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## Penquis Public Health Council

Date: May 7th, 2025

Location: Penquis in Bangor Baxter Conference Room  
& Virtual

262 Harlow St. Bangor, ME 04401

Time: 9am – 11am

Attendance: **Alsina Brenenstuhl**, Town Manager, Town of Dover-Foxcroft, **Becca Boulos**, Executive Director, Maine Public Health Association, **Cynthia Grass**, Public Health Nursing Sufooter, Maine CDC, **Colleen McCorkell**, Public Health Nurse, Maine CDC, **Edie Smith**, Regional Representative, Senator Angus King's Office, **Heather Drake**, Program Manager, Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment, **Heidi LeBlanc**, Chief Operating Officer, Penquis, **James Jarvis**, Family Physician & Faculty Teacher at the Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center's Family Medicine Residency Program, **James Markiewicz**, Associate Director, Maine CDC, **Jamie Comstock**, Health Promotion Manager, Bangor Public Health, **Jane Danforth**, Director of Grants and Community Wellness, Millinocket Regional Hospital, **Jen Gunderman**, Bangor Public Health and Community Services, **Jen Laferte-Carlson**, CH Manager, Northern Light Acadia, **Jessica Fogg**, District Liaison, Maine CDC, **Jessica Taylor**, Senior Director, Population Health and Care Transitions, St. Joseph's Healthcare, **Jessica Whitsell**, Disease Intervention Specialist, Maine CDC, **Kathy White**, Piscataquis County Economic Development Council, **Laura Gordon**, Executive Director, Heart of Maine Resource Center, **Laura Lacasse**, Community Health Coordinator, Northern Light, **Matt Donahue**, VP & Chief Impact Officer, Heart of Maine United Way, **Miranda Tilton**, Public Health Nurse, Maine CDC, **Rachel Robbins**, Penquis Public Health, **Roxane Dubay**, Tobacco Prevention, BPHCS, **Sue Andrews**, **Tyler Paquet**, Intern, Bangor Public Health and Community Services, **Hillary Starbird**, Director of Community Outreach, Northern Light Health

### 1. Welcome and Introductions (9:00 am)

- **Chair:** Jennifer Laferte-Carlson welcomed participants and initiated the meeting.
- All attendees made brief introductions.

### 2. Public Health Legislation Discussion (9:10 am)

- **Presenter:** Dr. Rebecca Boulos, Executive Director, Maine Public Health Association (MPHA)
- **Topics Covered:**
  - Overview of current public health legislation in Maine.
  - Emphasis on the implications of budget cuts to public health programs.
  - Encouragement for attendees to share personal stories with legislators and to reach out for support (contact: [rebecca.boulos@mainepublichealth.org](mailto:rebecca.boulos@mainepublichealth.org)).
  - Promoted APHA advocacy efforts:
    - [APHA statement on RFK](#)
    - [NIH universal vaccine initiative](#)
  - Suggested tools: APHA alerts, joining APHA, and the "5 Calls" app to contact representatives.
  - Edie Smith, Regional Representative: Sen. Angus King Office

- Encouraged attendees to contact their delegation offices regarding the cancellation of clinical trials through Northern Light Health (NLH). Suggested using phone or email via the official website portal. Recommended the app "[5 Calls](#)," which provides direct contact information for elected officials.

### 3. Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment (MeSCHNA) Review (10:05 am)

- **Presenter:** Heather Drake, Program Manager, MaineHealth
- **Topics Covered:**
  - Overview of the MeSCHNA process and planning timeline.
  - Fall target for stakeholder and community engagement to begin.)

### 5. Health Huddles: Exploring Topics, Sharing Resources, Building Connections (10:30 am)

- **Objective:** Promote collaboration and share resources across key health areas.
- **Discussion Format:** Open-table format organized by topic.

#### Topic Areas Discussed:

- Food Security
- Substance Use/Abuse (not addressed specifically)
- Mental Health
- Healthy Living / Aging in Place & Housing

Canva link to Health Huddles overview: [Health Huddles Design](#)

### 6. Closing Remarks and Next Steps (10:55am)

- Summary of key discussions and themes from presentations and huddles.
- Encouraged ongoing engagement with state representatives and use of shared resources.
- **Next Meeting:**
  - **Date:** August 6, 2025
  - **Time:** 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM
  - **Format:** Virtual Only
- Meeting was adjourned at 11:00am

Becca Boulos: APHA's statement re: RFK: <https://www.apha.org/news-and-media/news-releases/apha-news-releases/secretary-kennedy-and-his-policies-are-a-danger-to-the-public%E2%80%99s-health>

Becca Boulos: New vaccine proposal: <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/hhs-nih-launch-next-generation-universal-vaccine-platform-pandemic-prone-viruses>

## Summarized Notes from Health Huddles

### Food Insecurity

- **Rising Costs:** Food prices are increasing.
- **PRFC & BOK Grant:** \$10K grant for a greenhouse to support year-round production.
- **TEFAP Cuts:** Reduced availability, with 50-60% less food in Maine's network.
- **Emergency Food Cuts:** **EFSP** frozen until 2026; USDA programs ended, resulting in \$1M loss for Maine.
- **Distribution:** Monthly commodities for seniors and youth; 40% seniors, 20% youth served.
- **Hope House:** Provides food, housing solutions, and outreach.

### Housing

- **Penquis:** Potential resource for lead remediation in housing.
- **Issues:** Long waiting lists, affordability, and building restrictions.
- **Discrimination:** Focus on housing discrimination and AI policies.
- **Action:** Ongoing collaboration to address challenges.

### Mental Health

- **Public Health:** Increased screening and **PMADS** training for nurses.
- **Maternal Health:** New work group for improved maternal mental health services.
- **EMMC:** Free **Psychological First Aid** training (4-hour sessions).
- **College Mental Health:** Stigma around seeking support, especially among men 21-25. Therapy and suicide prevention are offered.