

Fall/Winter 2023

# HealthMatters

A Journal of Wellness and Good Health Care



Where We've  
**Been**



Where We're  
**Going**



# HealthMatters

HealthMatters is published as a service for the people of the Kennebec Valley region. Information is written by MaineGeneral's Marketing and Communications staff.

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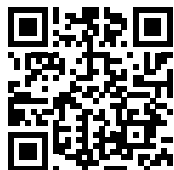
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## In This Issue

<b>Where We've Been.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Staff Stories.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Expert Care for All Ages.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Partnerships and Pride.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>10-Year Milestones.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Where We're Going.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>MaineGeneral Orthopaedics – Offering Advanced Care.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Expanding to Meet Growing Cancer Needs.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Groundbreaking.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>New Additions to a Solid Foundation.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Day of Hope.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Lung Cancer Screening Saves Lives.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Annual Campaign Donors.....</b>	<b>22</b>

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## Message from the CEO

I've come to MaineGeneral Health at a historic time for the health system and our region.

This year, we reflect back on promises made 10 years ago with the revitalization of health care in the Kennebec Valley: regionalizing care, opening the Alfond Center for Health and renovating the Thayer Center for Health.

While I've only been with you at MaineGeneral since July, I feel an incredible sense of pride in what has been built here in the Kennebec Valley.

Through the hard work of thousands of MaineGeneral employees over these 10 years, I'm pleased to say we've kept our promises: to strengthen and build upon a regional health system that ensures high-quality services and skilled, compassionate people to give you those services. You can find the vast majority of health care you and your family will need in your lifetime right here, provided by people you know and trust.

In the best of times, the changes we've made wouldn't have been easy. They required people and systems coming together to standardize best practices, to update procedures, technical equipment and payment systems, and to follow new and growing regulatory requirements.

Add a worldwide pandemic to these normal, expected growing pains. Staff were challenged like never before, but they persevered because we serve our neighbors, family and friends. We are part of this community and we want the best for it – and for you.

This HealthMatters issue focuses on how far we've come and where we are going – all to give you the best care right here in the Kennebec Valley. I couldn't be more proud to be leading this 4,600-strong workforce and continuing to improve our service to you, our community members.

Finally, MaineGeneral wouldn't have been so well set up for success if it weren't for the leadership of Chuck Hays, who retired earlier this year. I want to thank Chuck for spearheading the transformation of health care in the region and for building a culture at MaineGeneral that is second to none.

I look forward to working with you in the years to come!



Nathan Howell  
President & CEO  
MaineGeneral Health



### Get to Know Nathan Howell

#### • Are you a Maine native?

My mother's family is from Saco originally and I was born at Goodall Hospital in Sanford. My dad was in the Navy so we moved around quite a bit while I was growing up. But we were raised with a Maine value set, visited family often and lived in Maine when my dad was stationed at Brunswick Naval Air Station. I had the opportunity to attend Colby College to complete my undergraduate studies. My wife Julie and I moved our family back to Maine in 2018 when I took a job as President of Southern Maine Healthcare in Biddeford and in time for both of my kids to complete high school at Kennebunk High.

#### • Why do you like living in Maine?

I love the people, the culture and the natural beauty of our state. My whole family loves outside activities and I love the water.

#### • What do you do to stay healthy?

We are an active family and do a lot outside, whether it be walking the family dog or hiking, snowshoeing or skiing.

#### • What do you enjoy most doing outside of your work?

My family would likely describe me as having a "boat problem"; I am happiest on, around or working on boats – something I have done since the age of six.

#### • What gives you joy in your work?

Through my job I get to work with some incredible, intelligent and dedicated people. I also get to work out in the community. I love this aspect of what I do.

#### • Who (living or dead) would you most like to meet?

I am fascinated by leaders who have persevered through tough times – leaders like Nelson Mandela, Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln.

#### • What three words would your closest friends use to describe you?

Loyal; thoughtful; driven



# WHERE WE'VE **Been**

These pages tell a story.

The growth of MaineGeneral services over the past 10 years can be viewed through pictures and numbers. But celebrating milestones is more than buildings, technology and statistics. It's about each and every person who relies on us for their and their family members' care. It's about the memories we share along the way.

We're grateful to be your health care provider of choice, and are proud of the commitment to quality and compassion that each of our staff members gives every day.

i m a g i n e

CELEBRATING  
**10** *Years*



## Thayer Center for Health, Waterville



## Alfond Center for Health, Augusta





# Staff Stories



Accounts from those who have been part of this amazing 10-year journey



“When we had our open house, I remember looking out the windows and seeing the line of cars and the crowds. Here we were on a nice day in September, and **the community chose to come check out this new community resource**. That showed me that this is a really big deal, not only for us, but for everybody in the Kennebec Valley.”

— Paul Stein, Chief Operating Officer, shares a great memory before the opening

“We were moving people who were very sick, we were moving babies, the elderly – so that heightened the intensity of it, **but I will never forget that day**. It was a little surreal because it just flowed, and we were done before we planned to be done. That was because everyone was prepared, internally and externally. We had a community that came together, and it was beyond amazing.”

— Deb Bowden, Administrative Director of Oncology Services, on her memories of moving day



“We now receive very few calls in the middle of the night for broken pipes or things going bad. There’s more focus on preventive maintenance instead of on things that are broken and need to be fixed. We put a lot of thought into everything we built – **for the long haul.**”

— Rick Albert, Director of Facilities, speaks to facility upgrades that allowed us to offer better care



“Whether it’s hip replacement, shoulder replacement, spine care, arthritis care – we are now able to offer services that either we didn’t have in the past or offer patients so much better. **The future is looking at that and how we can continue to grow** and become a magnet for care – by earning it.”

— Chris Sementelli, Director of Sports Medicine, looking toward the future



To hear more staff stories and memories from our 10-year anniversary, visit [www.maine-general.org/10years](http://www.maine-general.org/10years).

# Expert Care



for **All Ages**

When the Alford Center for Health (ACH) opened on Nov. 9, 2013, one highlight was the birth of twins whose arrival close to home was made possible by the presence of the hospital's new neonatal intensive care unit. Officially, they were the youngest patients treated at the ACH.

Recently, as the ACH neared the 10-year mark of its opening, the hospital treated possibly its oldest patient – at least the oldest patient to stay on medical-surgical unit 1 West.

Jennie Pyszkowski was born in Winslow in 1918 and lived there six months before her family moved to Connecticut, where she has spent most of her life.

At 105 years young, she has lived through two devastating global pandemics, several major wars – World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam – and the birth and growth of the space program. During her lifetime, Jennie has seen tremendous societal, cultural and technological changes that most of us cannot begin to fathom.

She has been an energetic go-getter who raised three children and has

been blessed with five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. A 60-year member of VFW Post 1684 Ladies Auxiliary and its former national president, she also managed several business ventures during her lifetime, including a wine shop that she owned and ran until she retired from 72-hour work weeks at age 80.

After flying by herself from her home in Florida in late June to spend several weeks with family at their camp in Belgrade, she developed an infection in her toes due to poor circulation. Initially treated in the emergency department at the ACH and then admitted, she was discharged after a week to an inpatient rehabilitation unit.

When she again had problems with her toes, she was back at the ACH for a few more weeks. She was discharged on Aug. 24 to travel with son Ted and daughter-in-law Barbara to her daughter Adele's house in West Haven, Connecticut to continue her recuperation.

Before she left the ACH, however, she was greeted by a stream of hospital staff who stopped in to say goodbye and wish her well, including

hospitalist Dr. Ahmed Aldilaimi – “my favorite” – and laboratory assistant Michael Martin, who brought her a doll made by hospital volunteers to remember him by.

Jennie praised the care she received from so many people throughout the hospital.

“They were on the ball. Each one was doing what they had to do,” she says, adding that Trey Haseltine, a certified nursing assistant on 1 West, deserved special mention.

“He went overboard for me and was always checking on me,” she says.

“Our family really felt at ease knowing she was receiving exceptional care,” Barbara adds. “She interacted with a lot of people while she was in the hospital and they were all amazing to her.”

Liz Roney, RN, nurse manager on 1 West, said she was pleased to help Jennie's family share her story.

“Jennie and her family had a great patient experience and wanted to share it with as many people as possible,” she says. “To meet her really is a gift.” 🌿





# Partnerships and Pride

The Dalai Lama said, “Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching effects.” Ten years later, this is still proving true for those involved in building the Alford Center for Health (ACH) – and for the construction project itself.

“The project gave my team the foundation to start JF Scott Construction,” explains John Scott, who was vice president of H.P. Cummings at the time. H.P. Cummings teamed up with national partner Robins + Morton for the \$312 million ACH project. “From a construction perspective, the size of the job and collaborative approach allowed some quality contractors to take their services to the next level.”

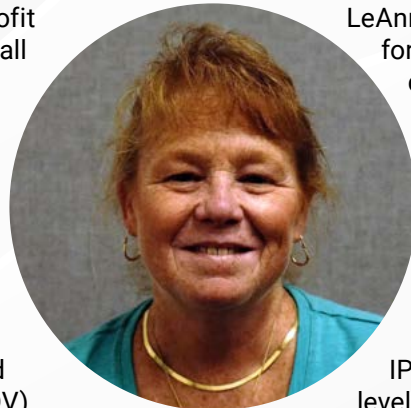
Craig Piper, project manager, SMRT, said this project led SMRT to personalize its internal design process to each architectural project. “Before drawing a single line, we work to understand who you are, what drives the success of the new facility, and how you envision your future,” Craig says. “We create a culture where it is safe to voice differing points of view, understanding that the best design solutions come from

reconciling and balancing different perspectives, wants and needs, and that started with the Alford Center for Health process.”

The process Craig refers to is Integrated Project Delivery (IPD). With IPD, everyone involved in the project - designer, builder and owner - takes their profit and puts it at risk, so all the goals are shared by everyone on the team. “Everyone had skin in the game,” recalls Lescar Beane, operations manager E.S. Boulos Company, which was the electrical and voice, data, video (VDV) contractor. “Being able to communicate freely, and getting buy-in on all aspects of the project up front from all team players really pushed the project to success.”

“Our philosophy at MaineGeneral is that, if we want products to come out well, we need to involve the people who do the work,” explains Paul Stein, MaineGeneral’s chief operations officer. “Areas were designed by the people who worked

in them. We mocked up patient rooms and got input from actual patients. We were able to get things right as a result of this inclusive process. And we finished nine months ahead of schedule and under budget. It was a win-win for everyone, especially the community.”



LeAnne Rogers worked for Robins + Morton doing a variety of administrative duties when the ACH was built. “I’ve been in construction for 30 years, and this project was the most unique I’d been a part of because of IPD. There were high-level decisions made with everyone at the table, in real time. Nurses, for example, could meet with the architects and structural people and decide to move walls or locate things in certain places, or find out why they couldn’t. They had a voice, they felt heard. Their hearts were in this. I feel so proud that I was part of this project.”

For many people, the ACH project got deeply personal. The constructor became the patient when LeAnne



was diagnosed with cancer and went to the Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care for treatment. While fighting cancer, she had appendicitis and spent time at the old Augusta hospital (now the Ballard Center). "Because I received care as a patient during this time, I was easily able to put myself in the caregivers' shoes and saw firsthand why we really needed a new hospital to take better care of patients," LeAnne says.

For Lescar, the ACH construction project was a difficult time in his life. "My wife was diagnosed with cancer in 2006 and continued to fight the battle the entire time of the project. She passed away in 2012 so this project holds a special place in my heart; she actually has a brick there in her memory."

John Scott is most proud that the project was done almost entirely with local workers, creating hundreds of jobs and giving Central Maine an economic shot in the arm. Eighty-four percent of workers and contractors were from Maine.

"Everyone who worked on the project left feeling proud of the work, and the sense of teamwork helped continue their connections and friendships to this day," Paul says. "It was a big responsibility, changing the health care dynamics for the Kennebec Valley by building the ACH and transforming the Thayer Center for Health in Waterville into a comprehensive outpatient center. We became one team to ensure people can get the care they need close to home, not only for now but for generations to come."

Rick Albert, MaineGeneral's director of plant operations, agrees. "When I run into people who worked on the project, they tell me they miss being on this job because it was so collaborative. And when they come here for care, they are so proud of their part in building the facility. I grew up in Augusta. When you work on a project like this in your own community, and can walk in and say 'I did this,' it's pretty special." 🌿

# 10-Year Milestones



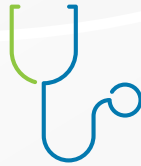
**477,986**  
Emergency  
Department visits by  
**302,352**  
patients



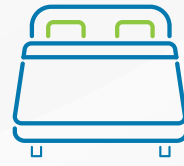
**3,125,949**  
Outpatient visits by  
**932,463**  
patients



**406,067**  
Express Care  
visits



**2,000,641**  
Primary Care  
visits



**105,746**  
Patients discharged  
from inpatient units



**9,960**  
Babies  
born



**154,386**  
Mammograms



**3,312**  
Joints replaced  
(hip and knee)



# WHERE WE'RE Going



Reflecting on the past is important, to appreciate how far we've come – together.

But this issue wouldn't be complete without celebrating where we're going.

We made promises to you leading up to the completion of the \$322 million project that included the new Alford Center for Health and the renovated Thayer Center for Health.

We've kept these promises, and pledge to continue to keep them and preserve a health care system that will serve you and your family for generations to come.

- Pledge to continue to work to ensure the sustainable delivery of services right here in the Kennebec Valley
- Preserve skilled medical staff and services in the Kennebec Valley
- Improve quality and patient experience through best practices
- Maintain a community-hospital feel where you are treated as an individual
- Provide disease prevention and healthy living opportunities – in the hospital and in the community

Here are just two of the health services that show how we are continuing this journey to give you the best care and service – right here in the Kennebec Valley.





MaineGeneral Orthopaedics



# Offering Advanced Care

# Close to Home

MaineGeneral is committed to providing a full range of orthopaedic and podiatry services close to home so people do not need to leave the area to get the care they need. When the Alford Center for Health was built and the Thayer Center for Health renovated 10 years ago, MaineGeneral Orthopaedics had nine medical staff in two locations. Now they have 28 in four locations (Augusta, Gardiner, Oakland and Winthrop), and the practice looks forward to growing and evolving in the years to come!

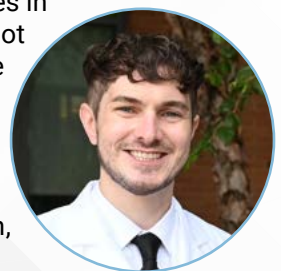
“In the last year or so, three of our veteran surgeons retired and we

brought on eight new surgeons and other medical staff to add to the depth and breadth of our practice going forward,” explains Philip Joseph, MaineGeneral Orthopaedics’ practice administrator. “We are cutting edge here. Having a wide scope of services in the community is our goal so we can offer patients the right care, at the right time, with the right person.”

Podiatry and shoulder/elbow surgery are two areas of orthopaedics seeing growth right now with the addition of Brian Loring, DPM, and Cassandra Sanko, MD.

## Podiatry

Brian Loring, DPM, is a podiatrist who specializes in all facets of foot and ankle care including ankle arthroscopy, Charcot foot reconstruction, bunion and hammertoe correction, ankle fusion and minimally invasive foot and ankle surgery. He joined MaineGeneral Orthopaedics and MaineGeneral Medical Center’s active staff in July 2023.





"It's gratifying to help people return to life, to walk again," Loring says. "Podiatry is also a really hands-on specialty involving a lot of procedures, along with surgery, both of which I enjoy doing."

Dr. Loring joined Michael Kipp, DPM, Douglas O'Heir, DPM, Renee Slaney, FNP and Lori Melancon, foot care RN, in offering surgical podiatry and general foot care at MaineGeneral Orthopaedics in Augusta and Oakland.

"A lot of people don't realize the scope of podiatry, the range of care that's available right here," Dr. Kipp says. "Over the last 20-30 years, training has enhanced to expand surgical scope of practice. We can do just about everything from basic foot exams to reconstructive surgery."

Minimally invasive podiatric surgery is an area expected to grow in the years to come, Kipp adds. "As with other surgeries, it means faster recovery, fewer complications, and makes some surgeries more available to patients who aren't candidates for more invasive procedures."

Having a dedicated foot care nurse has freed Drs. Loring and Kipp up to focus on podiatric surgery, while providing a needed service. "Basic foot care is especially beneficial for our patients with diabetes," Loring says. "Lori, the nurse, can help monitor their foot health and alert us to any changes, which helps to reduce diabetic complications later on."

To learn more about MaineGeneral's depth and breadth of podiatry services, visit [www.mainegeneral.org/podiatry](http://www.mainegeneral.org/podiatry).



## Orthopaedic Surgery

As a fellowship-trained shoulder and elbow surgeon, Cassandra (Casey)



Sanko, MD, specializes in treating both operative and nonoperative injuries and chronic conditions affecting the shoulder, upper arm and elbow. She performs shoulder and elbow arthroplasty (anatomic and reverse total shoulder replacements, elbow replacements) as well as arthroscopic and open shoulder and elbow repairs. She also performs fracture fixation of the clavicle, shoulder, upper arm and elbow. Dr. Sanko is MaineGeneral Orthopaedics' newest surgeon, joining the team in September 2023.

"I believe being part of a comprehensive team is critical to providing high-quality care to patients close to home," Sanko says. "When a health system can provide not only highly specialized orthopaedic care, but also easy access to physical and occupational therapy, medical specialists and preoperative testing, the patient benefits."

Sanko chose MaineGeneral Health because she could provide shoulder/elbow orthopaedic care within such a system. "I feel my values are aligned with the providers and staff at MaineGeneral," she says. "On my interview day, everyone was so friendly and welcoming. It quickly became clear to me that this is a compassionate, tight-knit group in which high-quality patient care is the top priority."

Dr. Loring also enjoys being part of a large, comprehensive team in the same clinical setting. "Medical staff can run things by each other, and we benefit from each other's expertise and experience. Head to toe, we see the whole view of a patient at MaineGeneral Orthopaedics, since

one condition can affect a lot of different body parts and functions. I think that's comforting for the patient, and for medical staff."

MaineGeneral Orthopaedics also has nurse navigators for spine, sports medicine, total joint replacement, osteoporosis and acute care. The navigators identify patients' care needs and ensure they get the right care at the right time. "Having one point person is very reassuring to patients navigating a complex treatment journey," Joseph says. "Patients really appreciate the added support and guidance."

A lot has changed at MaineGeneral Orthopaedics in the last 10 years. Medical staff has tripled. More than half of all total joint replacements (shoulder, knee, hip, ankle) are done in one day, on an outpatient basis, at the Alford Center for Health in Augusta and Thayer Center for Health in Waterville. A walk-in clinic is available for people with sudden/acute orthopaedic needs in their Augusta and Oakland practice locations.

What hasn't changed is MaineGeneral Orthopaedics' commitment to caring for patients close to home. Dr. Sanko's philosophy sums this up well:

"My goal is to get my patients back to what they want to do, whether that be sports, hobbies or activities of daily living. We work together to make this happen. Communication is key. It's important to understand patients' goals and expectations to help them choose the best treatment option. I want my patients to understand their condition, feel comfortable asking questions, and be confident in the care they receive. That's what we all want here." ✨

*Honoring a Legacy, Shaping the Future*

# Expanding to Meet



## Growing Cancer Needs

Long before a defunct golf course was transformed to include a state-of-the-art cancer center, Debbie Bowden recalls the challenges of treating patients at two sites that were much more limited.

“We only had 12 treatment bays in Waterville and five in Augusta, and both locations were very small. Sometimes, a family member couldn’t stay with a patient during treatment because there wasn’t room. Family matters and is a huge part of a patient’s cancer care,”

says Bowden, the administrative director of oncology services at MaineGeneral who has worked in the field for more than 38 years as an oncology nurse.

The effort to design, build and open the Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care (HACCC) in 2007 was the first tangible example of a regionalized approach to health care, centered on the patient, and set in a beautiful setting offering “healing enhanced by nature.”

On its first day, the center treated 64 people, a number that pales in comparison to the 200-plus patients now treated daily. In its 16 years of existence, the HACCC’s patient volume has grown substantially along with the types of cancer it treats and the medical and support services it offers to patients.

Space at the 59,700-square-foot facility has been reconfigured routinely as the program has grown, but it has now run out of room.



The time has come for an expansion to meet a much greater need for services and well-position the HACCC for the future.

## Treating patients from all parts of Maine

Cancer is the number-one cause of death in Maine and one in three Mainers will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. The HACCC serves 12 percent of the state's cancer population and patients are referred from all Maine counties, though most live in Kennebec and Somerset counties.

A \$36 million project to increase the size and efficiency of the center launched in October 2023 and will be completed in late 2025. Among the goals of the 28,000-square-foot expansion are: enhanced patient privacy, comfort and quality of care; the ability to accommodate more patients and improve patient and family experiences; and greater centralized multidisciplinary care.

These goals will be accomplished through an increase in exam rooms from 15 to 27 and infusion bays from 34 to 44; grouping exam rooms in pods with dedicated clinical offices; creating an integrated Medical Oncology Home/Survivor Clinic; renovating the Radiation Oncology and Genetics & Research spaces; expanding the laboratory and pharmacy spaces; relocating the Open Access Clinic within the center; and providing dedicated space for patient education and support programs. In addition, a new covered entrance to the center will be built, along with a courtyard and new access to the Healing Gardens.

Similar to the initial community-supported capital campaign that helped build the center, a \$30 million effort to support the expansion project was launched in September 2023.

Financial gifts in support of the campaign can be made at [give.mainegeneral.org/expand](https://give.mainegeneral.org/expand) or by contacting the MaineGeneral Office of Philanthropy at 207-626-1809 or [philanthropy@mainegeneral.org](mailto:philanthropy@mainegeneral.org).

## Emphasizing the need for growth

The dramatic rise in patients receiving treatment is only one indicator of just how much the HACCC has changed.

In 2007, there were three oncologists on staff compared to six now, and one Advanced Practice Provider (APP – a nurse practitioner or physician assistant) on staff; now there are seven APPs working on site and another at the Alford Center for Health.

Patient services also have increased substantially and include an Open Access Clinic with dedicated providers for unscheduled urgent needs; a cancer genomics program through a partnership with The Jackson Laboratory; disease-specific point-of-entry nurse navigators and clinical nurse navigators to provide support, education and assistance before, during and after the treatment process; a robust clinical trials program; and even such amenities as heat and massage chairs for patients receiving lengthy chemotherapy treatments.

## The changing landscape of cancer care

Dr. Rick Polkinghorn started seeing cancer patients full time as an oncology fellow in 1987 and then as a practicing oncologist in 1989. He has practiced at the HACCC since 2012 and also serves as the oncology medical director. The changes he has seen during his career are far-reaching.

"Available treatments back then were really limited. Probably a third of patients received treatment in the

hospital and many more needed to be in the hospital afterward because of the toxicities of the treatments," he says.



Today we treat a much broader range of diseases on an outpatient basis and the number of available treatments has expanded dramatically.

*Rick Polkinghorn, MD*

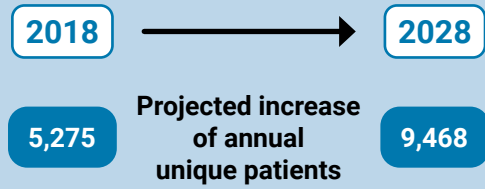
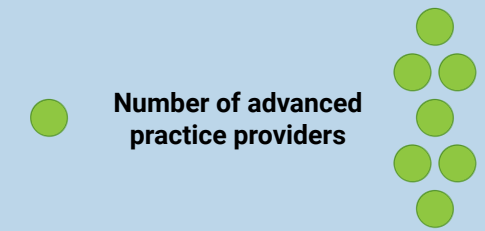
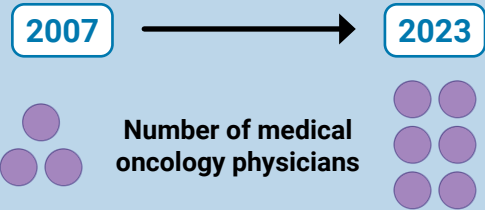
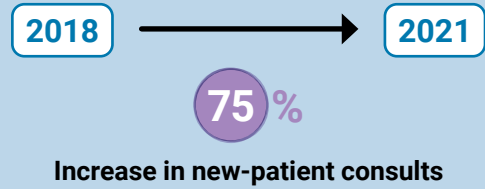
"We now can help people much more than we could before and provide treatments more safely, comfortably and effectively," he adds. "The Harold Alford Center for Cancer Care is the most recognizable brand of cancer care services in Maine. With six full-time oncologists, we're providing a lot of treatment to help a lot of people, and we need the expansion to continue doing that."

And while the center has changed greatly since 2007, Bowden said its focus on providing high-quality care close to home has not.

"We work really hard to put together evidence-based practices, so the treatments and workflow here could mirror those at places like the Mayo Clinic or Dana-Farber," she says. "You don't always have to go away for great care, and our center has proven that." ✨

The Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care is at full capacity and needs to expand to meet the growing demand for cancer care in central Maine.

### Reasons to Expand



**The Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care**, established in 2007, is located in Maine's capital city of Augusta and serves approximately 12% of Maine's cancer population. Patients are referred from all of Maine's 16 counties, with the majority of patients residing in Kennebec and Somerset counties. Services include oncology, hematology, psychosocial care, an open-access clinic, palliative care programs, clinical trials and targeted therapies, prevention, screening and education.



# Breaking Ground

## Expansion of Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care Begins

MaineGeneral ceremonially broke ground on the Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care (HACCC) expansion project on Sept. 27.

Alongside staff, community supporters and contributors, Nathan Howell, President & CEO of MaineGeneral Health, spoke to the need for the expansion.

“For 16 years, this building has served us well, providing skilled and compassionate care to thousands of Maine cancer patients. However, the need for cancer care exceeds our ability to provide it in the world-class way our patients expect and deserve.”

Gregory Powell, Chairman of the Harold Alfond Foundation, announced that the Foundation is providing \$25 million to support the expansion project.

“In the time since the Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care opened, 70,000 patients have passed through the center’s doors. They have been treated by the finest caregivers, close to home, and received high-quality care in a beautiful setting,” Powell said.

The HACCC expansion is expected to take two years to complete, and will be accomplished in a phased approach so patient care will not be interrupted. ↘



To learn more about the expansion or to support the project, go to [give.mainegeneral.org/expand](https://give.mainegeneral.org/expand).







New

# Additions



## to a **Solid Foundation**

In the midst of a national oncologist shortage, cancer treatment programs throughout the U.S. have been impacted significantly. This makes the recent addition of four oncologists-hematologists to the Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care (HACCC)'s staff even more remarkable.

“Physician leaders throughout the state have called and asked me how we were able to recruit them, but the reality is they came to us,” says Oncology Medical Director Dr. Rick Polkinghorn. “None had ties to Maine; they came for the program.”



Dr. Polkinghorn says the welcome response the doctors received during their interviews convinced them to move and practice here.

“They felt the support and caring that goes on and I told them they were joining a family in the truest sense of the word,” he says. “That made these four highly trained people want to join us. They’re great people who understand we’re treating the needs of a community.”

### Neil Majithia, MD

Dr. Neil Majithia was the first to arrive in August after practicing in Boise, ID.

“The biggest attraction was the culture and collaborative environment. Everyone is focused on helping each other and doing what’s needed to make the patient experience as good as it can



be and the cancer center a place of healing. That feeling was palpable,” he says. “And, personally, my wife and I were excited about coming to Maine and the many opportunities for outdoor activities it offers for us and our 22-month-old daughter.”

Dr. Majithia says he also was impressed with the facility, its beautiful surroundings and its expansion plans.

“It’s incredible to have so many services available right there in the building,” he says.

While in medical school, the science and biology of cancer and its therapies inspired Dr. Majithia to specialize in the field. The relationships he’s formed with patients has kept him in it.

“You get to know them really well and occupy a special place in their lives during a very difficult period of time,”

he says. "That's a privilege to have and why I love being an oncologist. If I had a hundred lives to live, I'd choose this career every time."

## David Adler, MD and Erin Dauchy, DO

David Adler and Erin Dauchy are a couple who relocated to the area from New Orleans and began practicing in September.



Originally from Connecticut, Dr. Adler said he always wanted to return to the Northeast.

"I did fellowship training in New Orleans, which was great, but I wanted to return to a slower pace of life. Erin and I visited the center in February on the coldest day of the year," he says. "Everyone was excited to meet us and made us feel welcome."

Dr. Adler trained at Tulane in a fellowship program with a strong hematological focus. His clinical interests include classical hematology, lung cancer, genitourinary cancer and lymphomas.

"The best aspects of my job are the relationships with patients. They're very grateful for their care and you feel you're making a difference in their lives," he says. "I look forward to making new relationships with patients here."

A native of Cooperstown, NY who also did her training in New Orleans, Dr. Dauchy has fond memories of visiting Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park as a child.



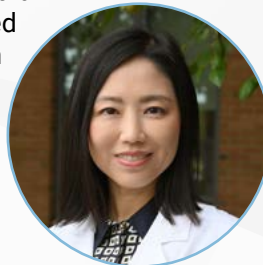
"Being in Maine for our interview felt like home because everyone was so friendly. We were looking for a place we could see ourselves settling in for a long time, starting a family and raising kids. But, professionally, when we came and met everyone, it felt like family even though we had just met them."

Dr. Dauchy says her interest in pursuing a career in oncology began with her mother, a veteran oncology and hospice nurse.

"I loved her stories about her patients and how much she cared about them," she says. "I was thinking about being a physician, so I got involved with oncology research and it was fascinating to see the pace at which everything changes. During my training after medical school, I had more clinical exposure to hematology and oncology and the excitement of new treatments coming out and forming relationships with my patients really drew me in."

## Sariah Liu, MD, PhD

Dr. Sariah Liu believes cancer treatment should be personalized based on each patient's unique situation, including genetic profile. That's why she pursued a doctorate in pharmacology in addition to her medical degree.



She joined the staff in October, bringing more than a decade of practice experience, including several years at Kaiser Permanente San Diego Medical Center and, later, as assistant clinical professor at City of Hope Cancer Center in South Bay, CA.

After living, training and practicing in California for 20 years, she and her husband sought professional opportunities in New England and a

great location to raise their 11- and 9-year-old sons. They found both in Central Maine.

"We wanted a place with more traditional values and very good educational resources," she says. "When I interviewed with Rick (Polkinghorn), we connected well because he also came from southern California and did his fellowship at UCLA in Torrance, which is the city I was practicing in. When I learned he grew up in Newport Beach, where I lived, I thought, 'this is meant to be.'"

Like her new colleagues, Dr. Liu's passion for working in the field burns bright.

"Seeing how my patients cope with their diagnosis and fight against a very tough disease process inspires me," she says. "I'm dedicated to providing them with high-quality care, helping them understand their diseases and navigate through treatment decisions, and supporting them during the uphill battle against cancer." 🐦

Learn more about these physicians and the rest of our oncology team:



[www.maine-general.org/  
find-a-doctor](http://www.maine-general.org/find-a-doctor)



MaineGeneral Health   
**DAY of HOPE**

Saturday, Oct. 7, the rain couldn't hold back our community as we gathered around cancer survivors, fighters, thrivers and loved ones for an uplifting, inspirational Day of Hope. More than 1,000 members of our community came together to rally around the Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care's staff and patients, showing them that no one fights alone.

At the Day of Hope, attendees enjoyed an inspiring opening ceremony where Bonnie Collins, breast cancer fighter, shared her cancer journey and what it means to have Hope All Around Us. The Walk for Hope followed, where walkers marched 1.8 miles through the beautiful University of Maine at Augusta Campus. The day featured a Kids Zone, where many children got to enjoy a variety of arts and crafts activities. The Day of Hope is about inspiration, but it is also about education and prevention. At this year's Day of Hope, more than 115 attendees received screenings and therapies and hundreds visited the Education Pavilion. New this year was our Food Pavilion where we had Ben Ramsdell, Peter Alfond Prevention & Healthy Living Center Culinary Chef, do a live cooking demonstration while attendees sampled healthy snacks and recipes.

To top it all off, the generosity of this community raised more than **\$195,000** in support of the Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care – making a tremendous impact on the cancer center's critical work in providing local cancer care. ↘

To see event photos, visit [give.mainegeneral.org/hopephotos](http://give.mainegeneral.org/hopephotos).

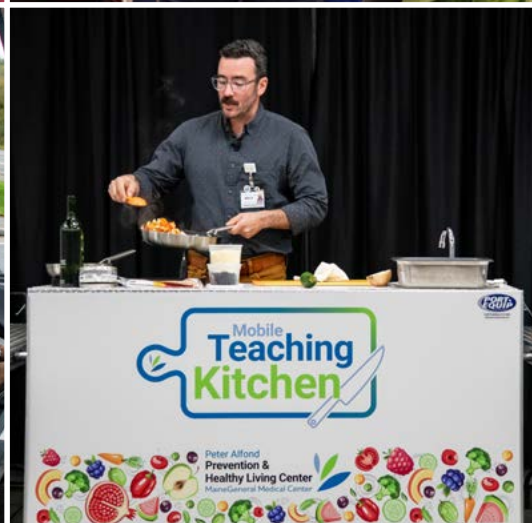
To learn more about the day or to donate, visit [give.mainegeneral.org/hope](http://give.mainegeneral.org/hope).















Lung Cancer  
Screening  
Saves Lives

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Catching lung cancer early increases the chance of survival by 20 percent.

MaineGeneral offers low-dose CT (LDCT) screening, an important tool that can save your life.

A low-dose CT scan looks for early-stage lung cancer in people with a history of smoking. The scan does not hurt and takes less than 5 minutes to complete.

Talk to your doctor about getting screened if you:

- Are 50 to 80 years old
- Are a current or former smoker
- Have quit smoking within the last 15 years
- Have smoked one pack a day for 20 years or two packs a day for 10 years

Learn more today! Visit our webpage devoted to lung health information, including:

- Hear from MaineGeneral patients who got low-dose CT screening
- Watch a video about the screening
- Hear about cancer prevention
- Learn about other lung cancer risks such as radon and arsenic
- View videos by some of the caring doctors and support staff and submit questions for our doctors to answer.



Scan the QR code below or go to [www.mainegeneral.org/lung](http://www.mainegeneral.org/lung).

At MaineGeneral, you have access to state-of-the-art care, including screening, diagnostic testing and treatment with specialists in thoracic surgery, medical and radiation oncology and interventional pulmonology. This care is available right here in the Kennebec Valley. There is no need to travel to get a screening done and, if needed, treatment. 🌿



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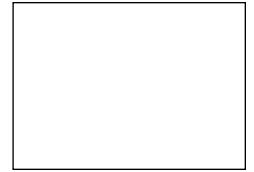
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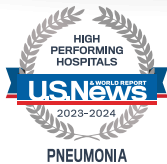
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