheimer’s disease across levels of prevention through:

1. Risk reduction
2. Early detection and diagnosis
3. Safety and quality of care
4. Dementia caregiving



Resources:

- [Maine CDC Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Program](#)
- [Alzheimer's Association: Maine Chapter](#)
- [Maine-Based Resources for Professional](#)
- [Maine State Plan on Alzheimer's Disease and related dementia](#)

Washington County

Events/ Trainings

November 5, 12 & 19

[Risk Communication for Public Health](#)

November 6 & 13

[ICS 200- Incident Command System for Initial Response](#)

November 7

[Down East Living with Cancer Conference- Ellsworth](#)

November 17 & 20

[MGT 319- Medical Countermeasures: POD \(Bangor and Portland\)](#)

December 15 & 16

[HIV/Hep C Rapid Testing Training Registration: Machias](#)

[More training and exercises: PHEP calendar](#)

News

[Celebrating Five Years of HOPE: New Data, New Graduates, and a Stronger Future](#)

[CoverME.gov's Fifth Annual Open Enrollment Begins November 1](#)

[Due to Federal Government Shutdown, USDA Notifies States that SNAP Benefits Won't Be Issued for November](#)

[Maine CDC Encourages Tick Bite Prevention This Fall](#)

HANs

[Notification of System Downtime](#)

[2025 Fall Tick Season](#)

National Native Heritage Month

Celebrates the culture and heritage of remarkable Americans who deeply enrich the quality and character of our Nation.

Today, there are four federally recognized tribal nations in Maine: the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Mi'kmaq Nation, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and the Penobscot Nation. Collectively, they are known as the Wabanaki, or "People of the First Light or Dawnland."

The Passamaquoddy Tribe was federally recognized in 1976, with over 3,000 Passamaquoddy citizens today. There are two reservations located in Maine's Washington County and one in New Brunswick, Canada.

In 2011, in collaboration with the five Maine Tribal jurisdictions, a Tribal Health District was established with boundaries

National Diabetes Month



Diabetes is a condition that occurs when blood sugar or glucose is elevated. Approximately 38 million Americans, both adults and youth, are impacted. Diabetes is still the seventh leading cause of mortality in Maine, affecting about 1 in 10 people.

Data:

- 8.3% (2019-2021) of Hancock County's population had diabetes which is significantly lower than both the state 10.4% and national rates 10.9%.
- Diabetes mortality and hospitalization rates are both lower compared to the state and nationally.
- The rate of diabetes in Washington County is higher at 13%, in addition to the rates of death and hospitalization.
- The percentage of adults with diabetes receiving formal diabetes education is significantly lower at 41.6% in Washington County than the state at 55.6%.

Diabetes types:

1. Type 1 diabetes occurs when the body produces **little** or **no** insulin at all. Insulin is the hormone that facilitates the body's cells uptake of blood sugar for energy. In cases of type 1 the body's immune system destroys the insulin producing cells in the pancreas. Although it can appear at any age, this type of diabetes usually occurs in children and young adults.
2. Type 2 diabetes is the most prevalent type of diabetes that occurs when the body doesn't produce **enough** insulin or **doesn't use** it effectively, leading to accumulation of glucose in the blood and insufficient amounts of it reaching the cells. Although it can occur at any age, including during childhood but most likely occurs in middle-aged and older adults.

Diabetes can cause damage to the eyes, kidneys, nerves, blood vessels and the heart:

1. Damage to blood vessels leads to heart disease and stroke
2. Nerve damage results in diabetic neuropathy
3. Kidney disease causing diabetic nephropathy
4. Foot problems such as callus, pain, infections and possible amputations
5. Damage to the eyes leads to low vision and blindness
6. Oral cavity problems such as infection, gum disease or dry mouth
7. Sexual and bladder problems caused by damage to blood vessels and nerves.

determined by Tribal Health Center service areas and tribal jurisdictional boundaries.

Tribal Health Facilities in Downeast:

- Passamaquoddy Health Center Indian Township – Washington County
- Pleasant Point Health Center, Sipayik – Washington County

Learn more:

[Tribal Public Health](#)

National Family Caregivers' Month

Families are often the primary source of support for older adults and people with disabilities. More than 53 million family caregivers provide unpaid care, totaling more than 470 billion dollars. There are over 11 million unpaid dementia caregivers in the U.S. and in 2023 unpaid caregivers provided around 18.4 billion hours of care for people living with Alzheimer's or other dementias.

Family caregivers not only provide support to older adults and people with disabilities but also to individuals with chronic health conditions including mental health and substance use conditions. Family caregivers can include grandparents or grandkids, sons or daughters, parents or older adults.

Resources:

[Alzheimer's Association: Special Programming](#)

[Maine DHHS Care Partner Support](#)

[EAAA Caregiver Services](#)

[SAMHSA Parent and Caregiver Resources](#)

[Office of Aging and Disability Services](#)



National Rural Health Day November 20

Provides an chance to recognize and highlight the incredible efforts of rural health professionals, communities, organizations, state offices of rural health and other stakeholders dedicated to tackling the particular healthcare challenges that rural residents face today and in the future.

What can organizations do?

- The [National Diabetes Prevention Program](#) is a partnership of public and private organizations that makes it easier for people at risk for type 2 diabetes to participate in an evidence-based lifestyle change program to reduce their risk. Partners can include employers, healthcare professionals, community organizations, university community education programs and businesses.
- [Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support \(DSMES\)](#) provides personalized services to help individuals manage diabetes by creating a plan and teaching self-care behaviors, improves health outcomes for patients with diabetes as they learn how to manage their blood glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure. Become a [DSMES accredited or recognized provider](#).

In Maine there are 17 CDC-recognized organizations offering lifestyle change with 6,536 participants enrolled. There are also 20 recognized/accredited DSMES service providers with 5,402 people with diabetes having at least one encounter at a service provider location.

Resources:

[National Registry of Recognized Diabetes Prevention Programs \(search for Maine\)](#)

[Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support \(DSMES\) Directory](#)

[DSMES Toolkit](#)

[Toolkits for Diabetes Educators and Community Health Workers](#)

[Maine CDC Diabetes](#)

[Rethink Diabetes](#)

Lung Cancer Awareness



Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death overall among both men and women. In 2022, 218,893 of new lung cancer cases were reported in the U.S. and 131,584 people died from lung cancer in 2023.

Data in Maine:

- Lung cancer is one of the six cancer types that represent 60% of all new cancer cases.
- One of the leading causes of cancer deaths at 24%.

Maine is considered the most rural state in the nation, with nearly 50% of Maine's land almost completely uninhabited and 40% of the population living in one of Maine's 11 rural counties.

Both Hancock and Washington counties have been designated by the [FORHP](#) as rural. Learn more about the rurality of where you live or work: [Am I rural?](#)

Information:

[Maine CDC Rural Health and Primary Care Program](#)

[Maine Rural Health and Primary Care Strategic Plan](#)



U.S. Antibiotics Awareness Week (November 18-24)

Antimicrobial resistance poses risk to humans, animals, plants and the ecosystem as a whole when antibiotics and antifungals are inappropriately used.

Antimicrobial resistance kills 1.27 million people worldwide, making it an urgent global public health threat. Every year, more than 2.8 million antimicrobial-resistant infections occur yearly and more than 35,000 people die from it in the U.S..

Impacts:

1. Can affect people at any stage of life
2. Affects healthcare, veterinary and agriculture industries
3. Can make all antibiotics and antifungals ineffective resulting in unstoppable infections

What to do?

1. [Prevent infections in the first place](#).
2. [Improve antibiotic and antifungal use](#)
3. Stop the spread of antimicrobial resistance



2025-2026 Respiratory Season

[Maine CDC: Get Vaccinated](#)

[September 2025 ACIP Updates](#)

[2025-2026 COVID-19 Vaccination FAQs](#)

[Maine CDC Standing Order for Administration of 2025-2026 COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

- The annual rate of lung and bronchus cancer deaths in Maine is 34.7/100,000 which is higher than the U.S. rate at 29.3/100,000.
- The percentage of lung cancer diagnosed as late stage is 64.3%.

Risk Factors:

1. Smoking is the number one risk factor for lung cancer: 23.3% of adults in Washington County smoke, this percentage is higher than in Hancock County, the state and U.S. rates.
2. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. The U.S. EPA classifies Maine as Zone 1 area for radon having indoor screening levels greater than the recommended level 4pCi/L.
3. Other risk factors: asbestos, arsenic, diesel exhaust, silica and chromium, personal or family history of lung cancer, radiation therapy to the chest and certain dietary supplements such as beta carotene.

Lung cancer screening:

The USPSTF recommends that current or past smokers aged 50+ should start screening every year with LDCT until they are 80 years old. Based on the latest survey 8,860 individuals received a baseline and 9,381 annual follow-up screenings were performed using LDCT screening for lung cancer during 2024 in Maine.

Information:

[Maine CDC: Cancer Prevention](#)

[Maine Cancer Plan 2021-2030](#)

[Ask Your Doc](#)

Join the Downeast MRC

The MRC is a volunteer powered entity that brings together medical, public health and community members that possess essential allied skills to serve in strengthening public health, improving emergency response capabilities and building community resiliency through trainings, exercises and operational deployments. Register on [Maine Responds](#) and choose the [Downeast MRC](#).



'Have you ever walked along the shoreline, only to have your footprints washed away? That's what Alzheimer's is like. The waves erase the marks we leave behind, all the sandcastles. Some days are better than others.' Pat Summitt, University of Tennessee Women's Basketball Coach, who died from early onset Alzheimer's disease (1952 - 2016).

Sources: Maine CDC, U.S. CDC, American Lung Association, NIH, Rethink Diabetes, Alzheimer's Association, NCOA, SAMHSA, EAAA, NOSORH, RHlhub, MITSC, BIA, Wabanaki.



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