BE THE SEED

Healthy Communities of the Capital Area
Annual Report 2021
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Reflections from the Executive Director

What a year it has been! I want to thank the entire HCCA staff and board for supporting my transition into the Executive Director role and more importantly for supporting our communities over the past year. Who would have thought that when we went home on March 13, 2020, planning on working remotely for two weeks while this whole COVID thing blew over, that over a year later, we would still be remote and continuing to battle COVID?

It has been a year of learning, compromising, and collaborating like none other. We will always remember this experience and our accomplishments during this time.

We chose "Be the Seed" as the theme for this year’s annual meeting and report as a metaphor for how we all are continuing to grow and cultivate community health, in spite of the challenges we face.

This year’s annual meeting will highlight some of the work HCCA is doing to advance equity and ramp up fundraising. These are two areas we considered when recruiting our four new board members who will help us advance these goals.

I look forward to the day when we are all back in the office, safely working alongside one another and we can once again host our annual meeting in person. Thank you to HCCA staff, board, and community members who continue to support public health and primary prevention in our communities.

Renee Page

HCCA, Executive Director
Remarks from the Board Chair

The COVID-19 pandemic affected our personal and professional lives in a multitude of ways. For those who lost cherished people in their lives, I extend my deepest sympathies. For those who found new ways of coping with stress and isolation by enjoying the great outdoors or learning a new skill, I applaud you. My work as a nurse and leader in healthcare affords me the opportunity to work with individuals who demonstrate resilience on a daily basis, and I see this reflected in my community outside of my workplace as well.

I am inspired every day by how we have adapted and adjusted to carry out our lives in this new environment. Under the strong, steady leadership of the executive director, HCCA staff impressively and quickly adjusted to continue their work in a world where being physically present to build relationships to collaborate and promote positive public health outcomes is more challenging. This shows how truly professional and creative the team is.

Our board moved to virtual meetings despite our strong desire to come together in person to promote and support the great work of HCCA. Our accomplishments this year include creating a new finance committee that completed a review of our financial policies and developed new policies, developing a new online process to recruit new board members, bylaw review and revision, launching creative new fundraising strategies, and successfully transitioning to new leadership after creating a search committee for the executive director through a very thorough and exhaustive process.

Our resiliency continues to be tested, but we are stronger because of all we have accomplished in what has been the most challenging year in our world, state, and communities. I am honored to have served my first year as HCCA board chair and look forward to supporting the great work of this organization.

Jodi Beck, RN
Chair of the Board of Directors
Thank you to HCCA board members who stepped up during this challenging year to support HCCA’s new executive director, promote and support ongoing fundraising and advocacy efforts, and help develop new processes and protocols. We are grateful for your continued engagement in HCCA’s work.

Board of Directors

Jodi Beck, RN. Chair
Benjamin Brown, MD
Patrick Cheek, PhD
Samantha Deming-Berr, DO, MPH
Cathleen Dunlap, MEd. MSW. LCSW

Deborah Emery, MEd. CAS. Vice Chair
Patricia Hart, MS, CPH
Patricia Hopkins
Ranae L'Italien
Lisa Miller, MPH

Sarah Miller, MA
Barbara Moss, DO, MPH. FACOFP
Merry St. Pierre
Ashley Tetrault, MBA. Secretary
Courtney Yeager, MPPM. Treasurer
Financial Overview

11 Staff
15 Board Members

55 Consultants
23 Vendors

14 Funders
24 Donors

Community Impact:
$920,400 supporting our HCCA community through personnel, programs, local businesses, and resources

Financial Statement

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Information for this report is from the IRS Form 990 (7.1.19-6.30.20)

Join us in supporting public health and HCCA!

- Donate directly at hccame.org
- Choose "Healthy Communities of the Capital" when shopping on smile.amazon.com
- Purchase Hannaford gift cards from HCCA
Substance Use Prevention

JOANNE JOY AND PATRICIA BUCK-WELTON

Substance Use Prevention at HCCA is largely focused on preventing underage use of alcohol, cannabis, and other substances among 12-25 year-olds in partnership with schools, law enforcement agencies, and community organizations. We work to change community conditions, share information, provide education, and collaborate across towns and systems to extend the impact. This year also included expanded efforts to prevent opiate misuse. Funding is provided by Maine Prevention Services. Additionally, HCCA participates on multiple state and regional initiatives.

Communication efforts included 2 public service announcements on safe storage of medications and cannabis, 4 articles in HCCA newsletters, 96 social media posts on youth substance prevention, and 10 informational resources shared with SKCDC.

HCCA participated in 16 collaborations, including 4 ASAP coalition meetings, 3 meetings with law enforcement, 8 LGBTQ+ SupportMe virtual meetings, and 1 teacher training on resilience and support.

SKCDC is so grateful for our partnership with HCCA, we participate in the Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP), and Gardiner Area Thrives (GAT) coalitions. Building safe, healthy and inclusive communities is a benefit to each and every one of us. Thank you HCCA!

Cristina Salois,
Director, Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation
Drug Free Communities

JOANNE JOY AND PATRICIA BUCK-WELTON

Federally-funded Drug Free Communities grants support coalitions of interested and involved individuals to inform and implement prevention work. The members represent twelve sectors; youth, parents, business, media, schools, youth-serving organizations, law enforcement agencies, religious and fraternal organizations, civic and volunteer groups, healthcare and behavioral health professionals, state or local governments, and other organizations with a focus on reducing substance use. Gardiner Area Thrives (GAT) is a partnership between HCCA and a coalition of youth and adults from the communities and schools of Gardiner, Pittston, Randolph, and West Gardiner.

“Gardiner Thrives is an important community group helping youth have a stronger voice in the community. Our community is at its best when everyone feels that they belong and this group is making that happen.”

Mayor Patricia Hart

This year, GAT participated in or hosted **32 meetings, trainings, and events** around resilience and support, held local youth focus groups and parent surveys, produced **Community Concerns on Marijuana: a position paper for City of Gardiner**, offered 130 substance use prevention messages in print, online, and on the air, and provided distance resources for parents, students, and schools to survive COVID-19 related stress.
Tobacco Prevention

APRIL HUGHES AND ELIZABETH DEPREY

HCCA supports a tobacco-free Kennebec County through education, prevention, policy, and training initiatives. Highlights include Sidekicks, interactive youth training on holding respectful peer conversations about tobacco and vaping; and Non-Clinical Outreach, training for social service providers to initiate effective quitting conversations.

111 youth participated in 7 Sidekicks trainings.

223 youth and 201 adults attended 20 vaping presentations.

Maine Veterans' Homes is committed to being the Employer of Choice by providing a safe, healthy, and rewarding work environment for our team members. Implementing a tobacco free workplace policy was one of the many ways we pledge to protect our employee’s and residents' health.

Joanna Aronica, Wellness Manager
Maine Veterans’ Homes

Staff worked with organizations to pass 12 smoke-free and tobacco-free policies, impacting 38,608 Kennebec County residents by reducing secondhand smoke exposure, establishing healthy norms, and supporting those trying to quit.
Youth Engagement

KEVIN CARTER AND APRIL HUGHES

HCCA partners with the Maine Youth Action Network to generate youth-led change across Kennebec and Somerset Counties. Youth groups use social media, education, and advocacy to drive policy and environmental changes that support substance use prevention, stress management, and inclusive gender expression.

49 youth in 7 groups from Cony High School, Maine Arts Academy, and the Augusta Boys and Girls Club led change in their communities.

162 adults attended 10 trainings on virtual youth engagement strategies.

HCCA staff partnered with 14 organizations including libraries, schools, public health agencies, and Boys and Girls Clubs across Somerset and Kennebec counties to offer resources and training on youth engagement.

“Learning and helping the teens' mental health in the community has been a great experience. I love helping my community and thanks to this group, I am able to do that.”

Maine Arts Academy Youth Policy Board student
Let's Go! 5-2-1-0

NAN BELL

HCCA partners with Let’s Go! to connect with schools, after-school programs, and Head Starts and other early child care sites. Let’s Go! aims to create and support an environment where children can live the 5-2-1-0 messages every day. These include eating fruits and vegetables, doing physical activity in place of recreational screen time and reducing sugary drink consumption.

2 school districts have all 6 of their elementary, middle, and high schools registered with the Let’s Go! program. Each school has a Let’s Go! team comprised of a teacher, nurse, and kitchen manager working to implement Let’s Go! strategies everyday with students.

27 child care sites and 7 out-of-school programs are displaying visual messages, offering education for families and children, providing healthy foods and physical activity opportunities, and generating supportive policies.

Gardiner children enjoy their Let’s Go! StoryWalk®, an activity that combines outdoor movement and literacy.

As a health educator, my goal is to promote a lifestyle that an adolescent will incorporate immediately as well as into their future. The 5-2-1-0 message can be used to set small goals that are attainable.

Brenda Weis, Health Teacher, Cony Middle and High School

RSU 38 (Maranacook area schools) achieved their goal of installing water bottle refill stations in all 6 of their schools to support the "0 sugary drinks, drink more water" message.
HCCA’s SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educators support SNAP-eligible individuals and families in gaining the knowledge and skills to shop, cook, and eat healthfully on a limited budget. Educators also work alongside community partners to develop strategies to support these skills in the local environment, making healthy choices more practical and available to community members.

Educators offered virtual live, recorded, and in-person classes at elementary schools, shelters, programs supporting those with disabilities, out of school programs, low-income housing, and Head Starts throughout southern Kennebec County.

SNAP-Ed classes reached 116 adults of all ages and 1314 youth pre-K through 6th grade.

Alexis established the Capital Area Gleaners, a network of volunteers who collect unsold and unharvested produce from local farms and distribute it at food pantries.

HCCA’s SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educators created and shared 21 educational videos with the community via HCCA’s social media.
Maine Local Food Networks

STEPHANIE CESARIO-DEBIASI

Maine Farm to School Network (MFSN)
HCCA houses the Maine Farm to School Network, a social impact network connecting the leadership of state agencies, school nutrition, cooperative extension, non-profit partners, and other stakeholders to support farm to school programs across the state. These can include school gardens, local food in school cafeterias, and agricultural education for youth. This year, MFSN convened a virtual network-wide strategic planning process for 50 Maine farm to school leaders to collectively generate the top priorities for the next 3 years. New action areas include: Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion; Policy Advocacy; Fundraising; and launching a Maine Farm to School Institute.

MFSN organized 7 equity-focused presentations by BIPOC-led and youth-led Maine organizations on centering racial & social justice in the Maine food movement:

Photos from the Maine Food Convergence Project. Over 300 Maine food system stakeholders attended statewide winter convenings spanning February-March 2021 and regional summer convenings from August-September 2020.

Maine Farm to Institution (MEFTI)
HCCA is also home to Maine Farm to Institution, a network focused on connecting local food to institutions including colleges & universities, healthcare facilities, and correctional facilities. Between 2020-2021, MEFTI hosted a virtual networking conference, the Maine Food Convergence Project, in partnership with a team of networks focused on local foods, climate action, and racial & social equity in the Maine food system. Three priority areas emerged that will be addressed going forward: A. From Farm & Sea: Expanding Local Markets, B. Farming & Fishing: Abundance, Equity, and Resiliency, and C. Healthy Food: Breaking Down the Barriers.
HCCA Sows Community Public Health

Over the past year, HCCA’s programs adapted to fit the new realities of remote work. However, HCCA staff also showcased their flexibility and versatility across a host of new projects. "Seeds" represent new initiatives with potential, "seedlings" more developed emerging projects, and "leaves" growth upon an existing foundation.

**Seeds**

HCCA partnered with Hallowell Clay Works to offer learning materials for young people about expressing themselves through clay.

**Seedlings**

HCCA staff began a weekly internal equity discussion group that transitioned into a monthly planning team to develop opportunities to advance racial equity in our community health work.

**Leaves**

On HCCA’s Yoga for Anxiety web page, yoga instructor Tory Johnson offers a beginner practice, and provides breathing, meditation, and mindfulness techniques.

HCCA initiative Maine Farm to Institution sponsored the formation of a new food policy work group, e-newsletter, and website to track and mobilize advocacy around food systems-related legislation.

The HCCA blog continues to offer fun seasonal recipes, activities, and healthy living tips for individuals and families.

HCCA worked with Kennebec and Somerset County District Attorney Meaghan Maloney to offer education on the Maine laws addressing tobacco products and minors.
The HCCA Gardening Team

Renee Page, MPH, CLC, PS-C
Executive Director

Joanne Joy, MA, TPS, PS-P
Senior Program Manager

Jane Hutchinson
Financial Administrator

Patricia Buck-Welton
Substance Use Prevention Coordinator

April Hughes, MPH, PS-P
District Tobacco Coordinator

Elizabeth Deprey
Tobacco Prevention Coordinator

Kevin Carter
District Youth Coordinator

Nan Bell
Let's Go! Coordinator

Alexis Guy, MPH, RD
SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator

Carson
Office Cheerleader

Stephanie Cesario-DeBiasi
Maine Farm to School Network Coordinator

Rachael Reynolds
SNAP-Ed Coordinator
Thank you!

State and Federal Grants

**Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention** - Maine Prevention Services
  - Maine Youth Action Network at Opportunity Alliance
  - Barbara Bush Children's Hospital at MaineHealth
  - Center for Tobacco Independence at MaineHealth
  - University of New England

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**

**United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention** - Center for Substance Abuse Prevention

**United States Department of Agriculture** - Food and Nutrition Services

Foundations

[Logos of various foundations]