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September 2025 Newsletter - Downeast Public Health Council

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Downeast Public Health Council September 2025 Newsletter



- [Healthy Aging](#)
- [Falls Prevention](#)
- [National Preparedness Month](#)
- [Telehealth Awareness](#)
- [Events/ Trainings](#)
- [News](#)
- [HANs](#)

Healthy Aging



Throughout life, from early childhood to later maturity, adopting and upholding healthy aging habits increases resilience and provides opportunities to thrive.

Older adults are vital contributors to society. In both official and informal capacities, such as volunteering or staying in the workforce, they help their families and communities. However, communities and older persons may suffer as a result of antiquated assumptions and expectations regarding aging. Older persons frequently have worse general health and wellness as a result of lack of work, educational, and social opportunities.

Data shows:

- People aged 65 years and older made up 17% of the population in 2020. By 2040, that number is expected to grow to 22%.
- 9% of Maine's population are 65 years and older.
- 8% of older adults in Maine have three or more chronic conditions.

The **Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's** Healthy Aging initiatives are grounded in research that shows:

Next Downeast Public Council Meeting
Friday, September 19, 2025
10:00 - 12:00 PM
[Eagle Hill Institute](#)

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 Zandoni, 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](#)

- Healthy aging begins early in life.
- Improving older adult health and well-being impacts all of society and people of all ages.
- Health disparities people experienced early in life often affect their health throughout the lifespan.

What can organizations do?

- Encourage people of all ages, including older adults to engage in physical activities by [Move Your Way®](#).
- Provide older adults with actionable and accessible health information using [MyHealthfinder](#).
- Encourage healthy eating patterns for older adults using the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).
- Incorporate the requirements of older adults and those with varying abilities into all of your organization's materials and merchandise.

Twenty of the Healthy People 2030 goals are especially centered on lowering health issues and enhancing older adults' quality of life. Healthy People 2030's population data make it easy to compare older adults' health to national targets. **Use the data to:**

- Set your own targets for your programs.
- Find practical tools, including evidence-based resources your community, state, or organization can use.
- Monitor national progress and use the data as a benchmark.

Get involved:

If you are interested in older adults' health join the Downeast Public Health Council: Older Adults Health & Safety Committee which is working towards a goal where **“All older adults will live in safe environments and have access to appropriate community wraparound services.”** Register: <https://forms.office.com/g/87vXWv6xwv>

Resources:

Healthy People 2030: [Older adults](#)

Maine Health Equity Profile: [Older adults](#)

Falls Prevention



Falls Prevention Awareness Week is a national health campaign observed on the first day of fall to increase awareness around falls health and injury prevention.

Data shows:

- 1 in 4 Americans aged 65 years or older fall each year.
- In 2021, falls caused 38,000 deaths among those age 65+, and emergency departments reported 3 million visits due to older adult falls.

Events/ Trainings

Fall 2025

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

October 6 & 7

[ICS 400- Advanced ICS for Complex Incidents](#)

October 9 & 16

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

October 27

[MPHA 2025 Annual Conference](#)

November 6 & 13

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

[More training and exercise: PHEP calendar.](#)

News

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

[2025 - 2026 COVID-19 Vaccine Updates](#)

[Locally Acquired Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus Identified in Maine Resident](#)

[Maine DHHS: Recognizing the Second Annual 988 Day of Action](#)

[Maine CDC Publishes PFAS Modeling Tool to Help Farmers Reduce Contamination in Meat](#)

[Mosquito-Borne Virus Identified in Maine Mosquitoes](#)

[Maine DHHS Alerts EBT Cardholders to Take Precautions Amid Reported Multi-State Benefit Theft](#)

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

HANS

[COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations](#)

[Eastern Equine Encephalitis in Maine Resident](#)

[Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome in a Maine Resident](#)

[Interim Local Guidance for Health Care Personnel with Illness or Exposure to Respiratory Viral Infections](#)

[Case of Congenital Syphilis in Maine and Recommendations for Prevention](#)

- In Maine (2022), the fall-related deaths in 65 years and older were 688.7/100,000 and fall-related injury (unintentional) emergency rate were 2,839.7/10,000.

Engage partners into falls prevention by:

1. Using current connections
2. Creating a solid network of new partners by determining needs, utilizing current connections, and researching and brainstorming local organizations, planning, and following up.
3. Communicating with partners: assign on-ground support, streamline your activities, and give priority to community-informed communication.

Resources:

[Falls Free Checkup](#)

[Six Steps to Help Prevent Fall](#)

National Preparedness Month



National Preparedness Month (NPM) is committed to equipping people, families, businesses, and communities with the information and tools they need to respond to and recover from crises. It offers an opportunity to remind everyone that they, their families, and their communities can stay safe by being prepared for crises and disasters.

NPM aims to empower a ready culture in communities rather than focusing only on individual readiness. Disaster preparedness reduces costs, expedites recovery, and saves countless lives.

Emergencies can happen when least expected. There are three primary categories for disasters: Natural Hazards (earthquakes, storms, wildfires), Human-caused incidents (terrorism, arson) and Technological hazards (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives).

There were 27 distinct weather and climate disasters in the U.S. last year, which resulted in at least \$1 billion in damage and around 600 fatalities.

On average one disaster or emergency was declared annually in Maine during prior decades. However, between March 2022 and May 2024, [nine natural catastrophes](#) were severe enough to warrant emergency declarations or Presidential Major Disaster, five of which in 2023 alone.

The [National Preparedness Goal](#) is described by FEMA as "A secure and resilient nation with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk."

Get involved:

[Air Quality Alert for Wednesday, August 13](#)

[Air Quality Alert for Southwest Coastal Region of Maine](#)

[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.



Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among Maine males. It is the fourth leading cause of death with a mortality rate of 22.4/100,000.

In Maine, 74% of prostate cancer cases are diagnosed at the localized stage, with 10 out of 10 surviving for 5 years after diagnosis.

Risk factors include age, family history or genetics, race, dairy or calcium, vitamin E and folic acid supplements.

Those between the age of 55 and 69 years should talk to their healthcare providers about the decision to screen or not screen for prostate cancer.

Know your cancer risk: [Take the Quiz](#)

[Find a screening location](#)



National Suicide Prevention Month/ National Suicide Prevention Week (September 7-13)/ World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10)

Maine has a suicide rate of 22.7 per 100,000 population. The rate of suicide related ED visits increased by 30% between 2017- 2023 where 91% had a

If you are interested in Emergency Operations Response and Health Care Delivery, join the Emergency Operations Response Committee that is working towards a goal where "All healthcare entities meet CMS requirements for emergency preparedness and planning." Register: <https://forms.office.com/g/87vXWV6xwv>

Health Care Facilities are encouraged to join Maine-Health Care Coalition: Downeast Chapter, send an email [here](#).

If you are in the Downeast region, reach out to [Hancock County EMA](#) or [Washington County EMA](#) for support on your emergency operation plans.

Resources:

[Get Ready](#)

[Maine Prepares](#)

Maine CDC: [Preparing for Emergencies](#)

Stay Informed:

- Sign up for emergency alerts from [MEMA](#)
- Register with [Maine HAN](#)

Telehealth Awareness



Telehealth is the use of technology to schedule healthcare appointments and provide services. It allows individuals to "see" a healthcare provider without having to go to their office. Visits are usually covered by MaineCare, Medicare, and most insurance companies.

The technology provides safe, affordable, and quality care to patients, clinicians, and healthcare systems across the country, delivering essential care whenever and wherever it's needed. Virtual care technologies have become even more accessible since the COVID-19 pandemic, and progressive organizations are using telehealth solutions to develop digitally enabled care models that improve clinical outcomes, provider satisfaction, and patient involvement.

Telehealth has many benefits:

- Saves time
- Economical as it eliminates transportation costs
- Expands scheduling flexibility
- Improve access to care in rural areas or for those affected by other social determinants of health.
- Mitigate the spread of infectious diseases by keeping sick patients out of waiting rooms.

[Telehealth and MaineCare FAQs](#)

[Free telehealth training](#)

[MCD Global Health: Implementing Telehealth Access Points to Improve Access to Care in Maine](#)

mental health diagnosis before the self-harm event.

Suicide is the second cause of death among Maine residents aged 15-44 years. In Downeast Maine, 150 suicide deaths occurred between 2023-2024.

Information is key to preventing suicide, learn the warning signs: [988lifeline](#).

Find resources for schools, healthcare providers, and individuals [here](#).

[NAMI-Maine](#) provides advocacy, education, and support so that all individuals, families, and communities affected by mental illness can live fulfilling lives.



National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day

September 18

This day acknowledges the increasing number of people who, because of major advancements in HIV treatment, are living long, full lives with HIV. The awareness day also draws attention to the special health and social requirements of older adults, as well as the difficulties associated with HIV prevention, testing, treatment, and care.

More than half of people living with diagnosed HIV in the United States and dependent areas are aged 50 and older. Some were diagnosed later in life, while others have lived with HIV for many years.

In 2021, roughly 41% of the people in the United States with HIV were at least 55 years old, and the number of older people with HIV is increasing.

[Aging with HIV](#)

[HIV and older people](#)

Find HIV testing or services [here](#).



"Happily we bask in this warm
September sun, which
illuminates all creatures." —
*Henry David Thoreau, American
Naturalist and Essayist (1817-
1862)*

*Sources: ODPHP, U.S. Census
Bureau, Maine CDC, American
Red Cross, SOM, FEMA, ACS,
Hiv.gov, NCOA, American
Telemedicine Association.*



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