

# MPHA

Maine Public Health Association

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## ANNUAL REPORT



# A Message from MPHA's Executive Director & Board President

Dear MPHA Members, Supporters & Friends:

We remain inspired and grateful for the strength, resilience, grace, and deep commitment Maine's public health professionals demonstrates as we continue to respond to the demands placed on Maine's communities by the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of deferred resources. Thank you for giving so much of yourselves during this difficult time.

We've had a busy year at MPHA. We continued to offer regular trainings, working with partners on topics related to COVID-19 and ongoing public health challenges in Maine, including our annual conference in October. Our membership engagement efforts were enhanced by our member sections, mentor program, and new Advocacy Community of Practice.

We were honored to receive the American Public Health Association's Council of Affiliate's Outstanding Affiliate of the Year Award, recognizing our efforts to protect and promote public health in Maine. Becca Boulos, MPHA's Executive Director, Heather Drake, MPHA's Membership and Engagement Director, and Sarah Rines, MPHA's Past-President and Affiliate Representative to the Governing Council all presented at the APHA Annual Meeting (virtually), including hosting a coffee chat about the connection between time spent in nature and health.

Throughout the year, we continued to work across sectors to improve social, environmental, and political determinants of health, advancing efforts in areas such as housing, safe drinking water, chronic disease prevention, vaccination, and climate change resilience and adaptation. We had much success in the first session of the 130th legislature, advancing policies that invests in climate readiness, broadband, clean drinking water, and health care coverage. You can see our legislative report [here](#).

As we look ahead to 2022 and beyond, our priorities are to strengthen community-based, cross-sector partnerships, protect the tobacco master settlement for public health, extend our partnerships in advocacy and training, and increase our member engagement through our sections, committees, and mentor program.

Thank you for your ongoing support of public health in Maine.



Rebecca Boulos, MPH, PhD  
Executive Director  
Maine Public Health Association



Noah Nesin, MD  
Board President  
Maine Public Health Association



The background of the top half of the page is a photograph of the Maine State Capitol building. The building is a large, light-colored stone structure with a prominent central dome. The dome is topped with a dark, rounded cap. The building has many windows and is surrounded by green trees. The sky is blue with some light clouds. The text 'Highlights from our Advocacy Efforts' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a large, bold, green font.

# Highlights from our Advocacy Efforts

2021 was a busy and productive year as we submitted testimony, served on committees and coalitions, and educated our members about a diversity of policy topics.

In 2021, we:

- Submitted testimony for 86 bills – more than 4 times what we do in a typical, in-person legislative session – covering cancer prevention (tobacco, radon, arsenic, PFAS), climate change, housing, broadband, workforce, systems changes, and infrastructure. [Here is our 2021 legislative report.](#)
- Continued serving as the organizational lead on a bill that would protect Maine’s Master Settlement Agreement funds for tobacco prevention and public health (Trust for a Healthy Maine).
- Continued co-leading the public health sub-group of the Maine Climate Council’s Community Resilience Planning, Public Health and Emergency Management Working Group.
- Continued serving on Maine Climate Council’s Equity Subcommittee.
- Held legislative briefings for members about MPHA priority issues, including Trust for a Healthy Maine, Tobacco Policy, Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Tribal Populations, and establishing an Office of Health Equity.
- Held policy maker town halls on tobacco; the connection between climate change, transportation, and public health; and obesity.
- Participated in APHA’s Virtual Hill Day, meeting with Senators King and Collins, and in APHA’s Speak for Health campaign, meeting with Senator King.
- Met with Senator King about [Back from the Brink.](#)
- Participated in APHA’s Policy Action Institute.
- Published a [Letter to the Editor](#) in the Kennebec Journal about the public health impacts of Build Back Better.

# Developing a Stronger Public Health Workforce

A knowledgeable and skilled public health workforce is vital to ensuring a strong public health system. As such, at MPHA, we work with partners, including Maine AHEC/Maine Public Health Training Center, New England Public Health Training Center, and University of Maine, Augusta, to develop and deliver public health professional development and learning opportunities.

In 2021, we:

- Held 4 webinars in partnership with New England Public Health Training Center
  - **Park Rx: Exploring an Innovative Prescription Program, Health Benefits of Nature and Park Prescriptions**
  - **Health Equity Dialogues: Oral Health Equity**
  - **COVID-19's Impact on Mental Health in Immigrant Communities**
  - **Best Practices in Public Health Communication to Promote Equity and Inclusion**
- Co-hosted **Gettin' By: A Game of Scarcity** in partnership with Maine Public Health Training Center, for members of MPHA's Mentor Program, and as part of National Public Health Week.
- Co-organized Health Equity Dialogues with University of Maine Augusta on oral health, healthcare and health equity in transgender communities, and drinking water quality and health inequities.
- Held a 3-day, virtual annual conference with 20+ sessions, 22 poster presentations, and 300 attendees.
- Co-hosted **Creating Corridors for Active Transportation** with Bicycle Coalition of Maine and Maine Trails Alliance.
- Co-hosted a screening and panel discussion of the documentary, **Jacinta** with University of New England, AdCare Maine, and Maine Osteopathic Association.



MPHA's membership is the foundation of our work. Our members participate in programming, add new ideas, advocate for public health issues, and educate colleagues, students, policymakers, and the public about their work.

In 2021, we:

- Continued convening our **5 issue-based member sections** (alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; climate; health equity; obesity; and public health infrastructure). The groups produced:
  - **Substance Use in Maine: Increased Concerns with COVID-19 Impacts** (fact sheet)
  - **Policymaker Town Hall: Maine Climate Action Plan, Transportation and Public Health**
  - **Obesity: A Public Health Imperative Exacerbated by COVID-19** (fact sheet)
  - **Policymaker Town Hall: Obesity is a Chronic Disease**
  - **COVID-19's Impact on Mental Health in Immigrant Communities** (webinar)
  - **Best Practices in Public Health Communication to Promote Equity and Inclusion** (webinar)
  - **Maine's Public Health Infrastructure: An Overview** (storymap)
- Launched an ad-hoc, time-limited member section on COVID-19 vaccination promotion.
- Launched the first cohort of our Mentor Program with approximately 15 pairs.
- Developed and launched an Advocacy Community of Practice for members to learn about and practice engaging with policy makers.
- Grew individual membership to 550 members.
- Added 24 new organizational members.



**Engaging  
our  
Members**



# Strengthening Our Partnerships



The partners we work with enable us to have a stronger voice at the State House and a bigger impact on initiatives through collaboration and coordination. Our partnerships also enable us to demonstrate how far-reaching public health is, touching and impacting many facets of our daily lives.

In 2021, we:

- Received grant funding from Maine Community Foundation and The Bingham Program to help community members overcome transportation barriers to COVID-19 vaccination, testing and safe isolation/quarantine.
- Continued convening COVID-19 community task forces to connect with each other and facilitated trainings with state leaders.
- Partnered with U.S. PIRG and Maine Community Action Partnership to develop COVID-19 campaigns on mask wearing and vaccination uptake and several forums on vaccination.
- Partnered with the Maine American Academy of Pediatrics to launch a website for partners with vaccination information and resources – [mainevaccinepartners.org](https://mainevaccinepartners.org).
- Served on the steering committee for Maine’s State Public Health Systems Assessment.
- Serve as member of the Flavors Hook Kids campaign to end the sale of flavored tobacco products in Maine.
- Serve on the Environmental Priorities Coalition, which includes more than 30 environmental and public health organizations across Maine that come together to form one policy agenda.
- Joined other member organizations and coalitions including Maine Development Foundation, Maine Affordable Housing Coalition, Maine Alliance for Health & Prosperity, Maine Broadband Coalition, and Full Plates Full Potential Policy & Advocacy Coalition. Access the full list of our [advocacy](#) and [organizational](#) partners.

# With Gratitude to our Supporters

Thank You to the following organizations for their generous support of MPHA in 2021, including support of our 37th Annual Meeting, held virtually.

Green indicates organizational membership.

## 2021 Grant Funding

The Betterment Fund  
The Bingham Program  
Polinger Family Foundation  
Maine Cancer Foundation  
Maine Community Foundation  
Maine Health Access Foundation  
Maine Public Health Training Center/Maine AHEC  
New England Public Health Training Center  
Partners in Health  
Sewall Foundation

## Friend Supporters (<\$3,000)

American Lung Association, ME  
Bicycle Coalition of Maine  
Cary Medical Center  
Choose to Be Healthy Coalition  
Community Health Options  
Cumberland County Maine  
Ethos Marketing  
Good Shepherd Food Bank  
Groups Recover Together  
Healthy Acadia  
Healthy Androscoggin  
Healthy Communities of the Capital Area  
Healthy Living for ME  
Healthy Oxford Hills  
Husson University  
Jackson Laboratory  
Laura Blaisdell Consulting, LLC  
LymeTV  
Maine Affordable Housing Coalition  
Maine Conservation Voters  
Maine Council on Aging  
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Maine Development Foundation  
Maine Medical Center's Preventive Medicine  
Enhancement for Maine

## Silver Supporter (\$5,000)

MaineHealth  
Northern Light Health

## Bronze Supporters (\$3,000)

AdCare Maine  
Let's Go!  
MaineGeneral Medical Center  
Medical Care Development  
University of Southern Maine

Maine Hospital Association  
Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition  
Maine Lung Cancer Coalition  
Maine Medical Association  
Maine Medical Center CORE  
Maine Network of Healthy Communities  
Maine Resilience Building Network  
Market Decisions Research  
Midcoast Hospital  
Natural Resources Council of Maine  
New Mainers Public Health Initiative  
Northeast Delta Dental  
The Opportunity Alliance  
Partnership for Children's Oral Health  
Partnerships for Health  
Penobscot Community Health Care  
Portland Public Health  
Redington Fairview General Hospital  
Saving Smiles  
University of New England Center for  
Excellence in Public Health  
University of New England Westbrook  
College of Health Professions  
Volunteers of Northern New England  
WinterKids

# Mission

The Maine Public Health Association has served as The Voice of Public Health in Maine since 1984. We are the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent 550 individual members and 50 organizations across the state. The mission of MPHA is to improve and sustain the health and well-being of all people in Maine through health promotion, disease prevention, and the advancement of health equity. As a statewide nonprofit association, we advocate, act, and advise on critical public health challenges, aiming to improve the policies, systems, and environments that underlie health inequities – but which also have potential to improve health outcomes for all people in Maine. We are not tied to a national agenda, which means we are responsive to the needs of Maine's communities, and we take that responsibility seriously.

MPHA's guiding principles are to:

- Be the leading voice for public health policy and advocacy in Maine.
- Convene broad-based stakeholders and promote evidence-based and data-driven policy.
- Promote healthy communities and health equity.
- Engage members in our work.

MPHA has longstanding partnerships with several public health organizations across the state and is an affiliated association of the American Public Health Association (APHA). APHA is the national voice of public health and champions the health of all people and all communities. They are the only organization that combines a 150 year perspective, the ability to influence federal policy to improve the public's health and a member community from all public health disciplines and over 40 countries. Learn more at [www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org).