

# Public Health Reimagined

A Blueprint for Building a Modern, Responsive, and Cost-Effective System of Public Health and Prevention for Maine



**Goal 1: Promote a vision for health and productivity** that attracts new businesses, strengthens Maine's workforce, and gives kids a hopeful future through bold leadership, innovative promotion, and public education.

## **Recommendations to raise the profile and relevance of public health among Maine people and government**

- A. Actively promote a simple, modern, and relevant understanding of public health and prevention
- B. Establish and define the leadership roles and responsibilities of the State Public Health Officer and ensure the position is funded and filled
- C. Engage district and community leaders in identifying opportunities and strategies to consistently raise the profile and relevance of public health
- D. Build a functioning system of Local Health Officers that is integrated with municipal governments, local health care providers, and emergency management systems

**Goal 2: Work smarter and connect the dots** by improving the skills, expertise, and integration of public health, emergency management, community hospitals, and public safety at every level of jurisdiction.

## **Recommendations to improve the focus, skills, and inter-connectedness of public health among state agencies**

- E. Affirm foundational public health services that must be performed by Maine's state health agency
- F. Provide tools and resources to ensure the impacts on health and childhood trauma are considered in all policies and strategies across all departments of state government
- G. Establish policies and practices that require and support a strong public health workforce

## **Recommendations to connect and integrate public health planning and advisory networks more firmly among all levels of government and government functions**

- H. Establish a minimum number of Public Health Communities within each of Maine's 9 Public Health Districts in which community partnerships can be supported and local public health protections and services can be delivered
- I. Support community and district-level public health partnerships in establishing formal and informal linkages with other planning, program, and service-delivery entities to improve coordination, collaboration, efficiency, and effectiveness
- J. Require reciprocal representation among all levels of Maine's public health planning and advisory system

**Goal 3: Support local solutions** by rebuilding and revitalizing Maine's community health infrastructure and public-private partnerships.

**Recommendations to strengthen Maine's community health infrastructure**

- K. Identify and fund at least one competent and qualified community health coalition in each of Maine's Public Health Communities
- L. Establish and fund basic and essential public health services and staffing, including public health nurses, for all Public Health Districts and Public Health Communities
- M. Define non-clinical community health workers, paraprofessionals, and lay health worker functions that support public health services and staffing, phasing in funding for priority regions

**Goal 4: Create fair and equal opportunities for success** by addressing geographic and demographic differences in Mainers' access to high quality health information and preventive care.

**Recommendations to solidify Maine's commitment to ensuring health equity and addressing health disparities**

- N. Assure and fund the Tribal Health District
- O. Revise and fund an Office of Health Equity that is advisory to and reports directly to the Commissioner of DHHS and is accessible to every administrative department

**Goal 5: Take the politics out of prevention** by retooling how we set public health priorities, maximize the use of federal funds, and allocate Maine's tobacco settlement.

**Recommendations to improve resource attainment and evidence-based priority-setting**

- P. Establish a quasi-governmental entity to receive and allocate Maine's tobacco settlement funds in such a manner as to fully fund tobacco prevention and control efforts and to support other State Health Improvement Plan priorities
- Q. Designate the Maine Public Health Institute as an agent of Maine DHHS for the purpose of applying for federal funds to support public health research and programming

