

Health Promotion at Bangor Public Health & Community Services

July/August 2023



The Health Promotion Team provides public health education, resources, and technical assistance to community members, schools, businesses, healthcare, policymakers, parents/caring adults and youth on a variety of topics. Our goal is a thriving community where people have the resources they need to be healthy.

This month we're highlighting some of our current programs and partnerships - and the amazing work of our staff.



Responsible Beverage Sales and Service (RBS) Classes

“So I said to the bartender...”

Bangor Public Health has had the opportunity to work with over 600 people in the alcohol sales industry through its RBS training program. RBS (Responsible Beverage Sales and Service) is a state-certified program developed by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Bureau of Alcohol Beverages and Lottery Operations. We have two certified RBS instructors offering bi-monthly classes for alcohol licensees in Penobscot County. All of our trainings are FREE of charge. Sessions are available on various days and times in order to meet the needs of people working in the service industry. Our team has held trainings for all types of alcohol serving and selling establishments. From bars, restaurants, social clubs, golf courses, concert and event centers, convenience stores and grocery stores. Since 2018 sixty-seven licensed establishments have sent over 600 employees (610 to be exact!) for the professional certification that is valid for 3 years.

“I love teaching RBS classes. People are eager to learn and share their experiences in the field. We are able to share stories and brainstorm ways to deal with situations (some are incredibly funny) that come up when you work in the alcohol industry. We have many participants that have been in the serving or selling for years and their expertise is invaluable. People are able to walk away with new information and reinforce their knowledge that they are following the laws when it comes to safely selling or serving alcohol.” Brianna Bryant, Certified RBS Instructor

RBS gives all levels of staff, from owners and managers, to bartenders, waitstaff and clerks skills in the current rules and regulations in Maine, laws and liability, how to assess for impairment, ID checking and age assessment, how to refuse the sale or service of alcohol. This type of training and education helps keep our communities safer by preventing alcohol sales to minors and over-serving adults.

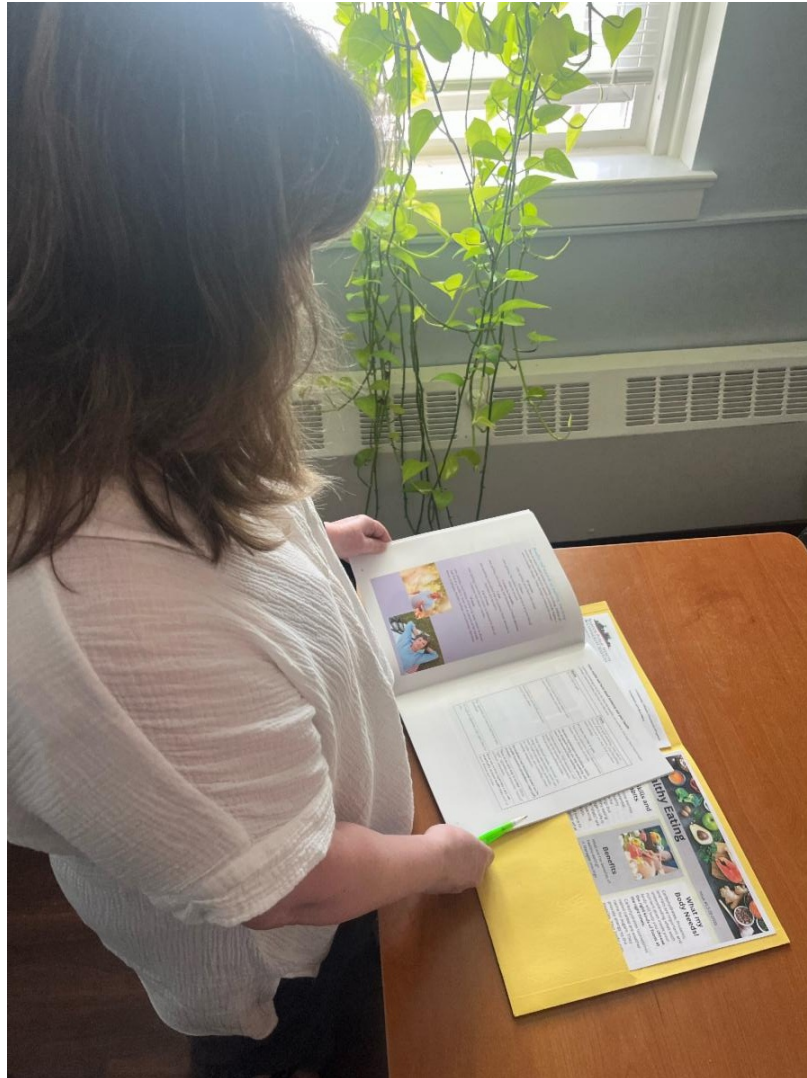
“This class helped build my confidence around alcohol sales and gave me strategies to deal with tough situations. It was great to have the chance to talk with other servers/sellers about their experiences, too. I’d highly recommend this class.” Abby, Bartender/Server

RBS training also supports our local businesses and economy. Businesses

with trained staff lower their risk of alcohol violations and create a safer environment for employees and patrons. They may also qualify for lower insurance rates (check with your provider).

This program is funded by a Maine CDC Maine Prevention Network grant.

Click [here](#) to view the upcoming schedule or sign up for a class.



Tobacco Treatment Pilot Program

Bangor Public Health and Penobscot Community Health Care teamed up to implement a no-cost tobacco treatment pilot program. This program is available to PCHC patients and employees. Onsite services are available at the Bangor, Brewer and Old Town PCHC Primary Care Offices. These locations also have pharmacies that can provide patients with low-barrier access to tobacco treatment medications. Staff can see patients in person and/or via telehealth. Referrals are made from providers. Patients and staff can also refer themselves. Once a referral is made, a tobacco treatment specialist gets in touch to gauge interest in the program and set up a visit. They work with each person to set up a plan that works for them and supports them along the way. All patients receive one-on-one treatment services, as well as information and links to other resources such as the Maine QuitLink. This program has proven to

be a success and we're excited to see it grow!

"I wanted to share a motivating success story. One of the gals I work with had an amazing transformation. We did a zoom meeting; she was initially scared about what we would talk about and how the whole process was going to go. We ended up having a great conversation where I found out her goal was weight loss surgery. When we met next time, she showed up with make up on and her nails painted and already feeling much better. The patient stated that she got up and actually got ready for the day and forgot to smoke! These are the reminders of why we do this work." Lisa Dunning, Public Health Specialist-Tobacco Prevention

This program is funded by a Maine Cancer Foundation grant.

Contact us for more information.



Cooking Matters Classes

Our Snap Ed team has been busy this summer teaching Cooking Matters classes for adults. In these free classes participants learn basic cooking skills, tips for food storage and safety, nutrition information, food budgeting, ideas to get your family to try new foods and grocery shopping tips. This program is geared towards lower-income households. Participants receive some free groceries as well as a free cookbook.

"I enjoy teaching Cooking Matters because it helps change the lives of participants. Learning how to read a recipe, chop ingredients and cook from scratch is not a skill everyone had the support to learn at a young age. We take it even further and teach participants how to use their money wisely at the grocery store and shop by unit prices, how to identify whole grains in their foods and how to be flexible in the kitchen to utilize ingredients from the food pantry." Brooke Fogg-Wolfe, Snap-Ed. Nutrition Educator

This grant is funded by the University of New England/US Department of Agriculture.

Contact us for more information.



Overdose Prevention Education Sessions

The drug landscape continues to change. Fentanyl is the leading substance causing fatal drug poisonings in our community. You may have also heard about Xylazine (a tranquilizer) mixed with Fentanyl appearing in Maine's drug supply. Xylazine may cause wounds that are difficult to treat and complicate overdose reversals. Our staff work closely with experts across Maine to provide the most up-to-date information to the community on drug poisonings. We provide free trainings that include information on drug trends, their impact on people who use drugs, and how to recognize and respond to an overdose. We bust myths about Fentanyl (you can't overdose by touching it) and provide state/local data and resources. Trainings and more information are available upon request.

This work is funded by a Maine Department of Health and Human Services Office of Behavioral Health grant.

Contact us for more information.

OPTIONS Overdose Response Team

OPTIONS Overdose Response Team (ORT) is busy doing outreach to individuals outdoors and at risk of drug overdose. The team goes

out with Bangor Police Department officers, as well as others around Penobscot County to connect with individuals who experienced a drug overdose in the prior weeks. The ORT provides direct support, information, and referrals to help people connect with healthcare, food, harm reduction services, housing and substance use treatment and recovery. Pat is one of our peer recovery coaches who works on the team. He recently shared that he spent a great deal of his younger life in conflict with police while living outdoors and using substances. Today he has built authentic and compassionate relationships with law enforcement. The relationship has positively impacted our communities through sharing experiences and reducing stigma on all sides.

This work is funded by a Maine Department of Health and Human Services Office of Behavioral Health grant.

Contact us for more information.

Improving Health Equity

Historically people with experience using drugs have had little input in the programs and services designed to serve them. Over the past year, we've been working on a project to address this. The goal is to build relationships, trust, and ensure people with lived experience are a key part of all our efforts from identifying the problems to designing solutions. As a first step, we met with 65 people with experience using drugs in the Bangor area. They shared barriers to engagement, needs, service strengths and service gaps. The conversations provided vital feedback about existing efforts and emphasized the need for hope and connection within the group. Our current culture, expressed by one participant is "*[when] people see you live outside, [they] do not even want to talk to you or look you in the eyes.*" The conversations also highlighted the value of asking for input and being included. People were clear they WANT to advocate for change and provide hope for others. They appreciated their voices and expertise being heard. They want to be included and help develop more effective strategies and programs. With the help of community partners, we will continue these conversations and hope to build a framework for a more inclusive approach to healthcare, social, and government systems.

This project is funded by a Maine Health Access Foundation SIIRG Grant.

Contact us for more information.



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