



Children's
Oral Health
Network
of Maine

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear friends of children's oral health,

As 2022 wraps up, I would encourage you to pause for a moment and celebrate some of the historic oral health developments of this monumental year. It is heart-warming to see how the seeds of many years of hard work have bloomed this year, and how the collaborative effort by the partners in this Network helped feed this momentum.

Whether you are most excited about the restoration of Maine CDC's State Oral Health Coordinator position, expansion of the state's School Oral Health Program, implementation of the MaineCare adult benefit, redesign of MaineCare's dental rates, launch of the Virtual Dental Home pilot, testing of innovative medical-dental integration models, establishment of the Oral Health Equity Collaborative, or the development of the Oral Health Navigator role as a new stepping stone into an oral health career pathway, and many more.... There is plenty in this mix for all of us to celebrate!

This annual report provides a brief overview of this Network's activities in 2022, and this is just the tip of the iceberg. For more depth and detail on all the work that is happening, please spend some time on www.maineconh.org, sign up for our [E-News](#) to stay current with network activities, come to our next network-wide gathering, or get involved in any part of the work that interests you.

While some huge milestones were accomplished this year, there is plenty of work that remains ahead of us. As always, we are honored to be working shoulder-to-shoulder with so many terrific partners who are helping drive forward COHN's shared mission to ensure that all children in Maine can grow up free from preventable dental disease!

Becca & Kalie

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2022 Annual Report available online:
www.maineconh.org/what-we-do/comms

COHN Steering Committee

In August COHN's new steering committee came together for the first time with the goal of providing collaborative leadership for the shared vision and work of the Network. This group is entrusted with guiding network activity; ensuring the network is functioning well; supporting COHN communication, strategic priorities, and events; and advising the COHN Board of Directors on the resource needs of the Network.



Photo from L-R: Kalie Hess, COHN; Lyvia Gaewsky, From the First Tooth; Kate Christiansen, Maine CDC; Dr. Kailee Williams, Waterville Community Dental Center; Beth Pearce, Maine Primary Care Association; Ayla Allen, Mainely Teeth; Sherry Laliberte, Medical Care Development/Maine CDC School Oral Health Program; Becca Matusovich, COHN; Sarah Lewis, Maine Access Immigrant Network.

Not pictured: Regina Phillips, Cross Cultural Community Services; Sanaa Abduljabbar, Maine Access Immigrant Network; Dee Kerry, Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Dr. Albert Abena, University of New England College of Dental Medicine; Tracey Jowett, University of Maine at Augusta; and Morgan Hynd, the Bingham Program.

Oral Health Equity

By striving to create an oral health system that meets the needs of all children in Maine, COHN's strategic work is founded on equity as a core principle. We aim to bring preventive oral health care to children and create systems of care to connect children to treatment as easily as possible, breaking down structural and systemic barriers to care. For example, COHN partners are working to strengthen the capacity of dental providers and collaborating with community-driven organizations to better serve BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities, children with disabilities and those in the foster care system, and families who live in rural areas or in poverty.

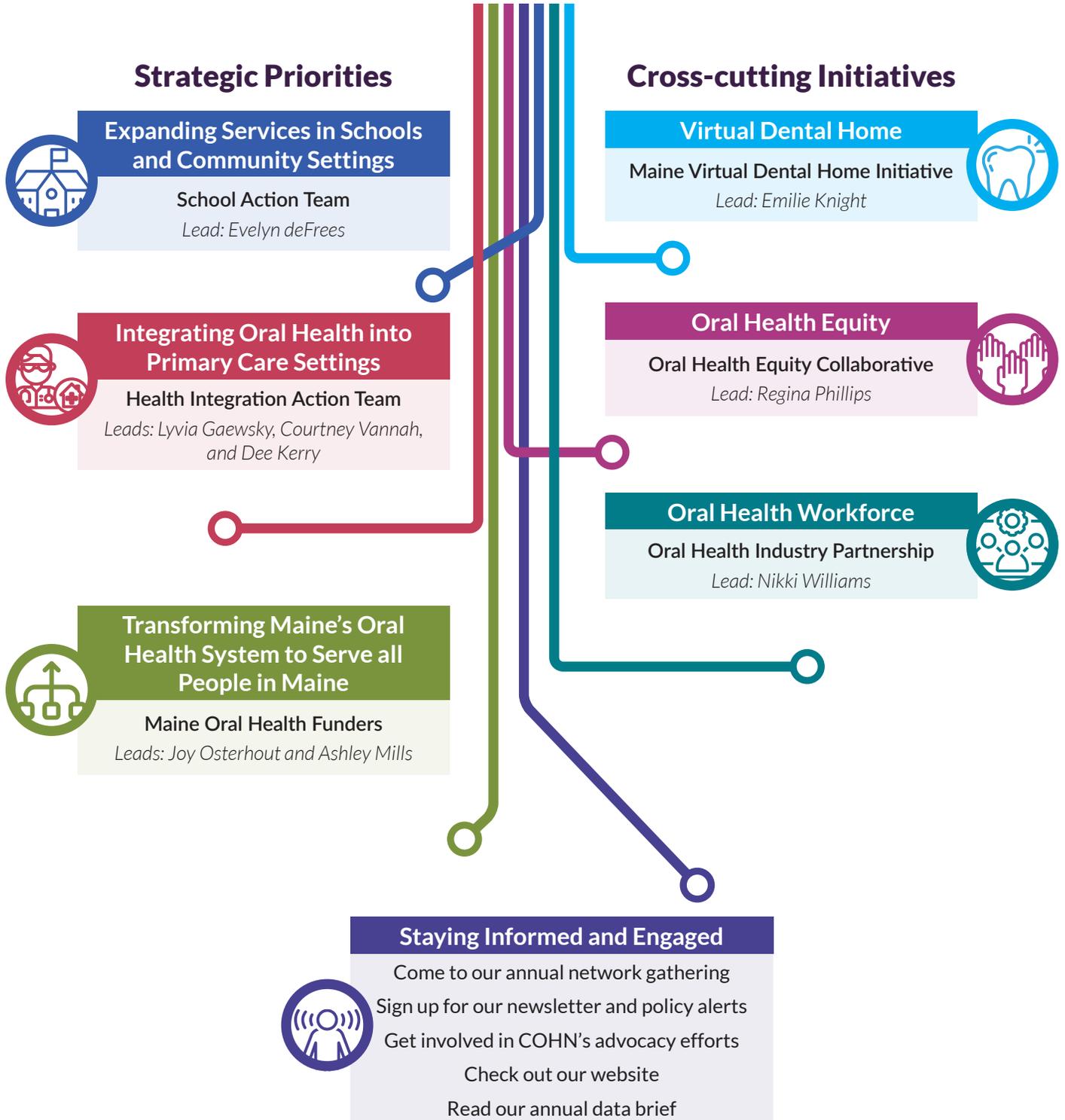
Addressing inequity through COHN's strategic priorities:

- 1. Providing oral health services in school and community settings** removes transportation, financial, and other barriers that keep children from getting preventive care before dental disease sets in.
- 2. Integrating oral health into primary care settings** brings early preventive services to the primary care setting, where most children receive consistent, regular health care from birth to age 5 with a trusted primary care provider
- 3. Transforming the oral health system to serve all people in Maine** ensures that the dental providers serving historically underserved communities are able to sustain high quality services.

Engage with COHN



There are a growing number of pathways for partners to engage in the work of improving children's oral health. See the range of efforts COHN members are undertaking, along with the lead partners for these efforts.



2022 Progress on COHN's Strategic Priorities



Expanding Access to Preventive Oral Health Care in Schools, Preschools, and other Community Settings

Led by the School Action Team

LD 1501: An Act to Protect Oral Health for Children in Maine was incorporated into the supplemental budget for State Fiscal Year 2023. This orders the expansion of Maine CDC's School Oral Health Program to all schools by 2025 and restores the Oral Health Coordinator position to provide state leadership on oral health.

With leadership from Medical Care Development and the Maine CDC School Oral Health Program, COHN has been supporting the development of a role we are calling an Oral Health Navigator to provide a new entry point into public-health oriented dental career pathways. We have been awarded funding from the Maine Department of Labor to develop this role as well as to strengthen other aspects of existing oral health career pathways.

COHN has been supporting Partnerships for Health to conduct a financial analysis of school oral health service delivery models to inform a sustainable and coordinated future system of school-based oral health care.

COHN partners compiled a [resource for school nurses](#) to explain the school-based oral health services that are already available to students and how to access them.



Sherry Laliberte provides hygiene care to a child as part of the Maine CDC School Oral Health Program



Integrating Oral Health into Primary Care

Led by the Health Integration Action Team

As the result of a strategic planning process, From the First Tooth (FTFT) will now address oral health integration for people up to age 21 and facilitate expansion of a broader range of oral health services in the medical office setting.

To bring the HIAT "integration rainbow" to life, Health Integration Action Team partners have launched several collaborative projects to design and test different models of integrating preventive dental services into primary care. These projects include building a hygienist into the primary care team, giving primary care providers the tools for E-Consults and early intervention, and producing a video series containing timely oral health information for caregivers at well-child visits.



Dr. Norma Desjardins and Therese Cahill from the Maine Dental Association and Dr. Jeff Stone and Dr. Laura Blaisdell from the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics have an historic first meeting of the associations to partner on children's oral health issues

COHN convened an historic first meeting of the Presidents of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Maine Dental Association. The group emerged with great enthusiasm for several shared goals to increase collaborative efforts across the leadership and membership of these two key professional associations that are well positioned to impact children's oral health.

2022 Progress on COHN's Strategic Priorities



Transforming Maine's Oral Health System to Serve all People in Maine

Led by the Maine Oral Health Funders Advisory Board

The Maine Oral Health Funders, with leadership from Maine CDC, supported the convening of stakeholders from across the state to tackle an oral public health workforce plan. The focus includes considering innovative care delivery models to maximize the reach and capacity of our oral health workforce to serve more of Maine's population in need of care.

With the expansion of MaineCare to include comprehensive oral health coverage for adults, Maine Equal Justice and Consumers for Affordable Health Care are working to help people become aware of the benefit and find a provider, and to ensure that the new benefits are implemented as effectively as possible to improve access to care among historically underserved communities.

The Maine Oral Health Centers Alliance, a group of non-profit dental centers, are working together to troubleshoot shared challenges around workforce, navigate MaineCare requirements, and advocate for policy improvements to better provide services to their patients, many of whom have had very limited access to dental care.



Dr. Norma Desjardins, Bonnie Vaughan, Karen Palleschi, and Dr. Barbara Covey, leaders from the Maine Oral Health Centers Alliance, pose with their awards



Kate Christiansen and Sherry Laliberte present the Maine Oral Health Centers Alliance with an award on Maine CDC's celebration of Rural Health Day

Until Maine has a truly sustainable oral health system that has the capacity to address the needs of the whole population, the providers serving people who are uninsured or who have MaineCare need ongoing financial support to keep their doors open. MOHF is providing operational support to the non-profit dental centers and mobile school-based programs to allow them to continue providing core oral health services until financial sustainability through reimbursement is a reality.

Cross-cutting Initiatives



Virtual Dental Home

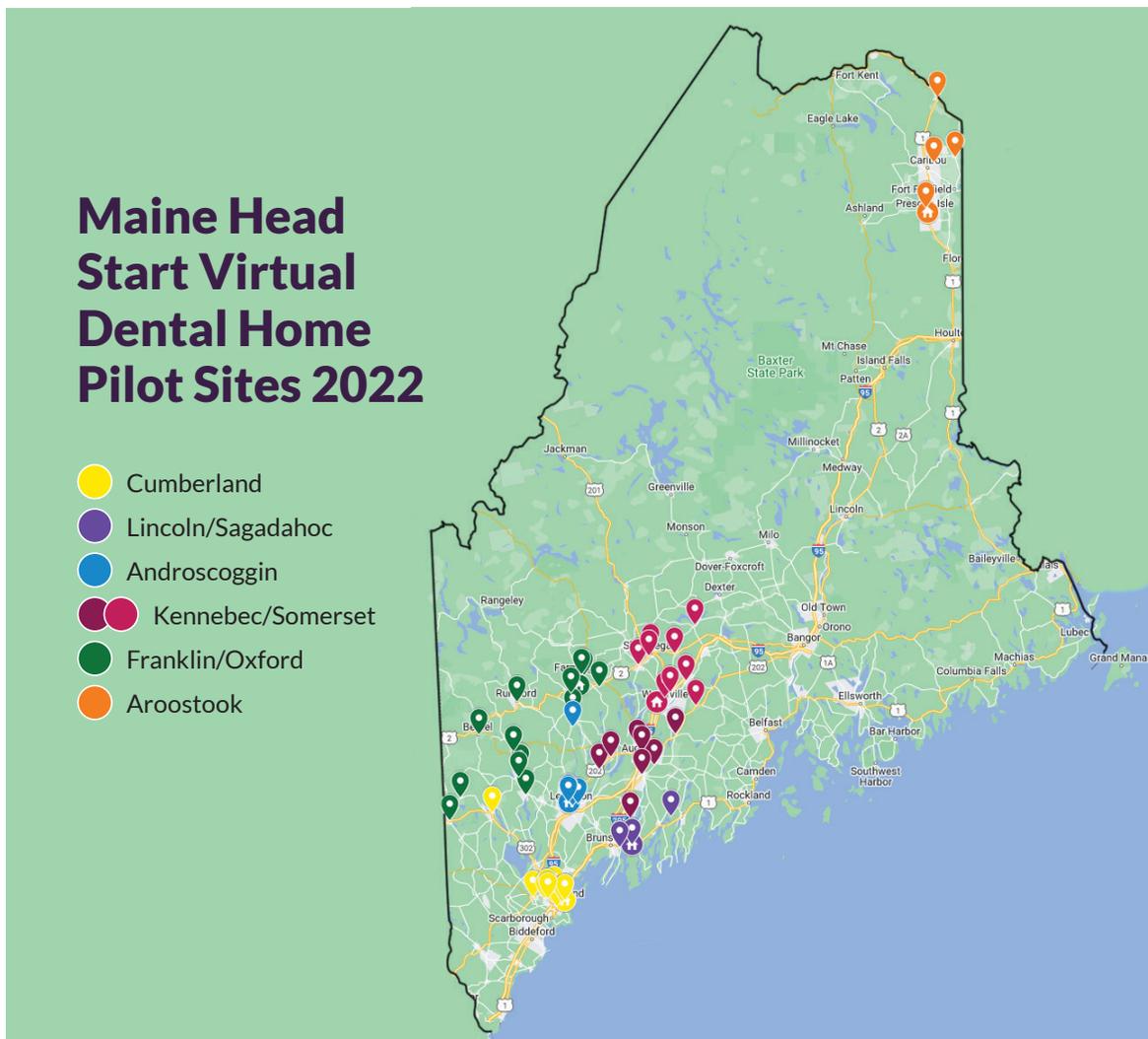
Providing children access to a comprehensive dental home with all preventive care delivered in their childcare, school, or primary care setting



Karen Palleschi, Jessie Albert Dental and Orthodontic Center, shares her experience with the VDH model

During the '21-22 school year, the Virtual Dental Home Head Start pilot was active in three counties and engaged two non-profit dental offices, one mobile clinic partner, and three Head Start agencies.

With the award of Congressional Project Funding, the pilot has now expanded to nine counties, with six Local Implementation Teams aiming to provide VDH services at 65 Head Start sites in the 2022-23 school year.



Cross-cutting Initiatives



Oral Health Equity Collaborative

building an oral health equity plan in Greater Portland and informing statewide equity efforts

In 2022, Cross Cultural Community Services, with support from COHN, established the Oral Health Equity Collaborative (OHEC): a collaborative of BIPOC-led community organizations (Cross Cultural Community Services, Maine Access Immigrant Network, and City of Portland Public Health Division's Office of Minority Health) with key local oral health providers (Community Dental, Greater Portland Health, and Mainely Teeth), and dental school educators (University of New England). This group has developed an oral health equity plan focused on addressing and improving oral health outcomes and disparities for black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in greater Portland.

OHEC goals:

Goal 1: Grow capacity of providers who take MaineCare and have a sliding fee scale to serve more (all) families.

Goal 2: Strengthen capacity of providers to provide culturally relevant care to those who face additional barriers to oral health.

Goal 3: Strengthen capacity of community-based organizations to help their communities access care and achieve oral health and to develop relationships with provider organizations to continually improve how the providers do their work.



Oral Health Workforce

envisioning and creating the public oral health workforce needed to meet the needs of all Maine children

This year, COHN was awarded funding from the [Maine Department of Labor/State Workforce Board's](#) Maine Industry Partnerships for Workforce Development Initiative and from the Maine Health Access Foundation to address oral health workforce challenges.

The Oral Health Industry Partnership will grow the oral health workforce statewide by creating a new entry point on the oral health career pathways leading to dental assistants and dental hygienists, both of which are high-wage high-demand jobs. This initiative aims to expand the diversity of Maine's oral health workforce, strengthen relationships with underserved communities, and improve community-based oral health care.

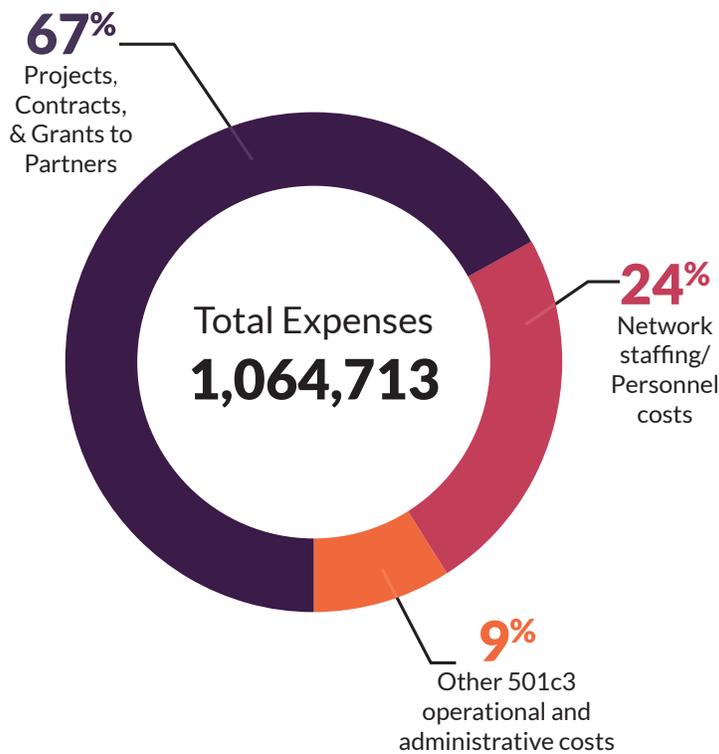
2022 Financial Report

The Children’s Oral Health Network has been very fortunate to have had consistent core funding provided by the Sadie and Harry Davis Foundation from the beginning. This funding supports our small staff and the costs of operating the 501(c)3 organization that provides backbone support for the Network, as well as seed funding for action teams and initiatives. We recruit additional project funding to pass through to partner organizations to support their capacity to work toward COHN’s shared vision. We also help partners develop their own grant proposals to fund Action Team initiatives.

2022 was an exciting year on many fronts, and not least because it was a breakthrough year for securing funding for several major initiatives. In particular, we were thrilled that Senator Collins, Senator King, and Representative Pingree all helped bring Maine \$650,000 in Congressional Project Funding / Congressionally Directed Spending to support our Virtual Dental Home pilot. COHN also was awarded a State contract from the Maine Department of Labor’s State Workforce Board for \$545,600 in American Rescue Plan Act funds to support a two-year initiative to develop the Oral Health Industry Partnership.



We offer special thanks this year to the Board of the Children’s Oral Health Network of Maine for the past 5 years of hard work to get this Network launched. We appreciate their solid dedication and management of the resources that make it possible for the Network to do its work!



Thanks To Our 2022 Funders

- Sadie & Harry Davis Foundation*
- Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
- Betterment Fund*
- Maine Community Foundation’s Harry E Davis Partnership for Children’s Oral Health Fund*
- Maine Health Access Foundation
- Proctor & Gamble Foundation/ P&G Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation
- Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation

*Core operational funders

Partner Organizations

The Children's Oral Health Network is only as strong as those who join forces to get the work done. Our sincere gratitude to the growing list of partners in Maine who are working together to make sure all children can grow up free from preventable dental disease.



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of Maine

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine
Advancing Oral Health in the Safety Net
Aroostook Community Action Program
Betterment Fund
Bingham Program
Catholic Charities of Maine, Jessie Albert Dental
and Orthodontic Center
Community Clinical Services
Community Concepts, Inc.
Community Dental
Consumers for Affordable Health Care
Count ME In!
Cross Cultural Community Services
Cumberland County Public Health
Greater Portland Health
Hanley Center for Health Leadership
Health and Education Communication Consultants
Helping Hands with Heart
In Her Presence
Island Dental
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program
Kennebec Valley Family Dentistry
Klingenstein Philanthropies
Knox County Dental Clinic
Lincoln County Dental
Maine Access Immigrant Network
Maine Association of School Nurses
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Maine Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
Maine Children's Alliance
Maine Community Action Partnership
Maine Community Foundation
Maine Congressional Delegation
Maine Dental Association
Maine Dental Health Out-Reach, Inc.
Maine Dental Hygiene Association
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Developmental Disabilities Council
Maine Equal Justice
Maine Health Access Foundation
Maine Health Data Organization

Maine Medical Association
Maine Oral Health Center Alliance
Maine Oral Health Coalition
Maine Oral Health Funders
Maine Parent Federation
Maine Primary Care Association
Maine Public Health Association
Maine Resilience Building Network
Maine School Nurses Association
Maine School Oral Health Program
MaineGeneral
MaineHealth
Mainely Teeth
Medical Care Development
Mercy/Dr. Harry E Davis Pediatrics
Midcoast Maine Community Action
New England Rural Health Association
New Mainers Public Health Initiative
North Theory Ventures
Northeast Delta Dental
Northeast Telehealth Resource Center
Northern Light Health
Partnerships for Health
Pivot Point Inc.
Portland Division of Public Health
Promise Early Education Center
Root Cellar
RSU 13
Sadie & Harry Davis Foundation
Saving Smiles of Maine
Southern Kennebec Child Development Corp.
St. Apollonia Dental Clinic
Sunrise Opportunities
The Opportunity Alliance
University of Maine at Augusta
University of New England
University of Southern Maine
Wabanaki Public Health
Waldo Community Action Partners
Waldo County Dental Clinic
Waterville Community Dental Center