



# Maine Pediatrics

## January 2026 | Newsletter Highlights

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### Maine AAP President's Message Brian Youth, MD, FAAP

Happy New Year!

As we begin 2026 and reflect on the last year, I continue to have so much gratitude for dedication for the work being accomplished by Maine AAP and our members. Whether it be our Professional Sustainability Committee working on provider wellness and promoting payment reform, or our Career Leadership/Engagement Committee speaking with and inspiring the pediatricians of the future, I am thankful to all of our Committee Chairs, our Board, our administrative team, and our members throughout Maine who show up every day to advocate for patients, families and communities.

While the new year brings hope, we certainly have our challenges. December brought the abrupt termination of seven AAP grants under the US Department of Health and Human Services. For us, this meant the loss of 3 potentially funded grant projects for which we'll have to find alternate funding sources:

- Community Vaccine Education and Communication Project - working with Maine Families Educators and Public Health Nursing to do direct patient/family vaccine education to combat misconceptions
- Expanding Suicide Prevention through Strategic Partnerships - working with AFSP Maine to expand education and suicide prevention activities
- Transforming Care Through Trauma-Informed Practice and Partnerships - to expand/build on patient/family resources and resilience training

In addition, the decision of our government to withhold funding from Medicaid and Medicare to hospitals that provide gender-affirming care means our patients need our advocacy more than ever.

At this time, I ask members to stay informed and watch for emails from National AAP and our State Chapter and consider lending your voice when opportunities arise to talk to legislators, write op-eds, or participate in other activities to advocate

for Maine families directly impacted by these events. Collectively, we can and will make a difference.

I remain inspired and grateful for the resilience of our patients and pediatric community, even in the face of adversity. When speaking on resiliency, Greg Kincaid (author and attorney) once stated and I think this will resonate with us here in Maine: "No matter how much falls on us, we keep plowing ahead. That's the only way to keep the roads clear."

## In the News...

**School-entry vaccine exemptions in Maine before and after public law 154, 2018–2023:** new research by Dr. Laura Faherty and Ashley Gromis examines how how PL 154 change affected vaccine exemption rates and clustering in kindergartens using annual, publicly available school-level counts of vaccine exemptions from the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. [Read full article.](#)

**HHS axes millions in grants to American Academy of Pediatrics:** The Trump administration has terminated seven federal grants worth millions of dollars to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the nation's largest professional organization of doctors who treat children. [Read more.](#)

**Healthcare Clinicians Condemn Decision by Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices to Rescind Recommendation for Universal Hepatitis B Birth Dose:** Several medical associations, including the Maine AAP, have voiced extreme concern over the changes in ACIP's recommendations regarding the Hep B vaccine dose given at birth. [Read full statement.](#)

**AAP: Proposed restrictions to gender-affirming care are a 'baseless intrusion into the patient-physician relationship':** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services released two proposed rules on hormone treatments and surgical procedures related to gender-affirming care for children and teens. AAP leaders are urging federal officials to rescind proposed restrictions on care for transgender youths that are unprecedented and not grounded in science. [Read more.](#)



### **Maine AAP Exec Director Dee Kerry Appointed to the National AAP's *Executive Director Steering Committee***

The Chapter Executive Directors' Steering Committee (EDSC) is a leadership body of seven executive directors elected by their peers. The committee's purpose is to discuss challenges and concerns among chapters, and strategize ways to improve communications, programming and collaboration to build stronger relationships between chapter leaders and national AAP. The term is two years, with the option to renew for an additional term.

## Engagement Opportunities

**Maine AAP School Health Communication Survey:** Maine AAP School Health Committee created a survey to better understand the current state of interdisciplinary communication between School-Based Health Centers, Athletic Trainers, School Nurses, School Health Advisors, and Primary Care Providers. By

completing this survey, you can help us better serve our school health workers in Maine. We appreciate your feedback! [Take the Survey](#).



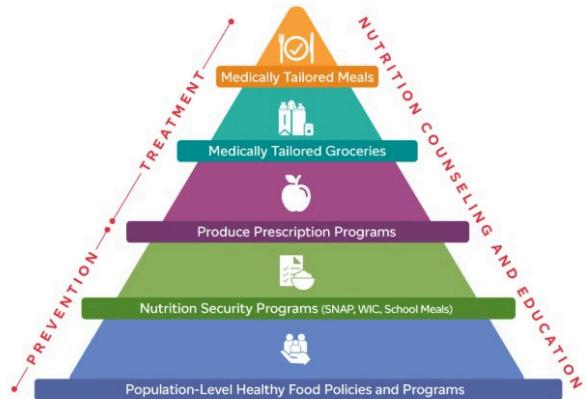
## Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Needs Assessment

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) contracted with Public Consulting Group (PCG) to conduct an assessment focused on prenatal alcohol and cannabis exposure, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)- related prevention, screening, diagnosis, and treatment in Maine. The assessment aimed to inform system-level improvements in provider practices, including risk discussions, diagnostic capabilities, referral processes, and prevention strategies. [View the FASD Assessment Briefing Here.](#)

### Did you Know?

Food is Medicine (FIM) refers to programs that incorporate food and nutrition into health care to treat and prevent disease, and advance health equity. FIM may include prescribing certain meals, foods, or meal kits that address specific health conditions or needs. FIM programs may also include nutrition education.

[Learn more about Food is Medicine.](#)



Many institutions, such as MaineHealth, have begun to integrate FIM into the patient/provider experience. Some of MaineHealth's FIM efforts include food and nutrition insecurity screening, clinical education, health behavior and lifestyle treatment options for diet-related diseases.

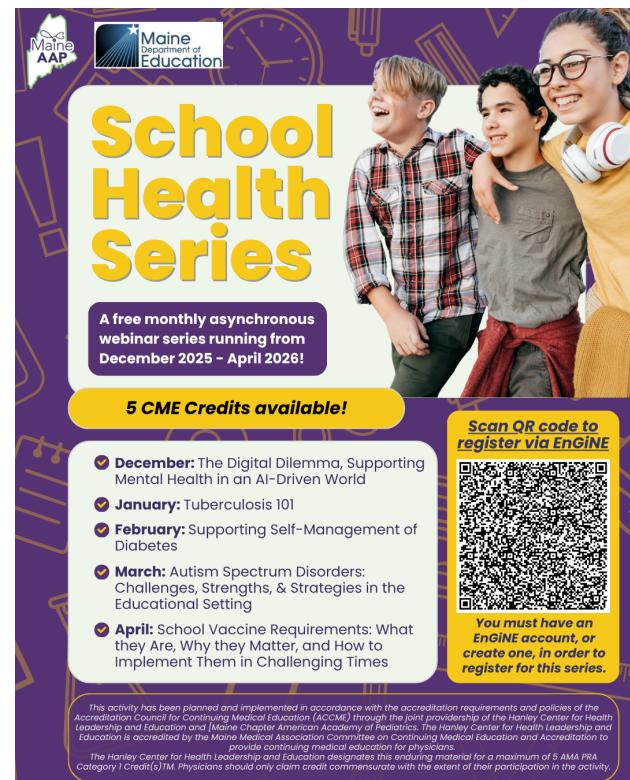
### Upcoming Maine AAP Programs

## Through April 2026 School Health Webinar Series.

We are excited to offer this monthly series in partnership with the Maine Department of Education. This webinar series is offered asynchronous at no-cost, and CME credit is available. [More info and registration details are available here.](#)

### Series lineup:

- **January:** Tuberculosis 101
- **February:** Supporting Self-Management of Diabetes
- **March:** Autism Spectrum Disorders: Challenges, Strengths, & Strategies in the Educational Setting
- **April:** School Vaccine Requirements



The graphic features a purple background with a collage of school-related icons like a clock, a graduation cap, and a pencil. In the top right corner, there's a photo of three young people (two boys and one girl) smiling. The main title "School Health Series" is in large yellow letters. Below it, a box states "A free monthly asynchronous webinar series running from December 2025 – April 2026!". Another box below says "5 CME Credits available!". To the right, there's a QR code with the text "Scan QR code to register via EnGINE". At the bottom, a note says "You must have an EnGINE account, or create one, in order to register for this series." Logos for Maine AAP and the Maine Department of Education are in the top left.

### CHILD, ADOLESCENT & YOUNG ADULT MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE

## ‘OFFICE HOURS’

### FOR CLINICAL PROVIDERS

Maine AAP, in partnership with the Maine Pediatric and Behavioral Health Partnership, is offering twice a month virtual Office Hours for pediatricians, family medicine physicians, and other child health providers.

These sessions provide guidance and resources on managing pediatric mental and behavioral health concerns—such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and developmental disabilities—in the primary care setting. Non-patient-specific questions are welcome, and client-specific consultations can be arranged as needed.

**WHEN:** MONTHLY ON THE 2<sup>ND</sup> AND 4<sup>TH</sup> WEDNESDAY FROM 12N - 1PM  
(A child and adolescent psychiatrist will be available on every call, and pediatric specialists will be available on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month).

**SIGN UP:**  
[CLICK TO RECEIVE THE LINK TO JOIN ANY OF THE MONTHLY OFFICE HOURS.](#)  
SIGN UP FOR INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS IS NOT REQUIRED!



Maine Pediatric & Behavioral Health Partnership



MAINE ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS



### Mental Health & Substance Use Office

**Hours.** Office hours will be held twice monthly on Wednesdays at noon, in coordination with the MPBHP program run by Maine DHHS's Office of Behavioral Health.

Pediatricians, family medicine physicians, and other youth-treating medical professionals may join to ask non-patient-specific questions about mental and behavioral health conditions, challenges, and medication management.

[Register here to receive a link to join one or more Office Hours sessions!](#)

## March 27-28th | Maine AAP 2026 Spring Conference

Join us for our annual Spring Conference at the Samoset Resort in Rockport, Maine. You can find conference registration and room block information [here](#).

**March 6th | 12-1pm: Safe Sleep Webinar with Dr. Meredith Jackson**  
Save the Date!

Maine AAP relies on donations from members and friends to enable us to continue growing and providing advocacy, education

and child health project collaboration throughout Maine! Please consider making a donation today!

[Donate Here](#)

## Upcoming Partner Programs

**January 5th | 3-4PM: School-Based Behavioral Health ECHO (participant orientation session).** Delivered by the Maine Pediatric & Behavioral Health Partnership (MPBHP), the ECHO Learning Collaborative is part of a comprehensive suite of MPBHP services, including psychiatry access, behavioral health resources, provider education, and virtual consultations. [Register Here](#).

**January 6th | 3:30-4:30PM: Maine's Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Monthly Learning Series.** [Register Here](#).

**January 29th-30th: Maine Winter Wellness Summit.** This event is open to all school personnel and community partners dedicated to supporting health promotion and wellness in schools. Whether you are an educator, administrator, school nurse, counselor, nutrition professional, or any staff member who serves students, the Summit is designed for you. [Register Here](#).

**May 6th | 8:30-4:30PM: Save the Date - Maine Patient Safety Academy.** The Maine Patient Safety Academy grew out of an initiative by Maine's critical access hospitals to build an infrastructure that supports patient safety and quality improvement activities. This event will be held at the Wells Conference Center in Orono, Maine. [Details Here](#).



**Connect with Maine AAP on Social Media!**

Follow us on X, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, and BlueSky where we continue to share pro-pediatric health messages, new clinical info and pertinent articles.

<https://linktr.ee/maineaap>

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