

Draft State Health Plan Released; Public Hearings Scheduled

The draft of the 2010-2012 [State Health Plan](#) targets efforts to improve health and health status through expanded primary care and prevention while producing savings by eliminating waste and inefficiency.

“It links evidence-based public health strategies with measurable outcomes to lower the trajectory of health care costs,” according to the plan’s introduction. “Importantly, it lays out a path and identifies the policy choices now provided Maine through newly enacted national health reform law.”

The plan notes the progress that has been made, since the state started releasing the state health plan, including:

- Maine improved from the 16th healthiest state in 2003 to the 9th healthiest in 2009.
- Maine improved from 19th among states in covering the uninsured in 2003, to 6th in 2009.
- Costs for health insurance premiums have grown more slowly in Maine than in the rest of the United States.
- In 2003, Maine ranked 12th in the percent of surgical patients receiving the appropriate care to prevent complications; by 2007, Maine ranked 1st.

The plan suggests:

- Reducing inefficient practices and waste, including:
- Reducing preventable hospitalizations, emergency room admissions and unnecessary care;
- Reducing duplicative and unnecessary laboratory tests and advanced imaging;
- Increasing the number of Maine citizens with a stable relationship with primary care practice;
- Reducing health care-associated infections; and
- Improving access to specialist consultations through telemedicine.
- Strengthening community-based public health and prevention;
- Paying for what matters, in other words, payment reform;
- Aligning policies and practices to support primary care and prevention;
- Guiding the Certificate of Need program to support priority goals.

The plan also discusses workforce challenges, the importance of data and electronic medical records.

The Advisory Council on Health Systems Development (ACHSD), the primary body advising the Governor's Office of Health Policy & Finance (GOHPF) on the state health plan, reviewed the draft at its meeting last Friday. Public hearings are June 9th in the morning in Portland and in the afternoon in Augusta.