



**RESILIENCE IN ACTION:
A PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY
GUIDE FOR MAINE**

Introduction

Maine Public Health Association (MPHA) is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse organization dedicated to advancing public health in Maine. We represent more than 1,000 individual and 80 organizational members across the state.

Our mission is to advance the health of all people and places in Maine through advocacy, education, partnerships, and support for the public health workforce.

Data show that our zip code is a stronger predictor of our health status and outcomes than our DNA. At MPHA, we emphasize improving the policies, systems and environments that impact health because that's how we can make the deepest, most positive impact, for people in Maine.



MPHA is a fiercely non-partisan organization.

We rely on scientific evidence, real-world experience, and community feedback to inform our advocacy and training efforts.

The ensuing policy recommendations are based on our 44-year history working to protect and promote public health in Maine, data reports, and community conversations hosted across Maine in 2025/2026.

Priority Policies

The mission of Maine Public Health Association (MPHA) is to advance the health of all people and places in Maine. Our policy priorities for Maine's next Governor focus on the infrastructure we need to keep Maine's public health and healthcare systems resilient, residents safe, communities healthy, and economies thriving.

01 Build More Resilient Communities
Resilient communities have strong social connections, diverse local economies, well-integrated infrastructure, and adaptive capacity for change.

02 Healthcare When You Need It, Where You Need It
Reliable access to affordable healthcare means better health - and lower costs - for everyone.

03 Make Government Work Better for People
Efficiency, transparency and accountability in government means that people can have timely access to services and confidence in the security of public systems.

Build More Resilient Communities

Resilient communities have strong social connections, diverse local economies, well-integrated infrastructure, and adaptive capacity for change.

01 Ensure Economic Opportunity

- Invest in Maine’s downtowns, working with local Chambers of Commerce to support small businesses, revitalize parks, support libraries and community centers, and bolster economies.
- Invest in Maine’s outdoor recreation economy, increasing access to free and low-cost safe places for everyone to recreate and spurring job development.

02 Promote Healthy Environments

- Invest in better quality, more affordable housing, ensuring homes are well-built, resilient against extreme weather and ready for people to age in place; this includes investing in trades training and supply chain management.
- Expand programs that reduce exposure to harmful environmental toxins like PFAS, lead, radon, and arsenic.
- Continue investing in Maine’s climate resilience and sustainability through multi-sector partnerships, bipartisan policymaking, community partnerships, and funding.

03 Support Mental Health and Community Belonging

- Expand access to trauma-informed mental health and substance use prevention and treatment services, including for first responders, veterans, and youth.
- Establish a state office to research, draft, and implement innovative policies and programs to promote community belonging and combat social isolation across age demographics.

04 Support Wabanaki Sovereignty

- Support full implementation of the 22-consensus recommendations of The Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act (MICSA) to recognize the Wabanaki Nations’ inherent sovereignty and improve tribal health.

Healthcare When You Need It, Where You Need It

Reliable access to affordable healthcare means better health - and lower costs - for everyone.

01 Increase Access to Health Insurance and Services

- Expand affordable health insurance coverage, including for chronic disease management, mental health, and substance use, keeping costs low for patients and health systems.
- Expand broadband so that telehealth is available statewide and invest in libraries and community centers that can provide local access to telehealth.
- Expand access to mobile health services, care for individuals in state custody, virtual care, and technology for rapid consultation with specialty services.
- Ensure access to reproductive healthcare services, especially in rural areas.
- Promote access to primary care through coordinated federal, state, nonprofit, and private partnerships and investments.

02 Strengthen Healthcare Workforce and Infrastructure

- Invest in healthcare workforce training and retention, including for public health nurses, community health workers, and community paramedics.
- Address barriers to accessing obstetric care due to closing obstetric units and decreasing ob/gyn workforce, such as requiring health insurance reimbursement for doulas and funding a nurse midwife training program in Maine.
- Strengthen primary care through payment innovations and training and recruitment of primary care specialties.

03 Prevent Chronic & Infectious Diseases

- Stabilize state/local public health funding for substance use prevention, early intervention and treatment, healthy eating, and active living initiatives.
- Reduce infectious disease by promoting vaccination in community settings.
- Reduce chronic disease by supporting local food systems (e.g., food procurement policies), incorporating food as medicine into Medicaid programs, and investing in oral health care, particularly in school-based settings.
- Reduce the burden of cancer in Maine through investing in prevention, screening, early detection, and ongoing treatment programming.
- Implement testing and tracking in Maine's medical cannabis program.

Make Government Work Better for People in Maine

Efficiency, transparency and accountability in government means that people can have timely access to services and confidence in the security of public systems.

01 Streamline Government Services

- Work with the Rural Health Transformation Program and other statewide initiatives to reduce bureaucracy and red tape, and improve efficiency in government programming and service delivery.
- Review contracting practices and identify opportunities for efficiency to ensure state contractors are paid on time, and that accountability metrics are reviewed and shared with legislators.
- Review conflicts of interest policies for elected officials and staff; require abstention votes when conflicts arise and prohibit policymakers from introducing legislation that benefits them financially.

02 Modernize Maine's Infrastructure

- Invest in a proactive, cohesive, and accountable public health system.
- Invest in upgrades and repairs to roadways, wastewater, drinking water, and energy grids.
- Bolster the state's cybersecurity, protecting taxpayer data, municipal services, and utilities infrastructure.
- Invest in transportation infrastructure, helping ensure people can attend healthcare appointments, access nutritious foods, and get to work and school.
- Explore responsible use of artificial intelligence so that it helps improve public health and efficiency, without harming human and environmental health.
- Protect Maine's strong voting laws, ensuring voting is accessible and secure for all eligible voters in Maine.

Resources

Which specific policies can help us achieve these larger public health aims?
Below is a compiled list of resources from within Maine and across the U.S.

- ## 01 Build More Resilient Communities
- [Meeting the Moment: An Environmental Policy Guide for Maine \(2026-2031\)](#)
 - [Fund to Address PFAS Contamination](#)
 - [Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan](#)
 - [Making Maine Work Report Series](#)
 - [Maine Economic Vision 2035](#)
 - [Wabanaki Alliance Economic Reports](#)
 - [Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#)

- ## 02 Healthcare When You Need It, Where You Need It
- [Rural Health Transformation Program](#)
 - [Reducing Maine's Cancer Burden](#)

- ## 03 Make Government Work Better for People in Maine
- [Try to Imagine It's You: How Transportation Barriers are Hurting Maine and How We Move Forward](#)
 - [State of Maine's Democracy](#)
 - [Maine Artificial Intelligence Task Force](#)

Contact

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