



## This Month at MCD Public Health

Our nation's health begins where we live, work, and play. This month we highlight a tool we've helped to develop called [WellStarME](#), which the State of Maine is using to increase the health and wellbeing of its workforce. Across the state, there is [positive news](#) including increased access to healthy foods and the recent announcements of our valued community partners' federally funded initiatives aimed at giving all Mainers a chance at choosing a healthy lifestyle. Finally, the month of July also brings [World Hepatitis Day](#) and with that we share with you some facts and information to help keep you, and those you care for, just a little bit safer. As always, there's also a [listing of events](#) to keep on your calendar.



Thank you for all you do to help our communities become healthier.

Be well,

Kate

## Project Spotlight



*WellStar ME logo*

### WellStarME hits its stride

We all get asked during annual physicals about diet and exercise and are told our blood pressure, weight, cholesterol and glucose levels. We receive sage advice to hold us over for another year. While annual check-ups are important, for many it is often not enough. Most of us need support in the form of encouragement, reminders, and personalized

health suggestions.

This is an area ripe for worksite wellness programs. Team members Tina Love, Phonse Allen-Laney, as well as Eric Dimbleby and Joshua Frazee from our IT department merged their collective expertise in health/wellness and information technology to answer this need. Working closely with our client, the State of Maine, they built a one of a kind database called WellStarME, a unique wellness program designed to identify and coordinate health and wellness services based on a participants' specific health score. WellStarME is available to State of Maine employees, ancillary employees, early retirees and their covered spouses/domestic partners who are enrolled in the State of Maine Point of Service Health Plan. The end product delivers a customized health status report which recommends services covered by their employer (or past employer for retirees) and available in their area. WellStarME also provides aggregate outcomes which the State of Maine uses to track the overall health and wellness of their health plan members in order to better meet their needs.

We recently sat down with Tina, Phonse, and IT team members Eric and Josh to learn more:

**MCDPH:** What kind of questions do you ask folks who take the WellStarME health assessment?

**Tina:** A typical health risk assessment (HRA) may use 50 plus questions. The State of Maine wisely decided to narrow the focus of their HRA down to ask only about areas that aligned with the things they are able to help with. We worked with the State of Maine to build a new HRA with a more narrow focus in mind. WellStarME's HRA is now only about 12 questions on tobacco, nutrition, exercise, pre-diabetes, and 'your numbers.' (ie: blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar).

**MCDPH:** Once a member 'knows their numbers' - what then?

**Phonse:** Knowing your numbers is one step to help take control of your own health by identifying risk and providing a baseline to measure your progress. Members are provided with customized scores and reports complete with recommendations for services-and then they decide how they want to proceed. All of the services recommended through WellStarME are provided at no additional cost to them.

**Tina:** So if a member, after taking their HRA, realizes they are at high risk for pre-diabetes, they can then click on the screen to see where there is a National Diabetes Prevention Program near them that their health plan covers. These programs are located all over the state so whether a member lives in Skowhegan or Kittery, or works in Eustis, they can find a conveniently located program of their choice.

**MCDPH:** How is this useful for program evaluators such as your client the State of Maine?

**Josh:** From the way the platform is built, program evaluators can pull aggregated data on the programs' usage. For instance, we know that since WellStarME came on line (just 8 short months ago) there are over 10,000 registered users taking advantage of this service.

**Eric:** This secure, encrypted, aggregate data set, pulled through various tools and analytics, gives the State of Maine and its health plan members a fair evaluation of areas for health concern, areas for benefit improvement, and other member-related metrics. The goal for the WellStarME program is for members to become empowered to manage their own health and wellness.

**Josh:** We can also track the utilization and outcomes of specific services and resources over time, to help ensure that the health and wellness benefits provided are meeting the needs of members.

**Phonse:** The WellStarME platform is completely separate from the insurance provider and all information in the system is protected. Reports are only provided in de-identified aggregated format, meaning no individual data is ever made available in program reports. There is absolutely no link between the health insurance risk pool and the WellStarME tool. This provides end users with peace of mind knowing their personal health information is kept confidential.

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Tina Love has been a registered nurse for over 30 years. She has always worked within healthcare systems whether in home health care, hospitals, and for a while was a traveling nurse spending one to three months in various locations throughout the United States. Tina has been with MCD for 4 years and is currently the Project Manager for the Rural AED project, Telephonic Diabetes Education and Support © (TDES ©) Program, and WellStarME. [tlove@mcdph.org](mailto:tlove@mcdph.org)

Phonse Allen-Laney has been with MCDPH for over 16 years. Phonse coordinates a multitude of programs at MCDPH including Telephonic Diabetes Education and Support © (TDES ©) Program, WellStarME and is a vital part of the Northeast Telehealth Resource Center (NETRC) team. [aralaney@mcdph.org](mailto:aralaney@mcdph.org)

Eric Dimbleby has been with MCD for 11 years. He is the Director of IT and leads many data-related programming efforts within MCD's Consulting business. His staff of 8 employees, in both the Maine and Maryland offices of MCD, is composed of a well-balanced mixture of programmers, data managers, help desk support, system administrators, and web designers. His team is integrated into every facet of MCD's 600 plus employee environment. [edimbleby@mcd.org](mailto:edimbleby@mcd.org)

Joshua Frazee has been with MCD for more than 9 years. In that time, he has worn many hats. Currently, he has a dual role of Systems Administrator for the Corporate Services Division and Lead Web Design Consultant within MCD's Consulting business. His skills around intelligent, usable end user design have grown in professionalism and demand with various outside and internal clients in the MCD family. [jfrazee@mcd.org](mailto:jfrazee@mcd.org)

## Around Town

We love sharing news about programs and opportunities that give everyone a chance to live healthier. Here are three top stories:

[Healthy Lincoln County](#) received a 2016 Summer Food Service Program \$2000 mini-grant to help support outreach efforts and transportation needs in their region. This effort is funded by the [Good Shepard Food Bank](#) and [Full Plates Full Potential](#) initiative. The goal is to increase participation in HLC summer food service through outreach to eligible families and provide support for families to access service sites.

Speaking of nutrition, Maine Medical Center announced on July 11th they are creating a [new residency in wellness and nutrition](#). The program's ultimate goal is to promote the virtues of good nutrition and plant based diets to vulnerable Mainers such as the elderly and those living in rural communities.

Maine's rural and vulnerable population will be further served with a \$2.5 million Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to boost the educational experience of [healthcare students capacity to work in rural and underserved Maine communities](#). University of New England will be managing that grant.

## Around the World

# NOHEP can happen! Viral hepatitis is inflammation of the liver caused by a virus. There are five different hepatitis viruses: A, B, C, D and E. There are many practical everyday ways of preventing Hepatitis. Those include not sharing needles, nail

clippers and toothbrushes, using a condom, and access to clean drinking water. [Learn the facts and be a part of prevention.](#)



## Mark Your Calendars!

**National Rural Population Health Learning Collaborative webinar**, Monday July 25, 3:00 to 4:00 EST US and Canada. [Please register here.](#) After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. [Web link](#) to access slides and recordings for the June 2016 webinar.

**National Association of Chronic Disease Director's monthly conference call**, Thursday July 28, 2016, 3:00-4:30 eastern, [FMI click here.](#)

**National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health Annual Meeting**, September 7-8, Omni Parker House Hotel, Boston, MA. [Click here to register.](#)

Save-the-date **Maine Public Health Association's 32nd Fall Conference**, October 18th, Hannaford Lecture Hall, University of Southern Maine, Portland. Conference keynote by Dr. Camara Jones, current APHA President and a Senior Fellow at the Satcher Health Leadership Institute and the Cardiovascular Research Institute, Morehouse School of Medicine. [Registration coming soon.](#)

American Public Health Association's 144th Annual Meeting, October 29-November 2, 2016, Denver, CO. [Click here to register.](#)

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