



Shaping Tomorrow TOGETHER



Maine Health Care Association

Fall Health Care
Conference & Expo

October 27-29, 2026
Samoset Resort, Rockport, ME

Schedule at a Glance

Sessions Target Audience Key

GA = General Audience
AD = Administration/Management
CO = Communications
FI = Finance
HR = Human Resources
LD = Leadership

AC = Activities
CL = Clinical/DON
DI = Dietary
EN = Environmental

Conference Partner



Tuesday, October 27

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Mike McNeil Scholarship Fund Golf Tournament
Registration is at 9:30 AM (*Samoset Resort*)

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Attendee and Exhibitor Registration Desks Open

- Exhibitor Early Registration from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM (*State of Maine Hall*)
- Attendee Early Registration from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM (*Monhegan*)

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Pre-Conference Quality Award Work Session

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Early Bird Dinner

Join us for an informal night of socialization with great food and fun. Buffet dinner served from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM (*La Bella Vita*)

Wednesday, October 28

6:30 AM – 8:30 AM

Breakfast Buffet (*La Bella Vita*)

7:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Conference Attendees Registration Desk Open (*Monhegan*)

7:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Exhibitor Registration Desk Open

(*State of Maine Hall* – “M” on exhibit area layout)

7:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Exhibitor Setup (*State of Maine Hall*)

7:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Coffee/Tea Available (*Lobby*)

Sponsored by Bangor Drug LTC & Lumina Care

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM

Opening Remarks & State Updates (1) **GA**

8:30 AM – 9:45 AM

The Inner Advantage: Re-Purposing Pressure for Greater Growth in a World That Isn't Slowing Down (2) **GA**

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM

Break

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Concurrent Sessions

- The Whole Leader (3) **GA/LD**
- From Data to Direction: CoreQ, Turn Customer Feedback into Sustainable Improvement (4) **AD/CL/LD**
- Exploring Maine's Healthcare Workforce Using Labor Market Information (5) **GA/AD/HR**
- Artificial Intelligence in Organizations: Innovation, Governance, and Pitfalls (6) **GA/AD/HR/LD**
- Dietary Collaboration with LTC Staff in the Community (7) **GA/DI/LD**
- Compliance Without the Chaos: Practical Strategies for SNFs and Residential Care (8) **AD/FI/HR/CL**
- Red Flags of Financial Abuse in Long Term Care (9) **GA/AD/LD/FI/HR/AC/CL/DI**

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Exhibit Area Open (*State of Maine Hall*)

Conference Attendees Lunch (*La Bella Vita*)

Two seatings by FACILITY name: A-L from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., M-Z from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Exhibitor Lunch (*La Bella Vita*)

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Concurrent Sessions

- Developing the Leader in You (10) **GA/LD/AD**
- Vigilance & Permission: Prepare, Decide, Survive (11) **GA/HR/LD/CL/EV Sponsored by SMD, Inc.**
- Clinical Ethics Update for Long Term Care (12) **AD/CL/HR/LD/GA**
- Building a Community: Fostering Connection for Employee Success (13) **AD/HR/LD/CL**
- Creating Fulfillment, Joy, and Tranquility: The Use of Art with Older Adults (14) **AC/AD**
- Breaking Down IDDSI Testing, Audit Tools and Implementation (15) **CL/DI**

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Break

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM

Concurrent Sessions

- Building the Healthcare Workforce of Tomorrow: Proven Strategies and New Funding Opportunities (16) **AD/HR/LD Sponsored by Acadia Benefits, Inc.**
- Everyone Communicates – Few Connect (17) **GA/HR/LD**
- Stronger Together-Building Partnerships Between Acute and Long-Term Care Infection Preventionists (18) **AD/CM/LD/AC/CL/DI/EV**
- A Report from the Field: Retention and Recruitment of New Mainer Employees in Long Term Care (19) **GA/AD/HR**
- National Quality and Regulatory Updates (20) **AD/FI/HR/CL**

3:00 PM – 3:45 PM

Assorted Sodas/Sparkling Waters Available (Lobby)

Sponsored by Bangor Drug LTC & Lumina Care

3:15 PM – 3:30 PM

Break

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Concurrent Sessions

- Purposeful Teams: Leadership Habits that Build High-Functioning Long Term Care Cultures (21) **GA/LD Sponsored by MaineSail Care Communities**
- Why Staff Training Fails in Healthcare & How to Fix It (22) **AD/HR/LD/CL**
- Maine Long-Term Care 2027: Lessons from Rate Reform and Emerging Trends (23) **FI/AD/HR**
- GUIDE Program – A New Medicare Benefit for Dementia Patients (24) **AD/CM/FI/LD/CL**
- Redefining Rehab in Senior Care: Innovative Solutions for Value Based Care (25) **CL/AD-CANCELLED**

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Connection Reception & Dinner

Join us as we celebrate in the Knox County Ballroom. The evening's festivities include a mix & mingle reception (6:00 p.m.), dinner (6:30 p.m.) and PAC Auction & Raffles (8:00 p.m.).

Thursday, October 29

6:30 AM – 8:30 AM

Breakfast Buffet (La Bella Vita)

7:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Conference Attendees Registration Desk Open (Monhegan)

7:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Coffee/Tea Available (Lobby)

Sponsored by Bangor Drug LTC & Lumina Care

8:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Exhibitor Setup/Cleanup (State of Maine Hall / Bridgepoint Hallway)

8:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Exhibitor Registration Desk Open (State of Maine Hall – “M” on exhibit area layout)

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM

Opening Remarks & National Updates (26) **GA**

8:45 AM – 9:45 AM

Quality Awards Presentations (27) **GA**

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM

Break

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Concurrent Sessions

- Advances in Dementia Diagnosis and Treatment (28) **AD/CL**
- The Importance of Deprescribing for Older Adults (29) **GA/CL**
- Practical Strategies to Strengthen Your Organization's Visibility & Reputation (30) **AD/CM/HR/LD**
- Utilizing Telehealth to Enhance Clinical Quality and Excellence (31) **AD/FI/LD**
- Building Sustainable Systems for Consistent Wound Prevention and Survey Readiness (32) **AD/LD/CL**
- Welcoming LGBTQ+ Community Members in Residential Care and Building Age-Positivity (33) **GA**
- Creepy Crawlies in Healthcare: Managing Common Infestations in Long Term Care (34) **AD/HR/LD/DI/EV**

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Exhibit Area Open (State of Maine Hall)

Conference Attendees Lunch (La Bella Vita); Two seatings by FACILITY name: M-Z from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., A-L from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Exhibitor Lunch (La Bella Vita)

1:00 – 2:30 PM

Concurrent Sessions

- Data, Deadlines, and Dollars: Mastering the SNF QRP (35) **CL/FI/HR/AD**
- Training, Compliance and Employee Engagement (36) **GA/AD/HR**
- The Power of Coaching: Cultivating Trust, Growth & Accountability (37) **AD/CM/HR/LD/CL**
- Symptom Management at End of Life – Long Term Care Edition (38) **CL**
- How to Staff an EVS Department and Give Them the Most Effective Tools (39) **AD/HR/LD/DI/EV**

2:15 PM – 2:45 PM

Assorted Sodas/Sparkling Waters Available (Lobby)

Sponsored by Bangor Drug LTC & Lumina Care

2:30 PM – 2:45 PM

Break

2:45 PM – 4:00 PM

Closing Keynote: Just Two Minutes! The Reset Every Long Term Care Leader Needs Right Now (40) **GA**

4:00 PM

Adjourn

Registration Fees:

Member:

Full Registration = \$360

Commuter (One-Day) Registration = \$240

Non-Member:

Full Registration = \$520

Commuter (One-Day) Registration = \$340

Register. Complete our [Online Registration](#) form. Registration & Full Payment are due by October 13, 2026. After that, you must register ONSITE & pay an additional \$35 late registration fee.

Tuesday, October 27



10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Mike McNeil Scholarship Fund Golf Tournament
Registration is at 9:30 AM with a shotgun tee off beginning at 10:00 AM. A scramble format will be used. Prizes will be awarded, including an opportunity win \$10,000 for a Hole-In-One! Lunch and snacks will be provided.

To date, the Mike McNeil Scholarship Fund (MMSF) has awarded \$100,000 to 158 students interested in long term care careers. The MMSF is open to MHCA member facility employees, their immediate family members and volunteers wishing to pursue post-secondary education and training in the areas of Nursing, Physical or Occupational Therapy, Speech Pathology, Social Work, Activities and Food Service.

Would you like to support the Fund?

Consider participating/sponsoring this year's [golf tournament fundraiser](#) or make a monetary donation [here](#).

Sponsors to date:

Swag Bag Sponsor:
Steve Smith Trial Group

Hole in One Sponsor:
Paycor

Lunch Sponsor:
Sysco

Hole Sponsors:
Beacon Hospice • BerryDunn • Brock Health
Canfield Systems • Clipboard
First Atlantic Healthcare • Maine Fire
National Health Care Associates

We are still seeking Hole Sponsors
Contact [Dianne Chicoine](#) for more information.

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Pre-Conference Quality Award Work Session
Maureen Carland – Maine Health Care Association
Rebecca Gagnon – Sedgewood Commons
Brenda Pierce – Westgate Center for Rehabilitation and Alzheimer's Care
Jessica Porter – Brewer Center for Health & Rehabilitation, LLC

Join a legacy of quality and innovation by participating in the AHCA/NCAL Quality Award Program – now celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2026! This dynamic work session is designed to support providers at every step of their Quality Award journey. Bronze applicants will collaborate with Maureen Carland, a Gold Award recipient and seasoned examiner with nine years of experience, while silver applicants will gain insight from a current silver examiner as well as recent 2026 Silver recipient and future award examiners. More than just an application, this program offers a transformative opportunity to strengthen your organization through expert feedback, team building, and a clear roadmap for performance excellence. By engaging with a community of like-minded leaders in long-term and post-acute care, you'll elevate your team, enhance care quality, and earn national recognition for your dedication to continuous improvement. Don't miss this chance to be part of a movement that's raised the standard for three decades – and is just getting started.

To RSVP for this workshop, please [click here](#).

Sponsored by Northbridge Companies



**Event
Sponsor**

MCKESSON

Wednesday, October 28

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM

Opening Remarks & State Updates (1)

Angela Cole Westhoff – Maine Health Care Association

Angela Cole Westhoff, MHCA President and CEO will offer brief opening remarks and updates on legislative activities, regulatory updates, and policy changes affecting long term care providers across the State of Maine.

8:30 AM – 9:45 AM

The Inner Advantage: Re-Purposing Pressure for Greater Growth in a World That Isn't Slowing Down (2)

Caleb Campbell – Inspirational Speaker on Leadership, Burnout, and Mental Health

Most people aren't struggling because they lack discipline, talent, or work ethics. They're struggling because they're being asked to carry more than they have the inner capability to hold. Work is faster. Teams are leaner. Expectations keep rising. And capable professionals don't fall apart under that weight...they compensate. They push through exhaustion. Normalize depletion. Lower their own internal warning signs. And tell themselves things will slow down soon – For many, it doesn't. In The Inner Advantage, Caleb Campbell reframes pressure and burnout for what it truly is: a capability crisis, not a personal failure. Rather than teaching people how to grind harder or "be more resilient," Caleb helps audiences understand how pressure works internally – and how to change their relationship with it, so it no longer drains them, but strengthens them. Drawing from elite performance environments and lived experience inside high-pressure systems, Caleb gives professionals a new framework for sustaining energy, clarity, and purpose in a world that isn't slowing down. This keynote restores a sense of agency, helping individuals rebuild internal capability so performance can rise without sacrificing mental health or well-being. This is not about doing less – it's about carrying pressure differently.

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM

Break

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Concurrent Sessions

The Whole Leader (3)

Caleb Campbell – Inspirational Speaker on Leadership, Burnout, and Mental Health

The skills and behaviors that got you here are not always the ones that will take you further. This session distills the full Whole Leader program into a single high-impact session helping leaders build the internal capability to perform under pressure, without burning out doing it. Meant to build on the morning keynote, Caleb moves leaders through the three dimensions that determine how well they handle pressure: the clarity of the mind, the intelligence of the heart, and the wisdom of the body. Attendees leave not with more to do, but with a clearer way to see themselves, their stress, and their ability to lead through it.

From Data to Direction: CoreQ, Turn Customer Feedback into Sustainable Improvement (4)

Cheryl Hill – Align

What if customer satisfaction surveys did more than measure experience—what if they reliably drove improvement? This session shares best practices for administering and interpreting surveys, including CoreQ, through a Baldrige aligned lens. Participants will learn strategies to increase response rates, interpret data effectively, and convert results into sustainable, systematic quality improvement. Real provider examples will illustrate how survey insights strengthen processes, guide decision making, and support ADLI based evaluation. Attendees will leave able to recognize effective survey practices, use Baldrige approaches to drive improvement, and assess real examples to enhance customer experience and organizational learning.

Exploring Maine's Healthcare Workforce Using Labor Market Information (5)

Andrew Dawson – Maine DOL, Bureau of Employment Services

This presentation will highlight labor market trends in the healthcare and social assistance industries and discuss research from the 2026 Maine Healthcare Occupations Report. Topics of discussion will include the shifting industrial, occupational, and demographic trends in Maine's population and workforce, as well as the long-term opportunities projected for Maine's healthcare-related occupations. Attendees will leave with an understanding of the current economic trends in Maine's healthcare workforce and the data and resources that are available through Maine's Center for Workforce Research and Information.

Artificial Intelligence in Organizations: Innovation, Governance, and Pitfalls (6)

Ben Nadeau – Bedard Pharmacy & Medical Supplies

AI presents significant opportunities to streamline operations, enhance customer experience, and improve organizational performance. This discussion will focus on actionable use cases, governance considerations, and the pitfalls leaders should avoid when adopting AI in the workplace.

Dietary Collaboration with LTC Staff in the Community (7)

John Short – Mount Joseph at Waterville

This program will discuss how dietary staff can interact with other departments and our residents to foster a positive environment with our colleagues, as well as the community and those we serve. This session will cover a range of topics including interdisciplinary team building, how to use your interactions as a stepping-stone to positive outcomes. How to engage with staff, residents, and community members in a constructive way, and how as support staff so we can contribute to the overall wellness of our facility and community.

Wednesday, October 28

**Lanyard
Sponsor**

**Affinity Care
of Maine**

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM Concurrent Sessions *Continued*

Compliance Without the Chaos: Practical Strategies for SNFs and Residential Care (8)

Olga Gross-Balzano – BerryDunn

Maureen Carland – Maine Health Care Association

This session will offer practical strategies for developing or improving nursing and assisted living facility regulatory compliance. From less-known items that frequently fall between the cracks to the tasks on everyone's minds, Moe Carland (MHCA) and Olga Gross-Balzano (BerryDunn) will discuss frequently asked questions, provide a summary of compliance program observations, and will engage participants in identification of some of the best practices to stay in the know and in compliance, taking care of residents, safeguarding facility's reputation and reimbursement.

Red Flags of Financial Abuse in Long Term Care (9)

Andrew Booth – Bath PD/Maine Council for Elder Abuse Prevention

Laura Farrington – Legal Services for Maine Elders

Law enforcement and Legal Services for Maine Elders often receive reports and investigate allegations of financial abuse or neglect from long term care facilities. This session will provide an overview of various red flags indicating financial exploitation or abuse of LTC residents based upon recent case studies/investigations. This session will also highlight the Maine Council for Elder Abuse Prevention's efforts to increase awareness and to help prevent these issues from occurring.

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Concurrent Sessions

Developing the Leader in You (10)

Ed Krow – Ed Krow, LLC

This session redefines leadership as a mindset and a skillset accessible to anyone willing to grow. Ed challenges the traditional view of leadership as positional power and instead introduces leadership as a daily act of influence, driven by character, guided by priorities, and grounded in service to others. Through this session, participants will be inspired to lead more intentionally, regardless of their role or title. Providing compelling reasons and examples of why leading yourself well is the most important leadership skill of all, the session crescendos with insights on attitude, vision, and personal discipline. These elements are what separate good leaders from great ones. A leader's attitude sets the emotional tone of the team. A clear vision brings meaning to the work, and personal discipline ensures that growth is intentional, not accidental.

Vigilance & Permission: Prepare, Decide, Survive (11)

Adam Gormely – Dirigo RMS

Drew Goodridge – Dirigo RMS

This training equips participants with the mindset and tools to prevent and respond to active shooter/active assailant threats. It emphasizes vigilance through early recognition of behavioral warning signs, combined with the powerful practice of giving yourself permission to act whether reporting concerns proactively or making life-saving decisions during an incident. Using the Prepare, Decide, Survive framework and real-world context ("when seconds count, police are minutes away"), the session builds mental readiness, overcomes common barriers like hesitation and normalization bias, and empowers teams to protect themselves and others through awareness, decisive action, and post-event resilience. *This session may include examples of active shooting incidences.*

Sponsored by SMD, Inc.

Clinical Ethics Update for Long Term Care (12)

Frank Chessa, Ph.D. – MaineHealth Maine Medical Center

This session will provide an update on current ethical issues affecting long term care providers and explore healthcare ethics consultation as a valuable resource for navigating complex clinical situations. Topics will include decision making capacity, surrogate decision making in Maine, medical aid in dying (MAID), voluntary stopping of eating and drinking (VSED), and other timely ethics considerations.

Building a Community: Fostering Connection for Employee Success (13)

**Jennifer Pelletier – National Health Care Associates
Anthony Scarpino – National Health Care Associates**

Staff retention is integral to the successful operations of a nursing home. Engaged staff results in higher quality of care and customer service. Staff are more likely to succeed in an environment where they feel part of a community and are connected to the facility and the team. Our presentation will discuss what it takes to build, strengthen, and maintain a community for staff. We offer suggestions on how to recruit staff that align with the company's mission and values; engage staff through real conversation and action; and maintain the community through internal development and training. The presentation will be interactive and ask the audience to help us build a community.

Creating Fulfillment, Joy, and Tranquility: The Use of Art with Older Adults (14)

**Mary Fibich – Barron Center
Sarah Nute – Barron Center**

Art isn't just entertainment in care centers – it's a powerful tool for healing, connection, and quality of life. This program will provide participants with new art inspiration, guidance and tools to use with older adults with cognitive and physical disabilities.

Featured topics include:

- The Benefits of Using Art
- Things to Consider When Planning Art Activities
- All About Art Materials and Helpful Art Adaptations
- Helpful Hints for Residents/Clients
- Helpful Hints for Art Group Facilitators and Activity Therapists
- Some Favorite Art Projects

Breaking Down IDDSI Testing, Audit Tools and Implementation (15)

Haley Marks – Medtrition

Dysphagia is a condition that impacts millions of people each year. The International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative was introduced to help improve the safety and consistency of how we serve the dysphagia population. The following presentation will provide a deeper dive into the details of the new IDDSI standards, including the framework, testing methods, and key considerations to be aware of as we navigate the new process.

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM Concurrent Sessions

Building the Healthcare Workforce of Tomorrow: Proven Strategies and New Funding Opportunities (16)

**Joan Dolan – Maine DOL, Bureau of
Employment Services
Angelina Klouthis Jean – Maine DOL, Bureau of
Employment Services
Deanna Partridge – Maine DOL, Bureau of
Employment Services**

Healthcare employers continue to face workforce shortages, turnover, and increasing demand for skilled talent. Over the past several years, Maine has invested significant resources into workforce recruitment, retention, training, and career advancement initiatives. This interactive session will share key lessons learned from

ARPA-funded healthcare workforce efforts, including strategies that successfully supported employee retention, upskilling, and employer engagement. Attendees will also gain an early look at emerging opportunities designed to strengthen healthcare workforce pipelines, including apprenticeship models, workforce training investments, healthcare career pathway initiatives, and new funding opportunities that may be available to employers and workers. Through real-world examples and an interactive audience activity, participants will explore practical solutions for common workforce challenges and identify programs that may best support their organizations.

Sponsored by Acadia Benefits, Inc., an IMA Company

Everyone Communicates – Few Connect (17)

Ed Krow – Ed Krow, LLC

Ever wonder why some people move forward while others seem to spin their wheels? Or why your colleagues seek input from certain people but don't value others' great ideas? Although everyone communicates, some people are better at identifying with and relating to others. This program will help you make powerful connections with others.

In this session, you will learn to:

- Build a heartfelt rapport with others, one on one and in groups
- Simplify your message to its most relevant points
- Share stories and illustrations to make points memorable
- Communicate with character, credibility, and conviction

Wednesday, October 28

Water Bubblers Sponsors

Constellation Health
Services Hospice &
Palliative Care

Machias Savings Bank

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM Concurrent Sessions *Continued*

**Stronger Together-Building Partnerships
Between Acute and Long-Term Care Infection
Preventionists (18)**

*Vicki Quesada – APIC Pine tree chapter/Woodlands
Senior Living*

Julie Tutt – NorthernLight

Long term care infection prevention is not an easy task, with varying diagnosis and age groups. Lots of questions and asking yourself, “what is everyone else doing”? APIC (Association For Professionals in Infection control and Epidemiology) Pine tree Chapter is working on a Buddy system to pair up an Acute Care Infection preventionist with a long-term care Infection preventionist. This program is to support each other in education, trends of infectious diseases in the surrounding communities, and open up communication between the two medical professionals. This is a volunteer program and each acute care IP would be paired with a LTC IP from the State of Maine. The benefits are endless. Education, trends, safety, communication, and collaboration.

**A Report from the Field: Retention and Recruitment
of New Mainer Employees in Long Term Care (19)**

Anna Black – Maine Health Care Association

In 2025, MHCA took concerted steps in addressing the workforce challenge facing Maine’s long term care sector. With funding support from Maine’s Department of Economic and Community Development and collaborative partnership with Maine’s Long Term Care Ombudsman, MHCA developed and convened a series of web-based and in-person educational training programs for long term care leaders offering tools, tips, and practical strategies to increase recruitment and support retention of New Mainers. In addition, focus groups and interviews were compiled, creating a strong picture of what’s working, what isn’t, and what more can be done to purposefully and positively increase the hiring

potential from the New Mainer community for the betterment of the long term care sector. This session will explore what’s been gained through the work one year later and will provide a recap of the trainings provided, lessons learned, and stories from participants who shared their knowledge and experience. Finally, participants will be encouraged to provide their feedback on these efforts and discuss next steps to continue the intentional growth of employees to meet the needs of residents in Maine’s long term care centers.

National Quality and Regulatory Updates (20)

Holly Harmon – American Health Care Association

This session will cover recent and anticipated regulatory changes and what it means for Maine. Resources to assist AHCA/NCAL members to elevate quality and succeed in this regulatory environment will be covered in this session.

3:30 – 4:30 PM

Concurrent Sessions

**Purposeful Teams: Leadership Habits that Build
High-Functioning Long Term Care Cultures (21)**

Michael Lacasse – Schooner Memory Care

Long term care leaders are navigating workforce instability, staff burnout, communication failures, and the increasing complexity of resident care, particularly in dementia-focused environments. Building high-functioning teams requires more than policies—it demands intentional leadership habits that shape culture, trust, and accountability. This session will examine practical strategies including communication discipline, psychological safety, recognition, role clarity, accountability, and consistency in long term care. Attendees will leave with actionable leadership tools to strengthen team performance, improve staff engagement, enhance communication, and create more consistent resident-centered care cultures.

Sponsored by MaineSail Care Communities

Wednesday, October 28

Why Staff Training Fails in Healthcare & How to Fix It (22)

[Steven Shaw – Presque Isle Healthcare Center](#)

Long term care facilities continue to face staffing shortages, increasing regulatory demands, and ongoing challenges with employee engagement and retention. Despite significant investments in staff education, many training programs fail to produce meaningful or lasting changes in practice, leaving organizations frustrated by poor implementation and repeated compliance issues. This session examines why traditional training approaches often fall short and how principles from organizational psychology can improve staff engagement, knowledge retention, and sustainable behavior change. Discussion topics include adult learning principles, barriers to implementation, motivation and buy-in, change management, and practical strategies that can be applied within long term care settings.

Maine Long Term Care 2027: Lessons from Rate Reform and Emerging Trends (23)

[Melissa Baez – BerryDunn](#)

[Lisa Trundy-Whitten – BerryDunn](#)

As Maine's long-term care sector continues to adapt to a changing reimbursement and regulatory environment, providers face new opportunities and challenges that will shape the future of care delivery. This session will provide a comprehensive overview of the policy, payment, and operational developments influencing Maine's long term care landscape in 2027. Attendees will gain insights into the ongoing impact of Maine's 2025 nursing facility rate reform, including lessons learned from implementation, emerging trends in provider performance, and implications for financial sustainability. The session will examine the specialty care payment model, value-based payment initiatives, and other evolving reimbursement drivers affecting nursing facilities and residential care providers throughout the state. Presenters will also explore key regulatory, workforce, and operational considerations affecting provider organizations and discuss strategies

for navigating uncertainty in an increasingly complex healthcare environment. Through analysis of current trends and reimbursement data, participants will better understand how policy and payment changes are influencing organizational decision-making, compliance, and long-term planning.

GUIDE Program – A New Medicare Benefit for Dementia Patients (24)

[Celeste Begley – HouseWorks](#)

As dementia diagnoses continue to rise, families and care partners are navigating increasingly complex care needs with limited support and growing caregiver strain. This presentation will introduce the CMS GUIDE Program, a new Medicare benefit designed to support individuals living with dementia and their caregivers. Discussion topics include program eligibility, respite care benefits, care navigation, and how providers can connect families to this resource. Attendees will leave with a clear understanding of who qualifies, how to access services, and how the GUIDE Program can reduce caregiver burden while improving care coordination and outcomes.

Redefining Rehab in Senior Care: Innovative Solutions for Value Based Care (25)

[Christie Norton – Preferred Therapy Solutions](#)

[Rachael Percoco – Preferred Therapy Solutions](#)

This webinar examines how rehabilitation can move beyond traditional service delivery to become a strategic contributor to value-based performance in skilled nursing and senior living communities. The presentation explores emerging hybrid care models that combine in-person therapy with telehealth, remote therapeutic monitoring, and AI-assisted technologies to extend reach, improve clinical insight, and optimize resource utilization. It also highlights innovative therapy programs tailored to senior care environments that support value-based care initiatives. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how modern rehab approaches can drive measurable outcomes while supporting operational efficiency.

Cancelled

Thursday, October 29

Halloween Contest Sponsor

Affinity Care of Maine

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM

Opening Remarks & National Updates (26)

Angela Cole Westhoff – Maine Health Care Association

Clif Porter – American Health Care Association

Angela Cole Westhoff, MHCA President and Clif Porter, AHCA President, will offer brief opening remarks and national updates including an overview of national legislation and regulatory issues.

8:45 AM – 9:45 AM

Quality Awards Presentations (27)

Maureen Carland – Maine Health Care Association

Holly Harmon – American Health Care Association

Sara Sherwood – American Health Care Association

Join us as we celebrate the commitment to quality care demonstrated by recipients of the 2026 AHCA/NCAL National Quality Awards. We are grateful for this opportunity to celebrate the success of our fellow Maine providers and invite all conference attendees to participate and learn about the Quality Awards Program.

Sponsored by Northbridge Companies

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM

Break

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Concurrent Sessions

Advances in Dementia Diagnosis and Treatment (28)

Dr. Rachael Blake – MaineHealth

As the understanding of dementia continues to evolve, it is important for long term care professionals to stay informed about current diagnostic approaches and treatment options. This session will review recent updates in dementia diagnosis, emerging therapies, and practical considerations for supporting residents living with dementia. Designed for administrators, nurses,

and rehabilitation professionals, this presentation will explore how these developments may influence care planning and quality of life.

The Importance of Deprescribing for Older Adults (29)

Kane Olson – Omnicare

This presentation emphasizes the importance of deprescribing for older adults, including identifying scenarios where it may be an option and communicating concerns. It defines deprescribing as reducing or stopping medication that may be harmful or no longer beneficial. The need for continual medication evaluation and potential negative impacts on quality of life are discussed. This content discusses reviewing medication lists for care facility residents, monitoring for changes and new symptoms, and deprescribing commonly targeted medications. It warns against prescribing cascades and emphasizes interdisciplinary team involvement and person-centered care. The goal is medication stewardship and protecting wellbeing.

Practical Strategies to Strengthen Your Organization's Visibility & Reputation (30)

Pam Kendrick – Maine Veterans' Homes

Care community providers face ongoing challenges related to census, workforce recruitment, staff retention, and community awareness. Organizations that consistently engage their communities and effectively tell their stories are better positioned to succeed across all of them. This session will explore practical, resource-conscious strategies for increasing organizational visibility and community connection. Topics include community events and partnerships; websites, social media, and Google Business Profiles; storytelling through resident, family, and staff experiences; and practical tools such as Canva, ChatGPT, and third-party resources. Attendees will learn how to increase community engagement, strengthen their online presence, and create purposeful content that supports organizational goals.

Thursday, October 29

Utilizing Telehealth to Enhance Clinical Quality and Excellence (31)

Laura Geiger – Lumina Care

Delivering quality care that aligns with a resident's goals of care can be challenging. When facilities face staffing restraints, continuously changing regulatory requirements and care accessibility issues, these issues can be compounded and lead to poor clinical outcomes. The average annual readmission rate within 30 days from a SNF is 23.5% and the annual cost of unplanned readmissions is estimated to be \$26 billion. Services include a facility specific quality measure dashboard, after hours provider services, tele psychiatry, talk therapy, transitional care management, remote patient monitoring, chronic care management, and behavioral health integration. The services are chosen to fit the facility needs. Telehealth can help care delivery, improve quality metrics, and allow specialized care for a resident and/or their family may need to drive clinical excellence in your facilities.

Building Sustainable Systems for Consistent Wound Prevention and Survey Readiness (32)

Cassandra Voltaire – WoundFit

Skilled nursing facilities continue to face ongoing challenges with inconsistent wound prevention, poor documentation, and recurring survey deficiencies, often despite staff training and good intentions. These issues frequently stem from weak systems rather than a lack of clinical knowledge, leading to increased regulatory risk and staff frustration. This session explores how facilities can build practical, sustainable systems to improve consistency in wound care across all shifts. Key topics include structured admission prevention protocols, clear escalation pathways, and documentation practices that demonstrate clinical reasoning and hold up during surveys. Attendees will gain actionable strategies to reduce reactive decision-making, strengthen interdisciplinary communication, and create systems that support both regulatory compliance and better resident outcomes.

Welcoming LGBTQ+ Community Members in Residential Care and Building Age-Positivity (33)

Kathryn Vezina – Maine Council on Aging

Micaela Cassily – Affirming Behavioral Health

The LGBTQ+ community has faced a lifetime of discrimination and as we age those impacts cumulate and multiply. As LGBTQ+ elders move into various supportive settings, some of our 'usual' ways of doing things can perpetuate negative impacts. At the same time, age-positive attitudes can contribute to a longer and healthier life. This interactive session will offer evidence-informed strategies for service providers to be more inclusive and welcoming for LGBTQ+ elders and support the integration of greater age-positivity for recipients of services and for facility staff.

Creepy Crawlies in Healthcare: Managing Common Infestations in Long Term Care (34)

Stacie Poulin – Maine CDC

Long term care facilities increasingly face challenges related to bed bugs, scabies, lice, and other infestations that can disrupt operations, increase costs, and cause significant stress for residents, families, and staff. Early recognition and an organized response are essential to limiting transmission while maintaining high-quality resident care. This session will provide a practical overview of common infestations encountered in healthcare settings, emphasizing evidence-based prevention, identification, treatment, and outbreak management. Discussion topics will include bed bugs, scabies, head and body lice, fleas, ticks, recognition of signs and symptoms, infection prevention strategies, environmental control, communication with residents and families, and lessons learned from public health investigations. Attendees will leave better prepared to recognize common infestations, implement effective prevention and control measures, and confidently respond to suspected outbreaks within their facilities.

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Concurrent Sessions

Data, Deadlines, and Dollars: Mastering the SNF QRP (35)

Amy Miller – American Health Care Association

The Skilled Nursing Facility Quality Reporting Program (SNF QRP) plays a critical role in regulatory compliance, public reporting, and Medicare reimbursement for nursing homes. This session provides participants with a foundational understanding of the SNF QRP, including its purpose, structure, and impact on facility operations and payment. Attendees will review the primary data sources used within the program and how each contributes to quality measurement and reporting accuracy. The presentation will also explain the three compliance thresholds skilled nursing facilities must meet to avoid Medicare payment penalties. Finally, participants will identify practical, actionable steps nursing homes can implement to effectively monitor ongoing compliance, support accurate reporting, and reduce financial and regulatory risk.

Training, Compliance and Employee Engagement (36)

Barrett Wilkinson – Piper Shores

Long term care organizations are entrenched in managing compliance expectations, so meaningful training experiences for employees often get overlooked. In this session, we will share some lessons learned from a year of concerted effort to expand and improve employee education at our facility while ensuring compliance with regulatory training requirements. Participants will have the opportunity to complete a micro-assessment of their current practice, understand the connections between employee education and retention, and leave the session with ideas to try at their site.

Thursday, October 29

Break Sponsors

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1:00 PM – 2:30 PM Concurrent Sessions *Continued*

The Power of Coaching: Cultivating Trust, Growth & Accountability (37)

Katherine Pushee – Andwell Health Partners
Trudy Newton – Andwell Health Partners

The rising crisis of staff shortages, burnout, and turnover continues to place significant strain on health-care organizations, impacting employee engagement, retention, and patient outcomes. A culture of coaching offers a sustainable solution by fostering psychological safety, strengthening accountability, and supporting professional growth. This presentation will explore the implementation of structured coaching plans, coaching conversations, leadership development strategies, and methods for creating an environment where employees feel valued and empowered. Attendees will gain practical tools to build a coaching culture, improve engagement and retention, enhance leadership effectiveness, and elevate both employee and patient experiences.

Symptom Management at End of Life – Long Term Care Edition (38)

Dr. Katrina Sink – Andwell Health Partners

Symptom management at end of life presents unique challenges in the long term care setting. Patients benefit when all members of the care team have familiarity with hospice services and symptom management. This talk will briefly overview the hospice benefit and interdisciplinary team. The focus will then be on identifying and assessing end of life symptoms, as well as management strategies. These strategies will include non-pharmacologic and pharmacologic ideas, with an emphasis on medications and their uses, dosing, and timing.

How to Staff an EVS Department and Give Them the Most Effective Tools (39)

Daniel Smith – Hillyard, Inc.

Today's EVS workers on average are older and the average starting age is older now. As EVS workers age out of work and millennials are not entering the profession, it begs the question. Do you have the right plan for recruitment and retention? What type of training and education are you providing? What onboarding process do you provide for new hires? What are millennials looking for in a career in EVS? What tools do you have to support them mentally and physically? Learn the process of hiring, onboarding, training, education and setting expectations not only for the EVS staff yet for management in this presentation.

2:30 PM – 2:45 PM
Break

2:45 PM – 4:00 PM

Closing Keynote: Just Two Minutes! The Reset Every Long Term Care Leader Needs Right Now (40)

Lizzie Williamson – The Excuse Buster from Down Under, Global Motivational Speaker, TEDx Speaker, Bestselling Author

You're tired. Your team is short-staffed, the pressure isn't letting up, and somewhere between the funding gaps and the 2 a.m. call-outs, looking after yourself has dropped pretty far down the list. This session is about putting it back at the top in a way that actually works in the real world. Dubbed 'The Excuse Buster from Down Under', Lizzie Williamson has heard every reason why looking after yourself gets pushed to the bottom of the list and she's here to bust every single one of them. Flying in from Sydney, Australia, Lizzie – creator of the Two Minute Method, TEDx speaker and bestselling author – closes out the Fall Health Care Conference with a keynote built specifically for long term care leaders who have been leading through enormous change and need a real way to refuel. Because

while there's a lot in this industry you can't control – the legislation, the funding, the regulations – how you reset, how you bounce back, and how you take care of yourself? That's entirely yours. And Lizzie gets it. No fluff, no hour-long meditation retreats, no advice that falls apart the moment you walk back through your facility doors. Just simple, science-backed strategies for those real moments in the day like when someone pulls out, when you've been pulled onto the floor or when you're on your last nerve and need to dig deep fast. Leave knowing that resilience isn't something you either have or you don't, it's something you can build, two minutes at a time. Leave with tools so practical and so simple you'll be using them before you hit the highway and every single day after that. Leave feeling reconnected to your purpose, recharged in ways you didn't expect, and genuinely hopeful about what's possible when the right strategies are in your corner.

4:00 PM
Adjourn

Continuing Education Units (CEU's):

Participants can earn a Certificate for attending the educational portion of this conference. To earn credit for any session, you must be present for the entire workshop; partial CEUs cannot be granted.

To obtain a Certificate, you must meet ALL the following requirements (without exception): (1) Complete and sign the CEU Documentation Form included in your conference bag, (2) Submit the white copy to MHCA Staff (at designated locations) as you leave the event (not before).

*CEU Forms sent by mail, after the event, are not valid, therefore, certificates will not be provided in those cases.

Costume Contest

MHCA's Costume Contest Returns to the Connection Reception & Dinner!

With Halloween just around the corner, we invite you to join in the fun by dressing up for the Connection Reception & Dinner on Wednesday, October 28th.

Whether you create an elaborate masterpiece, coordinate with friends for a group theme, or put together something clever with a touch of humor, we want to see it! Costumes are encouraged (but not required), and our panel of judges will be awarding trophies in four categories:

- Best Costume
- Best Group Costume
- Most Creative
- Crowd Favorite

In addition to taking home a trophy, you'll earn something just as valuable: a full year of bragging rights! So, dust off your wigs, capes, scrubs, or whatever inspires you, and get ready for an evening of great food, networking, laughter, and a little friendly competition. We can't wait to see what you come up with!

Cards of Kindness: A Small Gesture. A Big Impact.

MHCA is once again proud to support Cards of Kindness, a community holiday project that brings messages of love, encouragement, and festive cheer to older adults living in nursing homes and assisted living communities throughout Kennebec County and beyond.

Conference attendees are invited to help spread goodwill and brighten the holiday season by creating or bringing holiday cards filled with thoughtful messages. Whether you bring cards prepared by your team ahead of time or stop by the Cards of Kindness table located next to the registration desk to make them during the conference, every card helps remind older adults that they are thought of, appreciated, and cared for.

To add a little friendly competition, the facility or community that submits the most Cards of Kindness during the conference will receive the Good Egg Award! The winning organization will receive a special award presentation delivered after the conference, along with recognition on MHCA's social media channels and in E-News.

Gather your teams, get creative, and help us make the holiday season a little brighter for older adults in our communities. A simple card can make a meaningful connection.



Speaker Bios

Keynote Speakers



DAY 1 Opening Keynote

Caleb Campbell, once known as “America’s Athlete,” is a West Point graduate, former Army officer, and NFL linebacker. Selected in the NFL draft under a groundbreaking Department of Defense policy allowing him to serve and play simultaneously, his dream was abruptly halted when the policy was rescinded hours before signing his first contract. This life-altering moment launched Caleb into an internal battle that ultimately became a catalyst for his greatest transformation. Today, as an inspirational speaker on burnout, mental health, and leadership, Caleb connects with audiences facing relentless demands in a world that refuses to slow down. Through his powerful story and actionable framework, he helps others unlock the courage needed to turn life’s pressure into a pathway for something greater—individually and collectively. When not speaking, Caleb lives in Nashville, TN, with his wife, Kara, and their two children, Sophie and Rune. He’s still campaigning for a Bernese Mountain Dog puppy.

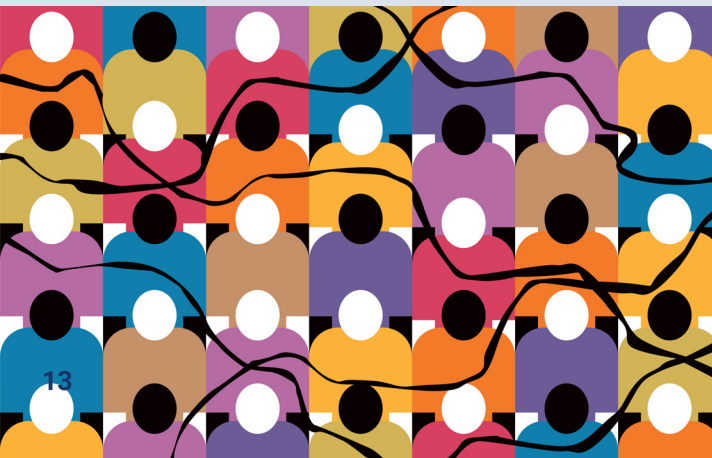


DAY 2 Closing Keynote

Lizzie Williamson, dubbed by the US media as “Excuse-Buster from Down Under”, is an internationally recognized keynote speaker, TEDx speaker, and two-time author (Two Minute Moves, The Active Workday Advantage) who helps people get unstuck, lift their energy, and take action when motivation is low. A former professional dancer who performed in high heels on the high seas, Lizzie knows how to bring energy when conditions aren’t perfect. Lizzie’s practical tools and insights have been featured on Good Morning America, Today Show, Sunrise, Studio 10, where her work is recognised for making motivation and wellbeing accessible, actionable, and relevant to real workdays. Lizzie has delivered keynotes and facilitated sessions across government, corporate, education, and community sectors and has energised audiences at international conferences featuring speakers including Barack Obama, Michelle Obama, Arianna Huffington, and the Dalai Lama.

**Photography
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**National Health
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Breakout Session Speakers

Melissa Baez is a Manager in BerryDunn's Healthcare Group, responsible for oversight of the governmental healthcare program reimbursement, such as Medicare and Medicaid cost reports preparation and review, benchmarking, and reimbursement consulting. Melissa strives to cultivate client relationships that include one-on-one interaction and constant communication, allowing her to offer solutions and suggestions based on best practices she has observed in the industry. She serves as a trusted advisor and provides thought leadership on issues related to third-party reimbursement and finance, like certificates of need, feasibility studies, and other matters. She is involved with the preparation and updates to the Senior Living group's interactive Medicare Prospective Payment System (PPS) rate calculator and SNF provider portal. She frequently presents at BerryDunn healthcare conferences and education events.

Celeste Begley, CDP, CCM, is a seasoned healthcare professional and Business Development leader specializing in home care and the continuum of care. In her current role, Celeste works closely with healthcare providers, senior living communities, and community-based organizations to improve care transitions, strengthen referral partnerships, and ensure older adults and their families have access to appropriate in-home supports. She is a Certified Dementia Practitioner (CDP) and Certified Case Manager (CCM) with a strong background in care coordination, dementia education, and caregiver support. Celeste has been at the forefront of developing and delivering educational presentations and CEU-eligible programming for Registered Nurses, Case Managers, and Social Workers, with a focus on dementia care, Medicare benefits, and interdisciplinary collaboration. She is known for her practical, relationship-driven approach and her ability to translate complex healthcare programs into actionable guidance for professionals across the continuum of care.

Anna Black is the Director of Government Relations and Workforce at Maine Health Care Association. Ms. Black, an accomplished government strategist, communications and public policy leader, joins MHCA after 15 years in the

public sector. Prior to MHCA, Ms. Black served as the Chief of Staff for Arizona's Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry, focusing on, among other areas, government affairs, communications, and workforce development initiatives. Prior to that, Ms. Black served the State of Maine for 10 years in a number of areas, including as the Director of Government Affairs and Communications for the Maine Department of Corrections, and as a program and policy contractor with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services Office of Behavioral Health (formerly known as the Maine Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services).

Rachael Blake, MD is an attending geriatric physician for MaineHealth Senior Care. She attended UMASS Medical School, and then pursued a family medicine residency and geriatric fellowship at Maine Medical Center, completed in 2012. She currently serves as the medical director and primary care physician at Piper Shores long term care and assisted living community in Scarborough, Maine and consulting dementia specialist at MaineHealth Senior Care Consult clinic in Portland. She is an Assistant Professor, Tufts Medical School, and a member of the MaineHealth Academic Research Council Research & Data Subcommittee, Maine State Plan on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias. She is currently a PI on NIH-funded grant, in collaboration with the Roux Institute and Apriqot, "Leveraging EHRs and AI for high resolution, AD/DR prevalence and risk".

Chief Andrew Booth has been with the Bath Police Department since 2002, working his way through each rank until his promotion to chief in 2021. He currently holds an executive level law enforcement certification with Maine Criminal Justice Academy. He has experience as a crash reconstructionist, training officer, MDEA special agent, evidence/property manager, and public information officer. He is Maine Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (MLEAP) assessor, serves on the Maine Chiefs of Police Association (MCOPA) MLEAP committee, and serves as Bath PD's accreditation manager. He is a member of a number of elder justice organizations, serving as the

co-chair of the Maine Council for Elder Abuse Prevention (MCEAP), member of the State's Elder Justice Coordinating Partnership, and chairs the Merrymeeting Bay Area Triad group, which is a local collaboration between law enforcement and older adult services focused on preventing and investigating elder abuse issues in Sagadahoc and northeastern Cumberland County area. Originally from Vermont, he attended St. Michael's College, where he received a bachelor's degree in history with a minor in business. In addition to his civilian career, he served 24 years in the Army National Guard, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel, Infantry, with two combat deployments to Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Maureen "Moe" Carland, MA, RN-BSN, NHA, is the Director of Quality Improvement and Regulatory Affairs at the Maine Health Care Association. She is a licensed multilevel nursing home administrator and registered nurse with over 35 years of experience in health care. Maureen led a team to earn the Gold – Excellence in Quality Award – for superior performance in quality care, awarded by the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), becoming the first Gold recipient in the state of Maine. Maureen has been a Gold Award Examiner for the past nine years and is a self-described quality assurance performance improvement (QAPI) junkie. She holds an MA in Leadership Studies as well as a BS in Nursing.

Micaela Cassily is currently the Executive Director of Affirming Behavioral Health (ABH), a new behavioral health agency located in Hampden, Maine. ABH's mission is to provide affirming, inclusive, trauma-informed and evidence-based mental health services to Mainers of diverse genders and sexualities. The Practice aims to foster trans joy and resilience, empowering trans Mainers to live their fullest and most authentic lives. Micaela worked 35+ years as a computer engineer, and architect, was a principal in the formation of a startup computer company, and managed the product development at several companies where developed products won awards at major computer trade shows. She began her career as a high

Speaker Bios

Breakout Session Speakers

school teacher of Physics and Math (3 years) in her native Bangor Maine.

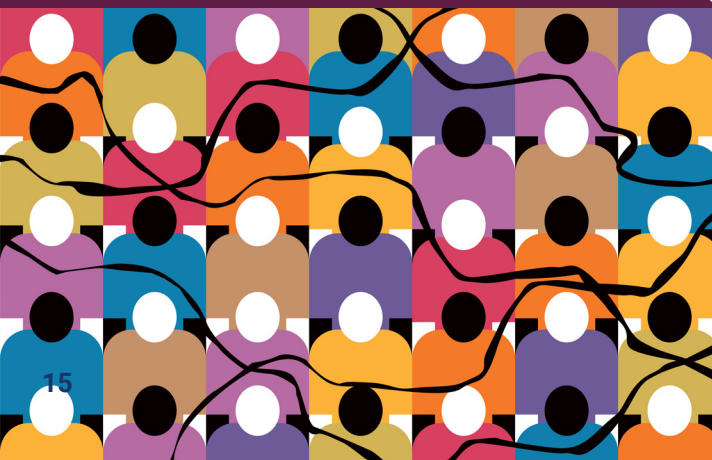
Frank Chessa, Ph.D., HEC-C, is Director of Clinical Ethics at MaineHealth Maine Medical Center and an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Tufts University. He is the course director for several courses at Tufts School of Medicine regarding ethics, professionalism, health systems and health disparities. He is the Principal Investigator for the study Increasing Clinical Trial Utilization and Enrollment of Non-English Speaking Research Subjects: A Revised Pathway (FDA, FAIN U01FD008261) and Co-leads the Community Engagement, Bioethics and Outreach Core, of the Center of Biomedical Research Excellence in Acute Care Research and Rural Disparities (NIH, FAIN P20GM139745). He also serves as Chair of the Board of Directors for Piper Shores (a life-span, elder care community) in Scarborough, Maine.

Angela Cole Westhoff, CAE is the President/CEO of the Maine Health Care Association. Prior to this role, Ms. Westhoff held similar positions with the Maine Dental Association and the Maine Osteopathic Association. Angela has over 25 years of non-profit management experience with a focus on health care, reimbursement policy, public health, and advocacy. Ms. Westhoff graduated from the University of Maine with a bachelor's and master's degree in communication, with concentrations in health communication and public relations. Angela also earned her Certified Association Executive (CAE) credential from the American Society of Association Executives. She is also a graduate of the Hanley Health Leadership Development (HLD) program as well as a past president of the American Osteopathic Society of Executive Directors and the Maine Public Health Association. In 2017, she received national recognition from the American Academy of Osteopathy with an Academy Award, the highest honor bestowed upon non-physicians. Angela serves on the Board of Trustees for the Maine College of Health Professions and the Board of Directors for the Maine Council on Aging. She is a member of the HLD Alumni Council and a volunteer for the United Way of Kennebec County.

Andrew Dawson is the Occupational Division Manager at the Maine Department of Labor's Center for Workforce Research and Information, where he oversees the Occupational Employment & Wages Statistics and employment projections programs. In this role, Andrew works directly with Maine employers to collect and process their staffing data which is used to produce annual employment and wage estimates and long-term occupational projections. Additional work involves compiling data into reports in support of economic development initiatives and publishing other economic research like the Maine Healthcare Occupations Report. Andrew holds a Bachelor's of Science in Marketing Management and a Master's of Business Administration from Thomas College.

Joan Dolan has served as the Director of Apprenticeship and Strategic Partnerships for the Maine Department of Labor since 2013. A nationally recognized workforce development leader, she has transformed Maine's Registered Apprenticeship system through strategic partnerships, innovative program design, and the expansion of career pathways across diverse industries. Under Joan's leadership, Maine's Registered Apprenticeship program has experienced remarkable growth, with registered apprenticeship sponsors increasing by 72 percent and active apprentices growing by 124 percent over the past five years. Previously, she directed a \$4.9 million healthcare workforce development initiative that advanced the careers of more than 1,000 healthcare professionals and established one of the nation's first Registered Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Programs.

Laura Farrington is a Senior Staff Attorney at Legal Services for Maine Elders (LSE) in Augusta, Maine. Raised in Southeast Michigan, Laura first graduated from Oakland University in Rochester and then went on to graduate from Michigan State University College of Law in East Lansing. When Laura first moved to Maine in 2017, she worked as an LSE Helpline Attorney, assisting older Mainers with a wide variety of civil legal matters. She then went into private practice to further her civil litigation skills, representing clients in personal injury, probate, and commercial



litigation matters throughout Maine. By 2020, she was welcomed back at LSE and now represents older Mainers before administrative agencies and Maine state courts in civil cases ranging from public benefits appeals, housing matters, healthcare access, financial exploitation, and more. Laura also co-chairs the Greater Augusta Area Elder Abuse Task Force, which consists of professionals such as attorneys, healthcare workers, and law enforcement who collaborate to discuss and address elder abuse trends, concerns, and resources in Central Maine.

Mary Michola Fibich, MA, ATR is a registered art therapist and professional artist. She earned her master's degree in art therapy from The George Washington University. Mary has over 35 years of experience in the field of art therapy, working in trauma, psychiatric, addiction, hospice, educational, medical, geriatric, and corporate settings. She currently works at the Barron Center in Portland, Maine in the Life Enrichment Department. Mary is also the co-author of *Managing Traumatic Stress through Art: Drawing from the Center* (Sidran Press, 1995) and *Transform Stress, Crisis and Trauma: An Art Therapy and Writing Workbook to Activate Wellbeing Strategies* (Sidran Press, 2024).

Rebecca Gagnon has over 15 years of experience in long-term care leadership, including serving as Chief Operations Officer in facilities across Maine, in both not-for-profit and for-profit settings. She holds an MBA and has worked in specialty centers, including a CARF-accredited brain injury facility, a continuing care retirement community, and the state's first ventilator care unit in a long-term care setting. Rebecca began her career as an Administrator with Genesis Health Care. She was nominated for the AHCA Future Leader Program in 2017 and began serving as a Quality Award Examiner for the AHCA Quality Award program. Rebecca was a Silver Quality Award Examiner for five years and, most recently, served as a team leader. Rebecca is a Multi-Level Nursing Home Administrator and sits on the board for both Maine HealthCare Association as well as the Maine Nursing Home Administrators Board. Ms. Gagnon currently serves as the Administrator at Sedgewood Commons.

Laura Geiger, DNP, FNP-BC, NEA-BC is a dedicated healthcare provider and leader with more than 30 years of clinical experience spanning across roles from Certified Nursing assistant through Nurse Practitioner. She currently serves as the Chief Clinical Officer for Lumina Care. Laura oversees the clinical team and care delivery of all Lumina care services, programs and consistently promotes clinical excellence and collaboration in the delivery of those services. Laura started her career in Trauma and Emergency care then moved into Community and Palliative care before finding her way to her true passion of Geriatrics and Long-Term Care. She believes her professional experience coupled with collaborating with healthcare providers and leaders across the country has allowed her the privilege to lead healthcare innovation and care delivery advancements.

Drew Goodridge is a seasoned leadership trainer, risk management consultant, and speaker with over 25 years of federal law enforcement and counterintelligence experience. A retired NCIS Special Agent in Charge, Drew served in key investigative, operational, and deployed roles across the Middle East. As a contract instructor at the Defense Intelligence Agency, Drew trained the next generation of counterintelligence professionals in Quantico, Virginia. He now serves as a consultant with Dirigo Risk Management Solutions, where he designs and delivers high-impact training programs helping organizations build safer, more intentional teams. A ninth-generation Mainer, U.S. Army Reserves veteran, and active community leader, Drew brings a unique blend of practical expertise, faith-informed perspective, and authentic storytelling to every engagement; empowering audiences to lead with integrity, resilience, and purpose.

Adam Gormely is a corporate trainer and motivational speaker specializing in de-escalation, leadership development, and workplace safety. He designs and delivers practical programs that help individuals and teams build resilience, make sound decisions under pressure, and create more effective work environments. Drawing on his

distinguished 30-year career in law enforcement with the Maine Warden Service, including command roles as Sergeant and Lieutenant, Adam brings authentic, high-stakes stories into his sessions. These real-world experiences illustrate the power of preparation, strategic thinking, and purposeful action. His engaging, relatable style connects with audiences by turning those lessons into clear, immediately usable tools. Central to Adam's approach is helping people give themselves permission to act and lead. He pairs this with the importance of an others-focused mindset, encouraging individuals to prioritize the needs of those around them. Through training in situational awareness, risk assessment, and de-escalation strategies, participants leave with greater confidence and clarity to lead and respond effectively in challenging situations.

Olga V. Gross-Balzano, NHA, brings over 22 years of long-term care experience, including as an SNF administrator. She has a deep knowledge of long-term care trends and best practices. Her clients from coast to coast appreciate her straightforward, collaborative approach that emphasizes stakeholder education and engagement. Olga is a recognized national leader in healthcare regulatory compliance, operational, and business needs of healthcare facilities – she is a continuing education reviewer for the National Association of Nursing Home Administrator Boards (NAB), and a member of AHCA/NCAL Policy and Regulatory Committee. As of 2024, Olga serves as an Advisory Group Member, CMS Partnership for Quality Measures, Cost and Efficiency committee. She earned Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) Certified Executive of Healthcare Revenue Cycle designation. She is also an HFMA certified Specialist Business Intelligence, supporting her focus on assisting organizations with data-informed decision making.

Holly Harmon, RN, MBA, LNHA, FACHCA, brings passion and practical, real-world, clinical, and operational experience to her role as Senior Vice President, Quality, Regulatory & Clinical Services at AHCA. At AHCA, she oversees the quality, regulatory, and clinical efforts. She

Speaker Bios

Breakout Session Speakers

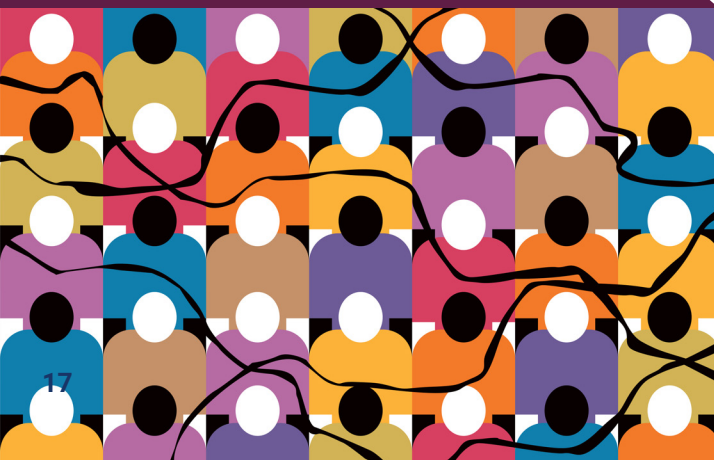
leads AHCA's national quality initiative, identifying priority goals and developing tools for providers. She designed and launched AHCA's infection preventionist certificate program. She currently serves on the Steering Committee of the national Moving Forward Coalition and on the Exam Committee for the National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards. She is a Fellow of the American College of Health Care Administrators. She puts her boundless energy and warm and energetic personality into training, education, and presenting both nationally and locally. She has made simplifying the complex world of long term and post-acute care policy and practice an art.

Cheryl Hill serves as the Director of Engagement Solutions at Align, bringing over 30 years of experience across both private and public sector organizations, including work in senior care. In her current role, she designs and delivers practical strategies to help senior living and post-acute providers foster and maintain a culture of engagement. Cheryl works closely with leadership teams to implement impactful communication, engagement, and retention initiatives. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Colorado State University and a Master of Science in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Purdue Global University.

Angelina Klouthis Jean serves as Director of Strategy and Innovation within the Bureau of Employment Services at the Maine Department of Labor, where she leads statewide healthcare workforce initiatives designed to strengthen talent pipelines and support employer workforce needs. She currently directs Maine's Rural Healthcare Transformation Project and previously oversaw multiple ARPA-funded healthcare workforce programs focused on worker upskilling, career advancement, and innovative employer partnerships. With more than a decade of experience designing and implementing workforce and economic mobility initiatives across the United States and internationally, Angelina brings a systems-focused perspective to workforce development and policy. She holds a Master of Arts degree from Universidad de los Andes.

Pam Kendrick is the Marketing & Communications Director for Maine Veterans' Homes, where she leads marketing, communications, community engagement, media relations, social media, recruitment marketing, fundraising communications, and executive communications for six care communities across Maine. She brings more than 20 years of marketing and communications experience, including a 21-year career with TideSmart Global, where she advanced to Senior Vice President of Marketing Services and managed marketing programs for national and multi-location brands. Throughout her career, Pam has developed and delivered presentations for healthcare professionals, business leaders, community organizations, and executive audiences, including conference breakout sessions and continuing education programs at McKesson's national ideaShare conference and presentations at the APCI Annual Conference. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Management Communication & Public Relations from Emerson College and is passionate about helping organizations strengthen community connections, tell their stories effectively, and maximize limited marketing resources.

Ed Krow delivers captivating, high-energy keynote presentations that challenge the traditional model of HR and prepare decision makers for motivating their people with a win-win strategy. A speaker, trainer and coach certified by The John Maxwell Team, Ed's topics bring a refreshing perspective on how to leverage what is commonly viewed as "people problems" and turn negative growth into business success. Ed is a member of the National Speakers Association, and has been featured in USA Today, Business Insider and Yahoo Finance. He is the author of "Strategic HR: Driving Bottom Line Results Through Your People" and "The Talent Attraction Blueprint: How Smart Companies Build a Magnetic Employment Brand and Win Top Talent". When he's not on stage or helping clients, Ed teaches at Millersville University. His first love is family, with golf vying for a tight second. If you do catch him at home, he's likely cheering for the Notre Dame or Baltimore Ravens football teams.



Michael Lacasse, FACHCA, ATDIT, is the Administrator of Schooner Memory Care in Auburn, Maine, where he leads a specialized dementia care community with a focus on operational excellence, team culture, and resident-centered leadership. He serves as District One Director for the American College of Health Care Administrators, representing the New England states, and is passionate about helping long-term care leaders build stronger teams, healthier workplace cultures, and more consistent care environments.

Hayley Marks is the Medtrition regional sales rep for the New England Market. She works with acute care, long-term care, and assisted living facilities to provide solutions and support specifically for protein supplementation, critical care nutrition, bowel management, wound healing, and dysphagia management. Hayley works with nutrition teams, nursing, and food service to present both medical and frozen products as well as provide in-service and follow-up business reviews. Hayley has been at Medtrition for 10 years, graduating with a degree in business, specializing in sales and marketing, from Babson College. She has done multiple presentations breaking down the IDDSI testing and implementation to help ensure facilities are prepared for the transition from the National Dysphagia Diet to IDDSI.

Amy Miller, RN, BSN, RAC-CT, CPC, serves as the Director of Clinical and Regulatory Services at the American Health Care Association. A registered nurse with over 25 years of experience in skilled nursing and long-term care, Amy brings a deep understanding of clinical operations, regulatory compliance, and healthcare quality improvement to her role. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Misericordia University in Pennsylvania and is certified as a Professional Coder (CPC) through the AAPC, as well as a Resident Assessment Coordinator–Certified (RAC-CT). Her broad expertise supports AHCA's mission to improve lives by delivering solutions for quality care in post-acute and long-term care settings nationwide.

Ben Nadeau is the Owner and CEO of Bedard Pharmacy & Medical Supplies. As a fourth-generation independent healthcare partner serving Maine for over 126 years, Bedard Pharmacy and Medical Supplies offers senior care that combines deep-rooted experience with innovative solutions to address facility's unique challenges. He became CEO in 2020 and officially acquired the company in 2024, focusing on strategic growth and fostering a workplace where every team member can thrive. With Bedard in his family since the 1960s, Ben has a deep understanding of the industry and a strong commitment to its continued success. He holds a degree in Electromechanical Engineering and, after college, founded his own companies before fully stepping back into leadership at Bedard in 2013. One of his favorite core values is Grow Together—he believes growth isn't just about the company's success but also about supporting and developing the people around him. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his family and finding time to relax.

Trudy Newton, RN, is a Maine nurse with 33 years of healthcare experience and a passion for developing healthcare professionals. She began her career in long-term care as a manager before advancing to Assistant Director of Nursing, where she gained expertise in caring for high-acuity patients while leading and mentoring clinical teams. She later spent 10 years in home health and hospice, providing compassionate care and support to patients and families. For the past 22 years, Trudy has been a dedicated member of Andwell Health Partners. During that time, she transitioned into clinical education, a role she has held for 12 years, where she discovered her passion for supporting employee growth, professional development, and clinical excellence. She has also served as a consultant to assisted living facilities, helping strengthen quality outcomes and best practices. A strong advocate for employees, Trudy champions psychological safety, continuous learning, and workforce development. She inspires clinicians to build confidence, embrace growth, and elevate their practice to provide exceptional patient care.

Christie Norton, M.S., CCC-SLP, is a Regional Director of Operations for Preferred Therapy Solutions, overseeing operations throughout Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. Since joining the organization in 2013, she has played an integral role in advancing clinical excellence and supporting the company's patient-first approach to care. A licensed Speech-Language Pathologist, Christie earned her Master's Degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from Emerson College. She brings extensive experience in rehabilitation programming within Skilled Nursing Facilities and is passionate about promoting patient-centered care and the vital role rehabilitative services play in maximizing residents' quality of life. Christie is dedicated to mentoring clinicians, supporting professionals who are new to skilled nursing practice, and developing future leaders within the healthcare industry. Her expertise in clinical programming and operations has helped drive positive outcomes for both patients and care teams. Although relatively new to the healthcare conference speaking circuit, Christie offers a wealth of practical knowledge and leadership experience drawn from years of service in post-acute care. Outside of her professional role, Christie is an artist and printmaker specializing in woodcut prints.

Sarah Nute is the Director of Life Enrichment at the Barron Center in Portland, Maine. She holds a BS in Gerontology and Family Studies from the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, Connecticut, and brings over twenty years of experience in assisted living, long-term care, and memory care. Sarah is a Certified Montessori Dementia Care Professional and a certified Death Doula. She is passionate about creating art for self-care, inspiration, and meaningful connection, using creativity to enhance quality of life for those she serves.

Kane Olson, has been practicing pharmacy since 2009. He began his career with the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation after earning his PharmD from the University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy. During his time there, he served rural communities in western Alaska, gaining valu-

Speaker Bios

Breakout Session Speakers

able experience and a deep appreciation for the unique challenges of frontier healthcare. He later became Director of Pharmacy at Providence Extended Care in Anchorage, where he discovered his professional calling—caring for older adults and medically complex patients. In August of 2024, Kane and his family returned to his home state of Maine, where he began a new chapter with Omnicare. Today, he provides consultant pharmacy services across the state, continuing his commitment to high-quality, compassionate care for medically fragile populations.

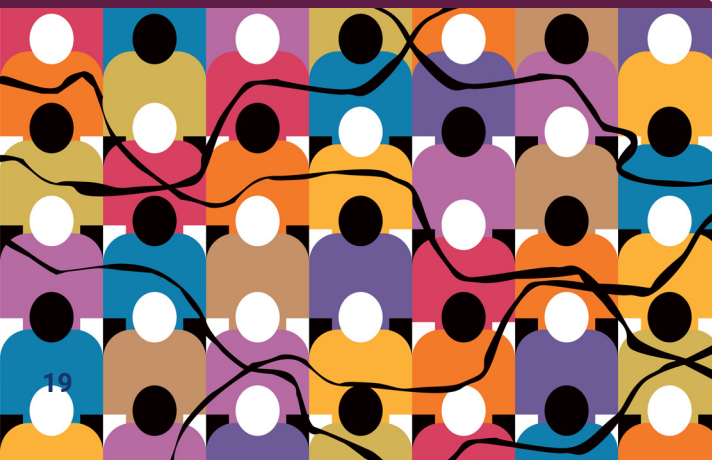
Deanna Partridge serves as program manager for the Healthcare Workforce Navigation team as part of the Rural Healthcare Transformation Program within the Bureau of Employment Services at the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL). As a Healthcare Workforce Navigator, she both assisted healthcare employers with meeting workforce needs and guided individuals to training and employment options to begin, return to, or advance a career in healthcare. As a program manager, Deanna has overseen the administration of several MDOL workforce development projects and demonstration pilots. Prior to State service, Deanna worked in social service non-profits, including 10 years at an independent health center. With 30 years of experience in program design and change management, Deanna brings a community organizing mindset to workforce development. Deanna has bachelor's degrees in journalism and political science from the University of Maine Orono and earned her Master of Philosophy in Peace Studies from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

Jennifer Pelletier, LSW, LNHA, served as a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator (LNHA) for 10 years, earning a reputation for building high-performing teams, driving operational excellence, and fostering a culture centered on exceptional resident care and service. In 2018, she was honored as Administrator of the Year by National Health Care Associates, and in 2022, she received the prestigious Eli Pick Facility Leadership Award, recognizing outstanding leadership and sustained excellence in nursing home operations. Today, Jennifer serves as the

Regional Director of Operations for New England with National Health Care Associates, where she partners with multiple centers to improve quality outcomes, strengthen operational performance, and create meaningful experiences for residents, families, and staff. She is passionate about developing leaders, cultivating a culture of service, and empowering teams to deliver compassionate, resident-centered care.

Rachael Percoco, MSPT, DPT, has extensive experience and a deep passion for healthcare, which has established her as a prominent figure in healthcare conferences. She has contributed to the development of curriculum models at Northeastern University and the American Physical Therapy Association. Her expertise in addressing complex topics has garnered a strong following among peers throughout the Northeast, including various state associations, physician groups, medical teams, and community forums. Since joining Preferred Therapy Solutions in 2015, Rachael has served as the Director of Outpatient Services. She is a Physical Therapist with a Master of Physical Therapy from Northeastern University and a Doctorate in Physical Therapy from Simmons College. Rachael is also among a select group of physical therapists clinically certified in pelvic floor therapy. In addition to her clinical work, she owns a holistic physical therapy practice and holds certifications in yoga and Tai Chi. Rachael is dedicated to providing everyone with the educational resources and tools they need to achieve their optimal health goals.

Brenda Pierce is an accomplished healthcare executive with more than 30 years of progressive leadership experience across the continuum of care. She has served as CEO of two hospitals, Chief Operating Officer leading multi-facility healthcare operations, and Vice President of Clinical Operations overseeing 65 skilled nursing facilities, in addition to roles as Executive Director of skilled nursing and assisted living communities and National Director for continuing care retirement communities. She has also served as a Professor of Medicine, contributing to the development of future healthcare professionals. Brenda has



worked extensively with The Joint Commission (formerly JCAHO), successfully leading the certification of more than 30 nursing facilities. She has also contributed to state association quality and education committees and served as an Administrator-in-Training preceptor, mentoring emerging leaders in long-term care. Since relocating to Maine two years ago, she has served as Administrator at Westgate Center for Rehabilitation and Alzheimer's Care, where she continues to advance quality outcomes, regulatory excellence, and operational stability. A Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Administrators, she remains actively engaged in advancing healthcare leadership standards nationwide.

Clifton (Clif) J. Porter, II is the President/CEO of the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), which represents more than 15,000 not-for-profit and proprietary nursing homes, assisted living communities, and intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Prior to this role, Porter led the association's government relations team as Senior Vice President for 11 years. In this position, Porter was intricately involved in many legislative accomplishments, including securing billions in life-saving resources for the sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. With more than 36 years of experience in long term care, Porter began his career in 1989 as an administrator-in-training at a skilled nursing facility. He subsequently served as an administrator at several skilled nursing centers from 1990 to 1998, and then as a regional director of operations in a large urban market from 1998 to 2004. He later joined HCR ManorCare (now ProMedica Senior Care) as Vice President of Government Relations, where he led the company's advocacy efforts for nearly a decade. Additionally, he has held positions on various state health care association boards. Porter has received several accolades, including the Industry Ally Award from McKnight's Long-Term Care News and was named among the Most Influential in Healthcare by Modern Healthcare and a Top Lobbyist by The Hill. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Healthcare Management from the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Medicine

and an MBA from Florida State University (FSU). He and his wife, Deborah, established the Porter Legacy Scholarship to support diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts for students pursuing bachelor's degrees in health services at VCU's College of Health Professions.

Jessica Porter, LSW, LNHA, graduated from University of Maine at Farmington in 2000. She started to work in long term care in 2010 as a social worker. In April of 2018, Jessica became a multi-level long term care administrator. She has been the administrator at Brewer Center for Health and Rehabilitation since August of 2021, receiving the Bronze award in 2025, and applying for Silver in 2026 (unfortunately did not receive it but learned a lot for next application).

Stacie Poulin, MS, is a Field Epidemiologist with the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (MeCDC) serving the Penquis Public Health District. She investigates infectious disease outbreaks, conducts surveillance for communicable diseases, and partners with healthcare providers, schools, and community organizations to strengthen public health preparedness across Maine. She is currently pursuing her Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree from Claremont Graduate University, with a focus on epidemiology and public health leadership. Stacie regularly presents on emerging public health issues and is committed to helping healthcare professionals provide evidence-based practices to protect the health of Maine communities.

Katherine Pushee, MBA, BSN, RN, serves as Director of Hospice at Andwell Health Partners, where she oversees five service locations, more than 175 employees, and an average daily census of over 400 patients. A Maine native with 24 years of healthcare experience, beginning her career as a Certified Nursing Assistant spending 10 years providing direct patient care in a variety of healthcare settings. These experiences shaped her commitment to compassionate leadership, workforce development, and supporting frontline caregivers. Throughout her career, she has led initiatives focused on employee engagement,

retention, leadership development, and organizational culture, including programs that significantly reduced nursing turnover through onboarding, mentorship, and coaching. Katherine is a strong advocate for psychological safety and coaching-based leadership and has experience developing and presenting educational programs for leaders and clinical teams. She holds an MBA in Healthcare Administration, a BSN, and an Associate Degree in Nursing.

Vicki Quesada, RN, LTC-CIP is a Clinical Education and Compliance Consultant with Woodlands Senior Living, LLC, where she provides clinical leadership, education, and regulatory compliance support across senior living communities. She is a nationally certified Long-Term Care Infection Preventionist (LTC-CIP) and a State of Maine Certified Instructor for Certified Residential Medication Aides (CRMA) and Personal Support Specialists (PSS). Vicki serves on the APIC Pine Tree Chapter Board of Directors and is dedicated to advancing best practices in infection prevention, clinical education, and quality care. Throughout her career, she has developed and delivered educational programs on infection prevention, nursing curriculum, regulatory compliance, and evidence-based best practices. She has presented to healthcare leadership teams, professional organizations, and the APIC Pine Tree Chapter, including sessions focused on preparing organizations for Joint Commission surveys. With a passion for education and improving resident outcomes, Vicki brings practical expertise and real-world experience to every presentation.

Anthony Scarpino is Vice President of Talent Acquisition at National Health Care Associates, a regional provider of skilled nursing and long-term care in the Northeast. For more than 30 years, Anthony has built his career at the intersection of people, innovation, and business performance - pioneering talent strategies and leading teams that deliver measurable impact on an organization's most critical priorities. Prior to joining National, Anthony developed and deployed large-scale recruitment solutions, including centralized talent acquisition models, predictive analytics, and innovative employment branding recog-

Speaker Bios

Breakout Session Speakers

nized by Forbes and The Wall Street Journal. At National, Anthony connects talent strategy to operational priorities, transforming the talent acquisition function to increase hiring capacity, strengthen the talent pipeline, reduce turnover, and decrease reliance on temporary staffing. His leadership centers on building strong partnerships between the talent function and operations and creating high-performing teams where people are challenged, supported, and positioned to succeed. Anthony lives in Danbury, Connecticut, with his wife and enjoys riding motorcycles across the country, visiting their four daughters, and cheering on Penn State football in Happy Valley.

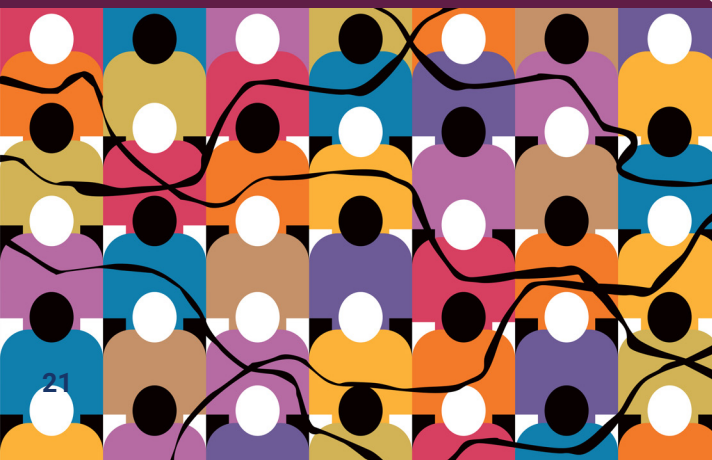
Steven Shaw, MS, is the Director of Social Services at Presque Isle Healthcare Center, where he oversees social services operations, discharge planning, care planning, resident advocacy, and interdisciplinary coordination within a skilled nursing facility. He works closely with residents, families, and healthcare teams to address complex psychosocial, behavioral, and discharge-related challenges. His professional background includes long-term care leadership, behavioral health, quality assurance, regulatory compliance, and organizational improvement. Prior to his current role, he served as a Behavioral Specialist with Alliant Health Solutions, providing technical assistance, quality improvement support, and staff education to healthcare organizations throughout New England. Steve served as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, teaching industrial-organizational psychology. Throughout his career, Steven has developed and delivered staff education, facilitated trainings, and presented to healthcare professionals, leadership teams, and community organizations on topics related to workforce development, organizational effectiveness, and improving outcomes in long-term care.

Sara Sherwood, MHA, LNHA, is the Senior Director of the Quality Award Program for AHCA/NCAL. She has more than 25 years of experience in healthcare across a broad range of care settings, including hospitals, post-acute and long-term care, assisted living, and residential care.

Sara began her career as a CNA in a nursing home before advancing through a range of operational, administrative, and leadership roles, including Administrator, Director, Senior Director, Executive Director, and Associate Vice President. Her broad experience provides her with a deep understanding of healthcare operations, workforce development, and quality improvement across care settings. A lifelong advocate for culture change, Sara had the unique opportunity to lead the development and construction of a new nursing facility designed around person-centered care and home-like environments. Her commitment to the profession is also reflected in her previous leadership roles as Vice President of the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA), Maine Chapter, and President of the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA), Maine Chapter. Sara holds a master's degree in healthcare administration and an undergraduate degree in food science and human nutrition. In her current role at AHCA/NCAL, she leverages her operational and leadership expertise to advance national excellence through the Quality Award Program.

John Short is a Certified Dietary Manager and Behavioral Health Professional. He serves as the Food and Nutrition Director at Mount Joseph at Waterville. John worked as a CDM first at Lakewood and now at Mount Joseph. He has worked in nursing home dietary departments since 2003 when he got a job as a 15 year old dishwasher. He eventually became a CDM and is now a department director. John also spent five years as a part-time behavioral health professional. He has presented in an educational manner in skills fairs and as a BHP.

Dr. Katrina Sink has dedicated her career to compassionate end-of-life care. After early work as a nurse aide and paramedic, she discovered her passion for palliative medicine during medical school. She believes in whole-person, high-quality care that supports both patients and their families through serious illness. Dr. Sink earned an associate degree in Applied Science from Davenport College, a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Calvin College,



and her medical degree from Michigan State University College of Human Medicine in 2010. She completed her Family Medicine residency and Hospice and Palliative Medicine fellowship at Grand Rapids Medical Education Partners. Board certified in both Family Medicine and Hospice and Palliative Medicine, Dr. Sink practiced in hospice and geriatrics in Grand Rapids before moving to Maine in 2017. After several years in primary care, she joined Andwell Health Partners and the Maine Center for Palliative Medicine in 2022.

Dan Smith is a highly sought after industry expert who specializes in value engineering, quality assurance, workloading, benchmarking, process improvement, QAPI, IP and staffing. Dan is a graduate from the University of Southern Maine in Economics and a Hall of Fame inductee in 2001 for ice hockey. In addition to experience in Clinical, Anatomical Pathology and Toxicology laboratory sales and disease states, Dan is a regional speaker on diseases, disease states in residents/patients and how to control an outbreak. Dan has given talks to Maine Healthcare Association, LeadingAge ME/NH, Pennsylvania Coalition of Affiliated Healthcare & Living Communities, Massachusetts Facility Administrators Association, New Hampshire Association of Business Officials, Maine Educational Plant Maintenance Association, Vermont School Custodians & Maintenance Association. Dan has also presented Indoor Air Quality, Infection Prevention and Workloading for each of the organizations in the past.

Lisa Trundy-Whitten is a principal and leads BerryDunn's Healthcare Practice Group. Lisa has concentrated on serving the healthcare industry, senior living organizations, industry associations, and acute care hospitals for the past 20 years. Lisa provides audit and consulting services to a number of organizations throughout the continuum of healthcare located throughout the Northeast, Midwest, and West Coast. Lisa has extensive experience working closely with long-term care clients, including State Veterans Homes, and consulting on third-party reimbursement issues, including cost reporting, certificate of need

applications and Medicaid and Medicare audits. Lisa is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and serves on the AHCA Not for Profit Advisory Council.

Julie K. Tutt, MBA, BSN, RN, CIC, is an Infection Preventionist III with Northern Light Health, where she oversees infection prevention programs across acute care, outpatient, primary care, dialysis, and long-term care settings. She has more than 16 years of nursing experience and specializes in infection prevention, quality improvement, healthcare leadership, and regulatory compliance. Julie holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Saint Louis University, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Maryville University, and a Master of Business Administration with a healthcare focus from Husson University. She is Certified in Infection Prevention and Control (CIC) and is the co-author of a peer-reviewed publication examining a COVID-19 outbreak in a rural community hospital. In addition to her professional role, Julie serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the American Red Cross Northern and Eastern Maine Chapter. She is passionate about advancing patient safety, strengthening infection prevention practices, mentoring healthcare professionals, and supporting community health initiatives.

Kathryn Vezina, RN, MSN, JD is the leader of the Equity & Healthy Aging Initiative at the Maine Council on Aging. This initiative helps increase mutual understanding between aging services providers and older adults in diverse communities. Kathy is an RN and a Maine attorney (currently inactive) and has worked in a leadership development organization, community behavioral health, and in a health law firm. She graduated from University of Maine School of Law and the University of California San Francisco in Nursing. Kathy has worked as an RN and a CNA in long term care facilities and provided legal counsel for long term care organizations in Maine.

Dr. Cassandre Voltaire, DO, ABWMS is a board-certified family medicine physician and Fellow of the American Board of Wound Management. She currently serves as a wound care physician and is the founder of the NoGuess™ Wound Care System, where she partners with skilled nursing facilities to build sustainable systems for prevention, documentation, and survey readiness. Dr. Voltaire began her career as a Certified Nursing Assistant in long-term care before becoming a physician, giving her a unique perspective on both frontline challenges and clinical leadership. She has extensive experience working in skilled nursing facilities, VA long-term care units, and outpatient settings. Her work focuses on helping DONs and clinical teams move from reactive wound care to consistent, systems-driven approaches. She serves on the Educational Board of the Post-Acute Wound & Skin Integrity Council (PAWSIC) and the Editorial Advisory Board of Wound Care Today.

Barrett Wilkinson currently works as the Learning and Development Specialist for Piper Shores in Scarborough Maine. Prior to this role, Barrett was an administrator for the Portland Public Schools as the Executive Director of Equity and Belonging. He has spent his career in public service working with educators, administrators, and non-profit leaders to create safer communities for all. Barrett's degree is in Public Policy and management and his professional work has been in the non-profit, public health and human resources fields. He has expertise in equity and belonging, restorative practices, facilitation, and conflict resolution. Barrett has worked throughout the U.S., Northern Ireland, and especially in southern Maine, and has a Masters in Public Policy and Management. Barrett volunteers on the board of directors for Portland Outright and the Foundation for Portland Public Schools.



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