



ANNUAL REPORT

2022



Mission

Our mission: Improve and sustain the health and well-being of all people in Maine through health promotion, disease prevention, and the advancement of health equity.

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 more than 700 individual members and 60 organizations across the state.

As a statewide nonprofit association, we advocate, act, and advise on critical public health challenges. We aim to improve the policies, systems, and environments that underlie health inequities, and which have the potential to improve health outcomes for all people in Maine.

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)--the national voice of public health with 150 years of expertise and history. APHA influences federal policy to improve the public's health and it boasts a member community from all public health disciplines in over 40 countries. Learn more at www.apha.org.

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 of Maine's public health community as we continue to respond to the demands placed on Maine's communities by the COVID-19 pandemic and chart a path forward. 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, work with partners on topics related to COVID-19 and ongoing public health challenges in Maine, and hosted our annual conference last October. We enhanced our membership engagement through our member sections and mentor program.

We were honored to receive three awards at the 2022 American Public Health Association's Annual Meeting, and for our staff and a board member who were selected for national positions within APHA.

During the 130th Legislature, we influenced more than 100 pieces of legislation, more than five-times what we do in a typical session, across a wide range of public health issues. It was a very "balanced" session, with some exceptional wins, and some setbacks, for public health. Check out our [legislative report](#) for more details.

As we look ahead to 2023 and beyond, our priorities are to:

- strengthen local public health efforts,
- protect the Tobacco Master Settlement for public health initiatives,
- prevent youth tobacco and other substance use,
- 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



Jay Knowlton, MPH
Board President
Maine Public Health Association

Serving as Your Trusted Voice in Augusta

Legislators and partners look to MPHA to provide expert, fact-based testimony on public health issues because we are Maine's trusted public health voice. In 2022, we influenced more than 100 pieces of legislation related to cancer prevention (tobacco, radon, arsenic, PFAS), climate change, tribal sovereignty, broadband, public health workforce development, systems changes, and infrastructure.



"MPHA gives me the opportunity to put my voice into action through their policy advocacy and to help develop tools other health professionals can use to navigate Maine's governmental public health system"

— Christine Lyman, MSW, MPHA member for 25+ years

Advocacy highlights

In 2022 MPHA helped to:

- Pass local ordinances in Portland, Bangor, Brunswick, and South Portland to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products that attract and hook kids.
- Secure full funding for Maine's tobacco prevention and control program.
- Pass "An Act To Require the Inclusion of Racial Impact Statements in the Legislative Process"—a first step toward improving how public policy impacts historically disadvantaged racial populations.
- Pass legislation that requires drinking water systems to monitor for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS"), otherwise known as forever chemicals, and take steps to limit them.
- Pass legislation that establishes the Maine Climate Corps Program, supporting public health workforce development, volunteerism, and climate change readiness.
- Defeat measures that would have rolled back Maine's strong vaccination, smoke-free, and accessible voting laws.

Providing Expertise and Raising Visibility

In addition to engaging directly through testimony, we held legislative briefings for our members about MPHA priority issues, including Trust for a Healthy Maine, Fund for a Healthy Maine, Tribal population health, and drinking water safety. We also served on several statewide and local committees including:

- Maine Climate Council's Community Resilience Planning, Public Health, and Emergency Management Working Group, co-lead.
- Maine Climate Council's Equity Subcommittee
- Cumberland County's Community Health Improvement Plan Advisory Committee

In 2022, MPHA published and elevated position statements on critical public health issues, including reproductive health care, voting, and gun safety. Our staff and members also raised visibility in the media--Executive Director Becca Boulos weighed in on Supreme Court decisions that impacted people's health in the [Portland Press Herald](#) and co-authored a piece in the [Bangor Daily News](#) about how the Inflation Reduction Act is a win for public health in Maine.



*Photo & quote credit:
[Drew Johnson / The Forecaster](#)*

“As a community, we have a choice. We can end the sale of flavored tobacco products.”

— Tara K. Pelletier, DO
MPHA member speaking in favor of the South Portland flavored tobacco ordinance, [as featured in The Forecaster](#)

Developing a Stronger Public Health Workforce

A knowledgeable and skilled public health workforce is vital to ensuring a strong public health system. MPHA works with dozens of partners in Maine and across New England to conduct public health training and education. We also bring public health leaders together to learn from one another through networking events and our annual conference.



“MPHA is an incredible resource for health professionals and anyone in Maine who wants to work toward a safer, healthier future for our state.”

— Dora Anne Mills, MD,
MPH, FAAP
Chief Health Improvement
Officer, MaineHealth

In 2022, we expanded current initiatives, including growing our mentor program to 20 pairs of public health professionals that coached and developed students and early career professionals interested in public health careers. We also offered new training programs to students through our FocusMaine Food Policy Internship, and established a partnership with the Harold Alfond Center for the Advancement of Maine’s Workforce. A student member worked with MPHA staff and partners to design and administer a public health workforce survey. Results of the survey can be seen here in an [annual meeting presentation](#), and here in the [final report](#).

COVID-19: Responding to Needs and Charting a Path Forward

MPHA equipped health professionals and the public with tools to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Those efforts included organizing and co-hosting webinars that reached hundreds of people across Maine on issues like vaccinating children under 5 years, responding to mis- and dis-information, managing loss and grief, navigating a changing work landscape, and maintaining emotional well-being and health.

MPHA prioritizes health equity in our work to ensure all people in Maine have a fair and just opportunity to live the healthiest life possible.

In 2022, we developed and implemented a webinar series on Health Equity: From Information to Action through our Health Equity Member Section. The series included 10 webinars covering foundational topics of social determinants of health, social risk, and social equity, as well as topics such as tribal health, transgender health, youth mental health, and embedding a health equity lens into health improvement planning.

We also continued serving as a member of the Wabanaki Alliance, working to urge Maine's policymakers to acknowledge Wabanaki self-determination.

*"MPHA is an important part of making Maine's public health advocacy better. Their unwavering dedication to health justice and their efforts to work together in training and advocacy are admirable. I'm proud to be a part of a group that works hard to protect and improve the health of our community."
— Hibo Omer, MPH
Executive Director, New Mainers Public Health Initiative.*



*"As a social scientist in Maine, I look to MPHA for their expertise in equitable, engaged public health work. I always appreciate MPHA's commitment to centering community voices."— Liz Scharnetzki, PhD,
Co-lead of MPHA's Health Equity Member Section*

Strengthening Our Partnerships

We work with more than 60 partners statewide on our advocacy and training efforts, enabling education and cross-sector work to strengthen public health policies and practices.

In 2022, we convened COVID-19 community task forces to connect with each other, and facilitated trainings with state leaders. We engaged in efforts to reduce youth tobacco use as a member of the Flavors Hook Kids Coalition, promoted environmental health through the Environmental Priorities Coalition, advanced paid leave as part of the Maine Paid Family Leave Coalition, and urged state leaders to recognize the self-determination of tribes in Maine as part of the Wabanaki Alliance.

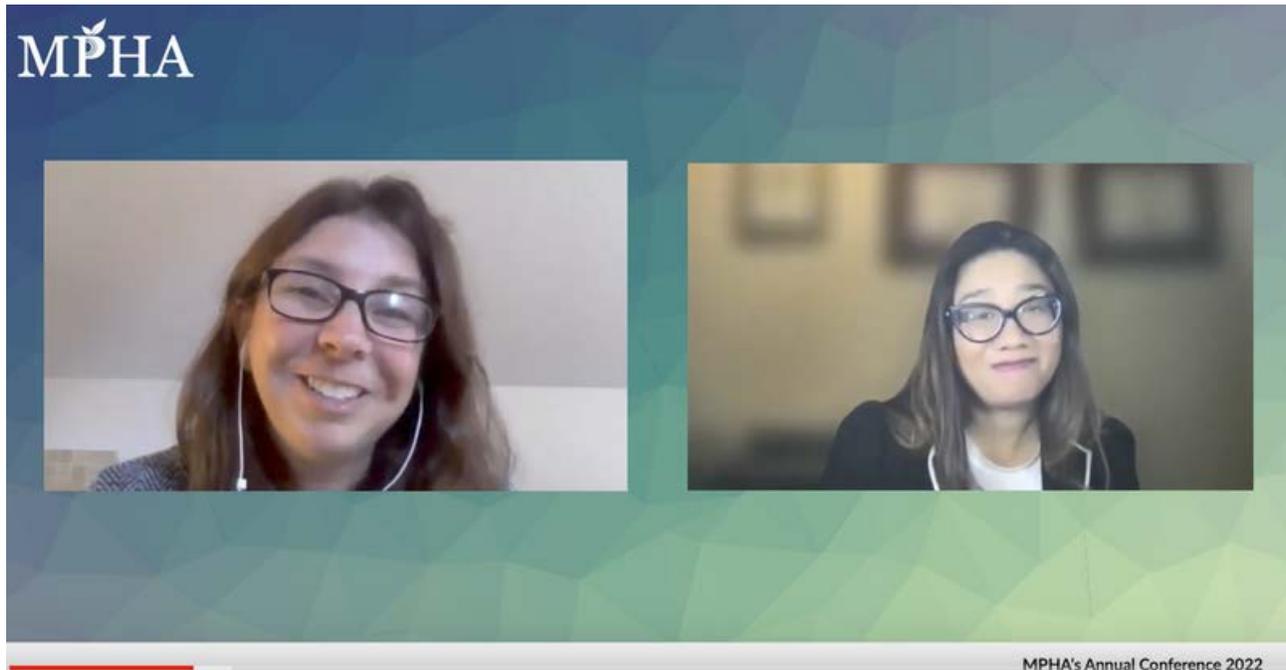
We also teamed up with the Maine Development Foundation and Maine Alliance for Health and Prosperity to promote and highlight the intersection between public health and the economy. Access the full list of our [advocacy](#) and [organizational](#) partners.



Gaining National Recognition and Leadership

As an affiliate of the American Public Health Association, we are offered opportunities to engage at the national level, working with other state affiliates and APHA staff. This enables us to showcase MPHA's work, learn from others, and grow professionally and organizationally. Last year, MPHA staff and board members won awards for our work, and were appointed to leadership positions in APHA. That includes board member Sarah Rines, who won the Council of Affiliates' Award of Excellence and was appointed its chair.

MPHA's Annual Conference: Adapting in Times of Adversity



Above: MPHA Executive Director Rebecca Boulos, MPH, PhD introduces keynote speaker, American Public Health Association President-elect, Chris Chanyasulkit, MPH, PhD

MPHA's annual conference is the largest public health gathering in Maine. Last year's virtual conference brought together more than 300 stakeholders to brainstorm, learn and engage in solutions to protect public health. Our theme, "Adapting in Times of Adversity: The Role of Public Health in Strengthening Maine's Communities," covered a range of topics in conference sessions, all of which are [available online](#).

Below: Heather Drake, MPH, MPHA's Membership and Engagement Director, speaks at the American Public Health Association conference



Keynote Highlight

We were thrilled to feature Dr. Chris Chanyasulkit, President-elect of the American Public Health Association as our keynote speaker.

Dr. Chanyasulkit discussed how stakeholders can influence and improve social determinants of health, emphasizing that "the best way to use your voice is to vote. Your health is always on the ballot."

Engaging Our Membership

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 2022, we grew to over 700 individual members and more than 60 organizations. Our membership has more than doubled over the last five years.

We developed creative and meaningful ways to engage our members, including through our member sections on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; climate; health equity; obesity; and public health infrastructure. We also continued our mentor program, and launched a new public health policy ambassador program that includes members interested in taking part in our advocacy efforts as expert spokespeople and policy researchers in their interest areas.

Member Section Spotlights

MPHA member sections produced and disseminated substance use prevention social media shareables, a health equity resource guide, and a toolkit for addressing obesity-related stigma and bias in health care and public health. The public health infrastructure section created a [story map](#) about Maine's governmental public health system, a valuable resource for anyone engaging on public health issues in Maine.

The sections also held webinars on the current state of PFAS and other relevant public health topics.

"I have been a member of the Board of Directors for the Maine Public Health Association for a number of years. As secretary of the board and a member of the executive committee I have had the privilege to experience, first hand, the important work and advocacy that MPHA represents in protecting the health of all of us who choose to live here in our great state."

—Bill Flagg, Director of Public Relations, Cary Medical Center





With Gratitude to Our Supporters

Thank You to the following organizations for their generous support of MPHA in 2022, including support of our 38th Annual Meeting.

Green indicates organizational membership.

2022 GRANT FUNDING

The Betterment Fund
The Bingham Program
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Maine Cancer Foundation
Maine Health Access Foundation

Maine Public Health Training Center/Maine AHEC
New England Public Health Training Center
Howard and Geraldine Polinger Family Foundation
Qualidigm
University of Maine, Augusta

GOLD SUPPORTER (\$10,000)
MaineHealth

SILVER SUPPORTER (\$5,000)
Northern Light Health

BRONZE SUPPORTERS (\$3,000)
AdCare Educational Institute of Maine
HealthReach Community Health Centers
MaineHealth Let's Go!
MaineGeneral Health
MCD Global Health
Portland Public Health
University of Southern Maine

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Green indicates organizational membership.

FRIEND SUPPORTERS (<\$3,000)

American Cancer Society-Cancer Action Network
American Lung Association, ME
Auburn, ME
Bicycle Coalition of Maine
Blaisdell Consulting
Bookkeeping207
Cary Medical Center
Catholic Charities Office of Maine Refugee Services
Children's Oral Health Network
Choose to Be Healthy Coalition
Community Health Options
Cross Cultural Community Services
Cumberland County, Maine
Defend Our Health
Downeast Health Research Collaborative
Ethos Marketing & Design
Full Plates Full Potential
Good Shepherd Food Bank
Groups Recover Together
GrowSmart Maine
Healthy Acadia
Healthy Androscoggin
Healthy Communities of the Capital Area
Help Me Grow
The Jackson Laboratory
LymeTV
Maine Affordable Housing Coalition
Maine Conservation Voters
Maine Council on Aging

Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maine Development Foundation
Maine Family Planning
Maine Hospital Association
Maine Indoor Air Quality Council
Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition
Maine Medical Association
Maine Network of Healthy Communities
Maine Resilience Building Network
Maine Osteopathic Association
Market Decisions Research
Mid Coast Hospital
MMC Preventive Medicine Enhancement for Maine Program
Natural Resources Council of Maine
New Mainers Public Health Initiative
Northeast Delta Dental
Oasis Free Clinic
The Opportunity Alliance
Partnerships for Health
Penobscot Community Health Care
Rinck Advertising
University of New England Center for Excellence in Public Health
University of New England Westbrook College of Health Professions
US PIRG
Volunteers of America, Northern New England
WinterKids

With Gratitude to Our Supporters

Thank You to the following individuals for their generous support of MPHA in 2022, including making an additional donation when they renewed their membership, supporting our annual awards ceremony, providing scholarships for student memberships, or donating as part of our annual appeal.

2022 MPHA INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

Jodi Beck

Sherri Billings

Allen Browne

Mary Dionne

Judy Feinstein

Michelle Fong

Sarah & Jeremy Gabrielson

Wayne & Nancy Gaynor

Erin Guay

Susan Kales

Ed Molleo & Dana Leeper

Anonymous (13)

WE ARE ALSO GRATEFUL TO MEMBERS OF MPHA'S BOARD FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT IN 2022 – WE ACHIEVED 100% BOARD GIVING!

Executive Committee

Jay Knowlton, MPH
(President)

Leo Waterston, MA (Vice-
President)

Maye Emlein, JD, MPH
(Treasurer)

Bill Flagg (Secretary)

Noah Nesen, MD (Past-
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Doug Michael, MPH

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Affiliate Representative to the Governing Council (ARGC) of APHA

Sarah Rines

Non-Voting Members

Stephen Sears, MD, MPH (Clinical
Advisor)

Nancy Birkhimer, MPH (Maine CDC
Liaison)