

Public Health Reimagined

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



Why Now?

The value of good health

Good health is good for our families and good for our pocketbooks. It makes Maine a place where businesses want to be and where young people want to stay. Good health changes everything – healthy kids are ready to learn, workers are more productive, seniors can stay in their homes, and employers spend less on insurance coverage.

Concerning trends in Maine

Preventing illness, injury, and childhood trauma, rather than paying for them after the fact, is just common sense. But Maine's commitment to public health and prevention has faltered, leaving us exposed and flat-footed in the face of emerging health threats and workforce shortages.

Health and productivity at risk

Today's threats to health and productivity include vaping, opioids, unvaccinated children, lead poisoning, Lyme disease, asthma, traumatic experiences in childhood, and the harsh reality that not every family has insurance, or even a family doctor.

Maine employers are struggling with high health insurance costs and the challenges of maintaining a healthy workforce. At the same time, our kids are being set up for a lifetime of poor health. Their readiness for school, the workforce, and military service will be impacted, and there will be a ripple effect on Maine businesses and Maine's economy for generations to come.

We can do better

This country's best public health systems are modern and nimble, with dynamic leadership and equitably-distributed resources so all families and communities can stay healthy and be prepared for health risks, epidemics, and emergencies.

Concerning Trends – THE FACTS:

VAPING: 1 out of 6 high school students in Maine is now using a vaping product, which include Juul and e-cigarettes¹, and 99% of these products contain nicotine².

OPIOIDS: 1 person is dying every day in Maine, on average, from an opioid-related drug overdose.³

YOUTH SUICIDE: 1 out of 14 high school students attempted suicide in the last year⁴. Maine's suicide rate among youth and young adults is **30% higher** than the U.S. rate⁵.

DIABETES: 1 out of 9 Maine adults has diabetes and 1 out of 3 has prediabetes, with health complications costing \$1.6 billion in Maine every year⁶.

TICKS & LYME DISEASE: 1,769 Mainers were diagnosed with Lyme disease in 2017, an increase of 27% in 5 years⁷.


INFANT & MATERNAL MORTALITY: Twice as many women die in childbirth than just 2 years ago⁸, while Maine's infant mortality rate is 40% higher than it was 15 years ago⁹.

IMMUNIZATIONS: 1 of every 20 Maine kindergarteners has not been vaccinated against measles, chicken pox, and pertussis – twice the national average¹⁰

Five Common Sense Goals →

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Five Goals to building a modern, responsive, and cost-saving system of public health and disease prevention for families and businesses across the state:

- 1 Promote a vision for health and productivity**
Provide bold leadership, tenacious promotion, and public education to attract new businesses, strengthen Maine's workforce, and give kids a hopeful future.
- 2 Work smarter and connect the dots**
Improve the skills, coordination, and integration among public health, emergency management, public safety, and health systems at every level of jurisdiction.
- 3 Support local solutions**
Invigorate Maine's community health infrastructure and public-private partnerships.
- 4 Create fair and equal opportunities for success**
Address geographic and demographic differences in Mainers' access to high quality health information and preventive care.
- 5 Take the politics out of prevention**
Retool how we set public health priorities, maximize the use of federal funds, and allocate Maine's tobacco settlement.

We have the resources

We have the resources for a high-performing system of public health and community-based prevention that supports Maine employers and families. We must use our tobacco settlement funds wisely and efficiently; draw down federal funding whenever possible; and harness Maine's tremendous people-power by engaging public health experts, supporting public-private partnerships, and activating communities in collaborative problem-solving.

It's time to do what Maine does best: lead

We need to roll up our sleeves and get to work, building a modern, responsive, and community-focused public health system that supports kids in the classroom, keeps workers on the job, and helps families stay strong and thriving.

Learn more at:
PublicHealthReimagined.com

Public Health Reimagined is a project of The Bingham Program • FMI: lisa@publichealthreimagined.com

SOURCES

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