

**Primary Care Access in Maine**  
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**A LITTLE BACKGROUND...**

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- Maine is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most rural state in the U.S. (U.S. Census, 2010)
- Maine has the highest median age in the U.S. (U.S. Census, 2010)
- Maine ranks 28th in per capita personal income among the states (U.S. Census, 2012)
- Despite these challenging factors, Maine is among the most healthy states in the U.S., ranked #9 by the United Health Foundation

**ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE IN MAINE**

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- Maine's health sector is the largest in the nation (health sector employment as a percentage of statewide employment, Maine Dept. of Labor, 2010). This is a function of both rurality and age of population.
- Maine joins most other New England states in having the highest primary care physician rates per capita (Association of American Medical Colleges, 2011). Maine has 1.5 primary care physicians/1000 while the U.S. has 1.2/1000.
- There are, nevertheless, 100 unfilled openings for primary care physicians in Maine (Dean, University of New England College of Medicine, 2013).
- Maine had generous Medicaid coverage in the past (going somewhat beyond the ACA expansion recommendations) and did NOT experience a provider access emergency (in 2010, 11% were uninsured in Maine vs. 15% in the U.S.) We have made significant cuts since then.
- Maine will NOT be a Medicaid expansion state.

**WHAT DOES THIS RURAL STATE HAVE IN PLACE TO ADDRESS PRIMARY CARE ISSUES?**

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*Physicians*

- Maine has had an osteopathic medical school for 35 years at University of New England; *60% of the grads go into primary care.* Twenty-five percent of the physicians in rural Maine are UNE grads. *By 2015 the class size will increase from 124 to 225.*
- An allopathic medical school was established in 2009 by Tufts Medical School and Maine Medical Center. *This program has a strong rural primary care focus and close linkages with family practice residencies.*

### ***Physician Assistants***

- UNE offers a 24-month PA Program which graduates about 45 students per year. *The program will be expanding through funds from the ACA.*

### ***Nurse Practitioners***

- Maine has five advanced practice nurse training programs. Expansion is difficult due to faculty shortages. *The profession is building geriatrics into the nursing competencies in Maine.*
- Maine still lags behind the U.S. in the proportion of employed nurses that are in advance practice: 6.4% in Maine vs. 8.5% in the U.S. (Maine Dept. of Labor, 2012)
- *Maine has one of the most liberal scope of practice laws for APRNs in the country*
- Very few APRNs have set up independent practices

### ***Workforce Planning***

- The Maine Legislature established a Health Workforce Forum in 2005 to address current and projected workforce needs. The Forum is a statewide group of public and private sector stakeholders committed to ensuring a sufficient supply and qualified health and long term care workforce in Maine.

## **MAINE IS SHORING UP ITS PRIMARY CARE SYSTEM THROUGH A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES**

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- Patient-centered medical homes (100+ NCQA-recognized practices)
- 80 MaineCare Health Home practices (funded through Medicaid and ACA)
- 14 Federally-qualified rural health centers in a CMS payment reform initiative to promote advance primary care practices
- \$33 million ACA award to State Medicaid Program to use Maine's rich data systems to strengthen primary care delivery and reform payment systems
- In all these initiatives, there is significant participation by private sector payers and providers
- *Payment reform will be the ultimate tool to strengthen primary care and improve access!*

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