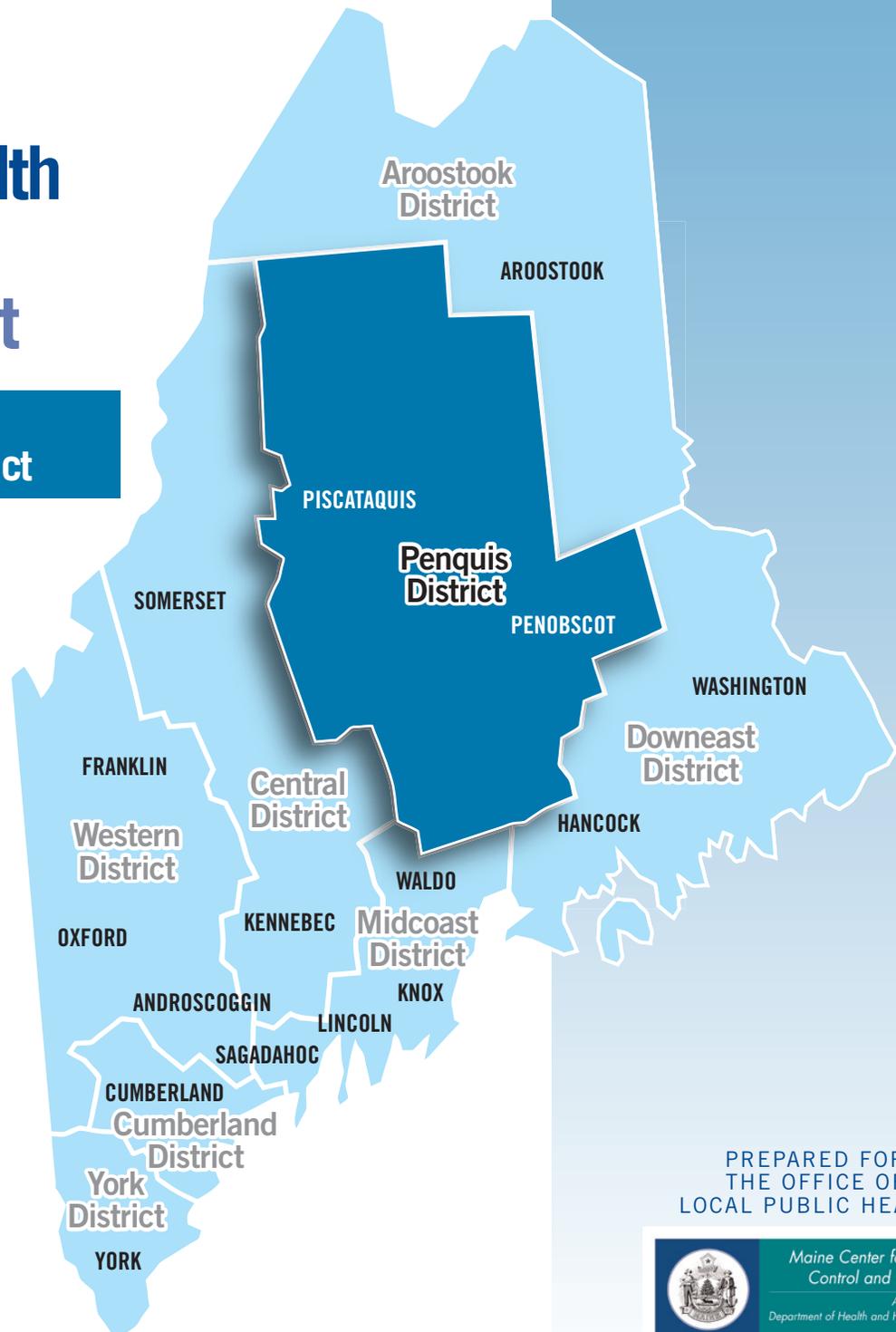
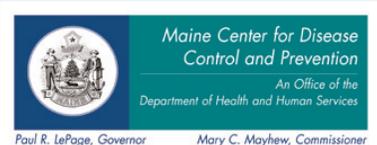


# Local Public Health System Assessment

Penquis Public Health District



PREPARED FOR  
THE OFFICE OF  
LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH



BY



November 2010

Dear Colleague:

This report constitutes a systematic look at how public health services are coordinated, aligned and delivered by organizations of this District on behalf of the people who live, work, study and visit here. It sets a baseline from which to measure progress in aligning and coordinating the delivery of services provided by the District's public and private public health stakeholders.

The Department of Health and Human Services' Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention provided federal funds to support the use of a national public health tool to assess the emerging public health systems in Maine's eight health districts. Over 352 public health stakeholders participated throughout Maine. All District Public Health System Assessment Reports are available at [www.mainepublichealth.gov](http://www.mainepublichealth.gov).

Working in partnership we can be more efficient, effective and focused in use of our resources within the District, and make Maine the healthiest state in the nation. We appreciate your interest and support for this vital work.

Sincerely,

Dora Anne Mills, MD, MPH  
State Health Officer  
Director, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
Maine Department of Health and Human Services

## Penquis District Characteristics

### How the District is organized

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- The Penquis Public Health District covers Penobscot and Piscataquis counties.
- There are 60 municipal governments, including a city, towns, plantations, and a Tribal Nation.
- The District serves all parts of its jurisdiction, including its townships, some of which have year-round or seasonal residents.
- The District's public health infrastructure includes a District Liaison, District Public Health Unit, and District Coordinating Council.

### Who we are\*

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- 165,612 people with 12.6 persons per square mile (Census 2008 est.).
- 9,096 of us are less than 5 years old, 33,438 are 18 years old, and 22,862 over 65 years old.
- 43.5% of our children are eligible for free or reduced school lunch.
- 14.9% of us are adults with a lifetime status of having less than a high school degree.
- We are enriched by the number of Native Americans, Hispanics, and Franco-American heritage.
- Much more data on who we are can be found at [www.mainepublichealth.gov](http://www.mainepublichealth.gov).

*\*see updated data from the new census at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)*



This report is a snapshot in time that can serve as a roadmap to improve the delivery of public health services in our District. We had not appreciated how much all sectors of our community, not only health care organizations, can and do play a role in protecting and improving community health and quality of life. We came together to start a conversation about becoming more systematic about how we work together. We want to create the conditions that support everyone's chance to make healthy choices as live, learn, work and play.

Please feel free to use the information in this report in your own organization, either to leverage resources for your own organization or to find a place to contribute to our collective efforts in the vision we have for our District's emerging public health system. Now we have a baseline for measuring our progress!

We would appreciate your questions and feedback. Please tell us if this report has helped or influenced your organization. To contact us by phone or email, find our District's information at [www.mainepublichealth.gov](http://www.mainepublichealth.gov).

Dale Hamilton  
District Coordinating Council Board Chair

Jessica Fogg  
Penquis District Public Health Liaison

## Background

Strong and effective public health systems have the ability to...

- Improve the health of the public
- Protect the public's health
- Carry out the essential public health services
- Advocate on behalf of what's in the best interest of the public's health
- Work collaboratively with stakeholders, communities, volunteers, and others
- Decrease rising health care costs
- Secure public, private and foundation dollars for public health activities

The Instrument used to develop these scores comes from the National Public Health Performance Standards Program (NPHPSP) of the US CDC. It uses performance standards that represent the optimal level of performance that needs to exist so that the essential public health services provided will achieve the results we need and want.

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (MCDC) contracted with the Maine Center for Public Health (MCPH) to lead a formal District assessment process in 2009 for all eight Districts, including this one. This work required three meetings and a check-back meeting attended by a broad range of disparate partners representing the District jurisdiction, state and regional public health agency, community-based organizations, academic institutions, hospitals, health centers, public safety, school systems, environmental and social service organizations.

Scores were developed by submitting information on the local public health agency, the jurisdiction, the governing structure and entities represented during the assessment to the US CDC's online reporting system.

Participants were surveyed for their responses to the experience. Here as elsewhere the experience provided education about public health services, the interconnectedness of different sectors in contributing to public health, and opportunities for networking and new partnerships. The results will be used in the development of a District Health Improvement Plan and will inform Community Health Improvement Plans currently under development by the District's Healthy Maine Partnerships.

The full District report can be found at [www.mainepublichealth.gov](http://www.mainepublichealth.gov). It provides a brief overview of the ten essential public health services and the performance standards, and covers the purpose, tool, benefits and limitations. The report provides an overview of both the quantitative and qualitative results for each essential service.



## Results

### Overview

The Penquis District Public Health Systems Assessment took place on September 2, 16 and 30th, meeting for approximately 3.5 hours each time. A total of 44 individuals participated in at least one of the three meetings with an average attendance of 27. Because a limitation of this process is that the scores are subject to the biases and perspectives of those who participated in the process, the planning group attempted to recruit broadly across the District. Individuals at the meetings represented HMPs, health care providers, hospitals, community health center, emergency management agency, social service and CAP agencies, state agencies, universities/colleges, municipalities, municipal health department, mental health agencies, businesses, area aging agencies, Local Health Officers, first responders, community organizations, and schools. Environmental health groups and faith-based organizations are potential gaps in representation.

### Summary of Scores

EPHS	SCORE	EPHS	SCORE
1. Monitor Health Status to Identify Community Health Problems	40	6. Enforce Laws and Regulations that Protect Health and Ensure Safety	42
2. Diagnose and Investigate Health Problems and Health Hazards	57	7. Link People to Needed Personal Health Services and Assure the Provision of Health Care when Otherwise Unavailable	35
3. Inform, Educate, and Empower People about Health Issues	62	8. Assure a Competent Public and Personal Health Care Workforce	42
4. Mobilize Community Partnerships to Identify and Solve Health Problems	48	9. Evaluate Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Quality of Personal and Population-Based Health Services	48
5. Develop Policies and Plans that Support Individual and Community Health Efforts	44	10. Research for New Insights and Innovative Solutions to Health Problems	38
<b>Overall Performance Score 46</b>			

### Rank ordered performance scores for each Essential Service, by level of activity

