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October 2025 Newsletter - Downeast Public Health Council

Maine Department of Health & Human Services sent this bulletin at 10/14/2025 01:33 PM EDT

Downeast Public Health Council October 2025 Newsletter



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Maine CDC: Drinking Water Program



The **Drinking Water Program (DWP)** is situated in the Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Environmental Health. DWP works to ensure safe drinking water in Maine, to protect public health, by administering and enforcing drinking water and subsurface wastewater regulations, providing education and technical and financial assistance.

There are six program areas within the DWP that employees 55 full-time staff:

1. Field Inspection
2. Rule Administration
3. Engineering and Water Resources
4. Data Management and Program Support
5. Subsurface Wastewater
6. Laboratory Certification

There are around 1900 Public Water Systems in Maine, all regulated by the DWP in accordance with the Safe Drinking Water Act:

- Around 20% are Community Water Systems (CWS) serving 51% of Maine's population (towns, mobile home parks, condos, etc.)
- Almost 20% are non-transient, non-community (NTNC) systems which include schools,

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

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 Zaroni, 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](#)

daycares and places of employment on their own well with 25 or more people.

- The majority of the systems (59.7%) are categorized as transient (campgrounds, motels, restaurants, etc.)

DWP Focus Areas:

- PFAS** (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a group of manufactured chemicals that have been used since the 1940s in industry and consumer products. One common concern of PFAS is that many degrade very slowly and can accumulate in humans, animals, and the environment over time. In 2021, the Maine Legislature passed a law implementing an interim drinking water standard of 20 ng/L or ppt for a combination of six PFAS compounds and required sampling at all CWS and schools/daycares that were their own public water system.
- Lead:** A new federal rule for lead and copper is in effect and applies to CWS and NTNC to locate existing Lead pipes, replace them within 10 years, strengthen tap sampling and reduce lead exposure.
- Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)** helps states and water systems achieve the health protection objectives of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Between 2020-2024, the DWSRF funded 97 infrastructure projects, 82% of projects in disadvantaged communities benefiting 1 in 3 Mainers. Additional funding is available through **Source Water Protection Grant, Asset Security Grant and Capacity Development Grant.**

More information:

Maine CDC: [Drinking Water Program](#)

DWP: [Contact information](#)

[PFAS in Maine](#)

[Drinking Water Safety Alerts](#)

Health Literacy



During October's Health Literacy Month, we would like to emphasize the **National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy** that seeks to involve organizations, professionals, policymakers, communities, individuals, and families in a connected, multisector approach to improve health literacy. **The plan is based on the principles that:**

- Everyone has the right to health information that helps them make informed decisions.
- Health services should be delivered in ways that are understandable and beneficial to

Events/ Trainings

Fall 2025

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

October 16

[ICS 100- Introduction to the Incident Command System](#)

October 27

[MPHA 2025 Annual Conference](#)

October 30

[Maine's 2025 Nurture ME Summit](#)

November 6 & 13

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

November 7

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

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

News

[COVID-19 Vaccine Now Available to Order](#)

[Tips to Reduce Browntail Moth Hair Exposure During Fall Outdoor Activities](#)

[State of Maine to Apply for Rural Health Transformation Program Funding](#)

HANS

[U.S. CDC: Ebola Outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)

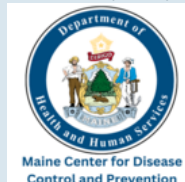
[Resurgence of New World Screwworm in the Americas](#)

[September 2025 ACIP Updates](#)

[Maine CDC webpages](#) have recently been updated.

Previous links to resources may no longer be accessible. Make sure you update content or resources that may link back to the previous Maine DHHS/CDC website.

Visit the [Downeast District Public Health](#) updated page.



National Dental Hygiene Month

Oral health is crucial for overall health and wellness. Maintaining good oral hygiene practices protects oral health and lowers

health, longevity, and quality of life.

Health literacy is the extent to which individuals can access, process, and comprehend basic health information and services required to make informed health decisions. Limited health literacy impacts people of all ages, races, incomes, and educational levels, however it disproportionately affects lower socioeconomic and minority groups. It has an impact on people's ability to search for and use health information, adopt healthy habits, and respond to important public health notifications. Additionally, poorer health outcomes and higher costs are linked to limited health literacy.

There are seven goals and strategies suggested to help improve health literacy:

1. Develop and disseminate accurate, accessible and actionable health and safety information.
2. Promote changes in the health care system that improve health information, communication, informed decision-making, and access to health services
3. Incorporate accurate, standards-based, and developmentally appropriate health and science information and curricula in childcare and education through the university level
4. Support and expand local efforts to provide adult education, English language instruction, and culturally and linguistically appropriate health information services in the community
5. Build partnerships, develop guidance, and change policies
6. Increase basic research and the development, implementation, and evaluation of practices and interventions to improve health literacy
7. Increase the dissemination and use of evidence-based health literacy practices and interventions

Source:

[National Action Plan To Improve Health Literacy Report](#)

Breast Cancer Awareness



In Maine, breast cancer is the most common cancer in females and is the **fourth** leading cause of cancer mortality. Washington County has **both** higher cancer incidence and mortality rates compared to all other counties.

The rates of new cases of breast cancer have increased between 2018 and 2021 in both Washington and Hancock counties; higher than the national and state rates. However, both counties have seen increase in screening rates, which is comparable to

rates of cancers and tooth loss, improves diabetic management, and reduces opioid prescriptions.

Data:

- 16.4% of adults in Hancock county suffered from tooth loss in 2020 while **29.5% of adults in Washington county** suffered from tooth loss which is higher than the state average at 18.6%.
- 67.3% visited the dentist in the past year in HA county while only **56.3% of adults visited the dentist in WA county**, significantly lower than the state average of 66.7%.
- 44- 48% of those under 18 years (HA) and under 21 years (WA) covered by MaineCare have had a dental visit in the past year.

Resources:

[Oral health tips for children](#)

[Oral health tips for adults](#)

National Depression Screening Day

October 10

Depression which is distinct from sadness or grief, is a prevalent and serious mental health condition, that is different from sadness or grief. One in six people will experience depression at some point in their lives, with around around 16 million Americans suffering from depression.

Depression screening is a standard set of questions that individuals answer to assist healthcare providers diagnose depression. Questions include changes in mood, sleeping habits, appetite or weight, energy levels, focus, attention and stress levels, in addition to questions about medications, alcohol and drug use, personal or family history about depression and other mental health conditions.

The USPSTF recommends screening for depression in adolescents aged 12 to 18 years and the adult population, including pregnant and postpartum persons as well as older adults.

[Patient Health Questionnaire-9 \(PHQ-9\)](#)

[WHO depression self-assessment tool](#)

[APA Depression Resources](#)

the national rate but still lower than the state's average.

Risk Factors:

- Age
- Family history or genetics
- Obesity
- Chest radiation
- Hormone Replacement Therapy
- Alcohol consumption

The Maine Cancer Plan prepared by Maine CDC's Comprehensive Cancer Control Program and Maine's Impact Cancer Network provides a roadmap to save lives and improve the quality of life for Maine people with six goals:

1. Prevention
2. Screening
3. Treatment
4. Survivorship
5. Palliative Care
6. End-of-Life Care

The Maine Cancer Plan can be used by **individuals, healthcare providers, policymakers and stakeholders** to help learn about the prevention and early detection steps, engage in dialogue with patients about screening, treatments and services, assist in understanding priorities and needs to build capacities and how goals align with other stakeholders to make a collective impact on cancer.

If you are interested in Primary and Secondary Prevention of Cancers including breast cancer, please join the Downeast Public Health Council: Primary & Secondary Prevention Committee which is working towards a goal where **“All people in district will be aware and educated on risks causing chronic disease and on benefits of early detection through screening.”** Registration form:

<https://forms.office.com/g/B7vXWv6xwv>

Sources:

[Maine Cancer Plan 2021-2025](#)

[2025 Maine Cancer Snapshot Special Topic: Risk Factor Associated Cancers and Population Attributable Fraction](#)

October Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Did you know you can lower your risk for breast cancer with these lifestyle changes:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Being physically active
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Avoiding alcohol
- Breastfeeding

Early Detection Saves Lives!
Women aged 40-74 should get a mammogram every two years. Call your provider **today** to discuss your risks and schedule your recommended screenings!

MBCHP
Maine CDC Breast and Cervical Health Program

MBCHP may be able to cover the cost of your screening and diagnostics. Even those with insurance may qualify! See if you are eligible with our quick & easy, [Online Eligibility Check](#) or call 1-800-550-5180

October 18 is National Mammography Day. A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast and is the most effective method to detect breast cancer for most women of screening age. Breast cancer screening can help find breast cancer early when it is easier to treat. The USPSTF recommends that women who are 40 to 74 years old and are at an average risk get a mammogram every two years.



International Infection Prevention Week

October 15-21

Infection control prevents or stops the transmission of infections in healthcare settings. Healthcare workers (HCW) can lower the risk of healthcare-associated infections and safeguard patients, visitors and themselves by following these guidelines:

1. [Standard Precautions.](#)
2. [Transmission-based Precautions.](#)

Tips for being a safe patient:

1. Wash your hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Remind people, including HCWs, to clean their hands before touching patients or handling medical devices.
3. More tips [here](#).

Healthy Lung Month

The lungs and respiratory system automatically perform the essential function of gas exchange together with controlling air temperature and moisturizing it. Additionally, they shielding the body from harmful substances by coughing, sneezing, filtering or swallowing them and supporting the sense of smell.

How to protect the lungs:

- Smoking cessation (main cause lung cancer and COPD).
- Avoid exposure to air pollutants: radon, smoke, ozone, particulate matter etc.
- Prevent diseases by getting regular checkups, receiving vaccines and detecting lung conditions in its earliest stages.
- Exercise and being physically active can help keep your lungs healthy.
- Lose weight: obesity is a risk factor for asthma and sleep apnea.

2025-2026 Respiratory Season

Data:

- 7 in 10 females aged 40 years and older had a mammogram in the past two years in Maine.
- 78.3% of females had a mammogram between 2018-2022 in Hancock County.
- 79.9% of females had a mammogram between in 2018-2022 in Washington County.
- Statewide 82% of females had a mammogram between 2018-2022.

The Maine CDC Breast and Cervical Health Program network healthcare providers are essential in promoting breast and cervical cancer screenings by giving patients access to financial assistance for **mammograms**, Pap and HPV tests, breast and pelvic exams, and certain diagnostic or follow-up services.

Enroll as a Provider at the Maine CDC Breast and Cervical Health Program (MBCHP).

Individuals may qualify for free breast and cervical cancer screening if they are a Maine resident, are 21 years or older and meet the income requirements:

Take the prescreening [survey](#).

More about Screening:

- [U.S. CDC](#)
- [Maine CDC](#)

Vaccination is one of the most effective method to protect individuals, families, and communities against preventable diseases. As the respiratory season begins, it is advised that individuals and their families receive immunizations that protect against certain respiratory illnesses such as **Influenza**, **RSV** or **COVID-19**.

Learn more:

[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](#)

[Ask Your Doc](#)

'A man can fail many times, but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame somebody else.' John Burroughs, American Naturalist and Conservationist (1837-1921)

Sources: Maine CDC, EPA, ODPHP, U.S. CDC, MedlinePlus, USPSTF, American Lung Association, NIH, APA, WHO



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