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Penquis Public Health Council Meeting

Wednesday, February 4th, 2026

[Zoom](#)

9am – 11am

MINUTES

Attendance:

Jami Aleksiev, Community Services Director, Eastern Area Agency on Aging; **Hanna Bouchard**, Northern Light Sebasticook Valley Hospital; **Jamie Comstock**, Health Promotion Manager, Bangor Public Health; **Jane Danforth**, Director of Grants and Community Wellness, Millinocket Regional Hospital; **Roxane Dubay**, Bangor Public Health; **Jennifer Doyle**, Bangor Public Health, Assistant Director and Program Manager; **Elizabeth**, RN CDC, PHN; **Jessica Fogg**, Penquis District Liaison, Maine CDC; **Cynthia Grass**, Public Health Nursing Supervisor, Maine CDC; **Anna Guest**, Power in Aging Director, Maine Council on Aging; **Jen Laferte-Carlson**, Northern Light Acadia Hospital; **Heidi LeBlanc**, Penquis; **Matt Donahue**, Heart of Maine United Way; **Gabe O'Brien**, Maine Youth Action Network; **Christine Rice**, Penquis; **Dayna Riitano**, Staff Assistant, Senator Collins' Office; **Rachel Robbins**, Public Health Educator, Maine CDC; **Susan Russell**, Center for Community Inclusion & Disability Studies, University of Maine; **Maria Staples**, Penquis Foster Grandparent Program; **Andree Thompson-LeDee**, Resident Services Coordinator, Penquis; **Melissa Walls**, Resident Services Coordinator, Penquis; **Julie Weidman**, Northern Light Acadia Hospital; **Lauren Young**, PCHC.

9:00 a.m. – Welcome

Jennifer Laferte-Carlson, Chair of the Council, called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees.

9:05 a.m. – Bridging the Gap in Rural Dementia Care

Presenters: Dr. Cliff Singer, MD, Director of the Northern Light Memory and Aging Center and physician at the Mood and Memory Clinic at Northern Light Acadia Hospital, and Lori M. Towne, MSN, FNP-BC, Medical Staff President, Northern Light Mayo Hospital.

The presenters discussed the growing population of adults aged 65 and older in 2026 and the increasing prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias as a significant public health challenge. They highlighted barriers faced by older adults and caregivers in rural and underserved areas and provided an overview of the dementia landscape in 2026. Actionable strategies were shared to support the development of age-friendly and dementia-friendly environments that better support individuals living with dementia and their caregivers.

Resource shared:

Register for MAINAH – Northern Light Health

<https://northernlighthealth.org/Forms/Register-for-MAINAH>

9:35 a.m. – Impacts of Ageism

Presenter: Anna Guest, Power in Aging Director, Maine Council on Aging.

The presentation focused on the impacts of ageism and the benefits of age-positive views and cultures, including improved longevity, fewer chronic conditions, and reduced anxiety. Participants discussed ways to serve as age-positive advocates in their communities, workplaces, and personal lives.

Resources shared:

Contact: Anna Guest, aguest@mainecouncilonaging.org

Leadership Exchange on Aging (LEA) cohorts currently accepting applications:

- LEA 18: February 12 and 26; March 12 and 26, 2026
- LEA 19: April 10 and 17; May 1 and 8, 2026
- LEA 20: September 10 and 24; October 8 and 22, 2026
- LEA 21: November 5, 12, and 19; December 3, 2026

Application link:

https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=fUGZjWvQ4ES2SC3-qcR_TcU880EqpuVPk1-rVVfg7zpUNINGNktFTjU3MkY2SDRBMDVWVkmZSEJVSQlQCN0PWcu&route=shorturl

10:05 a.m. – Break

10:10 a.m. – Eastern Area Agency on Aging

Presenters: Chris Street, Nutrition Services Director, and Jami Aleksiev, Community Services Director, Eastern Area Agency on Aging.

An overview of EAAA services was provided, along with discussion of current trends, capacity considerations, and emerging regional needs. Presenters discussed EAAA's ability to respond to community needs, areas where challenges exist, and opportunities for community partners to support services.

Resources and updates shared included:

- Medicare counseling outreach and education
- Technology classes offered Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. at the Durgin Center in Brewer
- EAAA classes and events calendar: <https://eaaa.org/classes-events/>
- Program trifold and flyers available upon request (contact: jaleksiev@eaaa.org)
- Mileage reimbursement for Meals on Wheels volunteers
- Volunteer engagement to increase flexibility in service options
- Upcoming Healthy Aging Expo in May at the Shriners

10:40 a.m. – Supporting Older Adults: Maine CDC Public Health Nurses Program

Presenter: Cynthia Grass, Public Health Nursing Supervisor, Maine CDC.

An overview of the Older Adult Services program was provided, highlighting how Maine CDC Public Health Nurses support older adults, particularly in rural areas, through in-home visits, health assessments, education, and assistance connecting individuals to needed resources.

Resource shared:

Older Adult Expo – April, Maine CDC

10:50 a.m. – Member Updates

Members shared updates, including information about the Maine Youth Leadership Conference. Participants were encouraged to share the opportunity with young people in their networks and invite them to attend and present.

Resources shared:

Conference information and registration: <https://www.myan.org/conference-registration-info>

Presenter application: <https://forms.gle/ZLEFAP2HvrMhooPa6>