

**Maine Health Access Foundation
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
June 12, 2025**

Trustees Present: Susan Roche (Chair); Beth Bordowitz, Christy Daggett, Gia Drew, Jake Grindle (*ex-officio*), Tracey Hair, Michael Lambke, Kevin Lewis, Anita Ruff, Clarissa Sabattis, Ellen Seidman, Toho Soma, Ian Yaffe

Trustees Absent: Barbara Crider, Richard Evans, Grace Odimayo

Guests Present: Jeannette Andre (Maine Philanthropy Center), Jennifer Hutchins (Maine Association of Nonprofits), Molly Curren Rowles (ACLU of Maine)

Staff Present: Margo Beland, Emily Berrill, Dania Bowie, Lelia De Andrade, Charles Dwyer, Holly Irish, Ruta Kadonoff, Dani Kallian (recorder), Jeb Murphy, Frank Martinez Nocito

Welcome

Chair Sue Roche called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Introductions were made and an icebreaker activity was conducted. Sue reviewed the agenda and meeting outcomes.

Board Consent Agenda

Sue asked if any items on the consent agenda required discussion. Hearing none, *it was MOVED, SECONDED (Lewis/Bordowitz), and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the following consent agenda items:*

- President's Report
- April 10, 2025, Joint Board & CAC meeting minutes
- April Treasurer's Report
- Financial Dashboard as of April 30, 2025

**Finance Committee –
Kevin Lewis (Treasurer), Jake Grindle (CEO)**

Update to Investment Policy Statement: Treasurer Kevin Lewis introduced rationale for recommended updates to MeHAF's Investment Policy Statement (IPS). A memo was shared which explained that Brown Advisory has been working with the Finance Committee to refine language around Mission-Aligned Investments to explore investing in local Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). He defined CDFIs as institutions certified by the US Department of Treasury that have the sole purpose of providing credit and financial services to economically depressed and underserved markets and populations. CDFIs fall into six broad categories: banks, credit unions (nonprofit), loan funds, microenterprise loan funds, venture capital funds, and community development corporations.

In collaboration with the Finance Committee, Brown Advisory refined the Investment Policy Statement (IPS), largely within the Mission-Related Investments section (Appendix A), with the following recommendations:

- Carve out up to \$3,000,000 to invest in Mission-Related investments over three years.
- Create a governance structure that provides the Finance Committee with discretion over the Mission-Related Investment Portfolio with consultation from the Program & Grants Committee to maximize the impact of investments when possible, and directs the Finance

Committee to inform the Board of Mission-Related investments at the Board meeting following the investment.

- Define Mission-Related Investments as promoting “access to quality healthcare and/or improved health outcomes for residents of Maine.”
- Clarify language regarding restrictions on the portfolio to ensure that there are reasonable implementation options.

At its May 8 meeting, the Finance Committee recommended that the Board approve the updates to the IPS as outlined in the revised version that was included in the meeting packet. Jake added that exploring how best to work with CDFIs is an exciting opportunity to leverage part of the endowment to provide collateralized loans to organizations that offer at-risk services by opening up a much needed, short-term cash flow source.

Trustees provided the following questions and comments:

- It was asked if there are target returns in mind for this collateralized loan and other impact investing tools? Finance Committee members shared that there are different ROI levels anticipated depending on the particular investments. The Finance Committee will work with the Program and Grants Committee to ensure mission alignment.
- It was noted that this is a good opportunity to make funds available for building construction and housing development in rural areas. Jake and Ellen responded that MeHAF does not have the competency to directly evaluate these types of investments. However, the funds may be used for this purpose by working with organizations with due diligence competencies that align with MeHAF’s mission and strategies, including with respect to rural housing.
- It was asked what will be done with the ROI that is realized. Jake noted that it will be added back into the general endowment.
- Given that this initiative will span three years, it was asked what happens at the end of that period. Ellen shared that the program will be revisited periodically during the three-year period and that multiple investments will be made during that time rather than one \$3M investment.
- A typo in the IPS was noted on the last page, 3rd paragraph that will be fixed by staff: *The [Finance Committee] will act in consultation with the [Program & Grants Committee] to maximize ~~that~~ the positive impact of the investment on the Maine community.*
- It was asked if we will be able to track the leveraged financial activity that will be accomplished through these loans? Beth noted that Brown Advisory and/or our CDFI partner will be asked to track all activity.

It was MOVED, SECONDED (Yaffe/Soma), and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the revised Investment Policy Statement as recommended by the Finance Committee, with the typo noted above corrected.

**Program & Grants Committee –
Jake Grindle (CEO), Ruta Kadonoff (VPP),
Charles Dwyer (SPO)**

Relative to the information provided in the meeting packet for the proposed Foundation-Initiated (FI) Grants, Jake shared that one of the most common themes identified during his one-on-one conversations with Trustees over the past months is the volume of material included in the packet for each meeting and the challenge for Trustees to review all of it in preparation of meetings. He noted that this has been an ongoing concern of Trustees and that to help mitigate this issue, Trustees may have noticed that the packet for this meeting intentionally pared down

the information provided for the Program and Grants Committee (PGC) FI presentation. He shared the process by which the PGC, along with other reviewers, reviews detailed grant applications to fully understand and evaluate them prior to their approval and recommendation to the Board. The information included in the packet details the highlights of the FI grant application and notes how it aligns with our mission and strategic plan. Trustees indicated their appreciation of this reduction in the number of pages in the packet, and suggested that a standard dashboard of information for approving grants be created that highlights the necessary information for Trustees to review.

Foundation-Initiated Grant to Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC): VPP Ruta Kadonoff reported that at its May 12 meeting, the Program and Grants Committee reviewed and recommended approval of a Foundation-Initiated Grant application from Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC) for a three-year grant of \$225,000 to support its Consumer Assistance Program (CAP). The CAP includes: (1) a toll-free HelpLine, where application and enrollment specialists assist consumers in finding, enrolling in, and using health care coverage, whether public or private; (2) outreach and education to consumers and enrollment professionals statewide; and (3) consumer assistance with denied coverage claims. This funding will be dedicated to addressing the needs of the most vulnerable Mainers: the uninsured, people with low income, and people who face barriers to accessing affordable, equitable, and quality health care. Support for the CAP has been a priority for the foundation since 2010. This work is highly aligned with MeHAF's strategy to *Promote reach and effectiveness of high-quality public and private coverage while ensuring free care options are available when needed.*

Trustees noted the importance for CAHC to be supported to teach others to magnify what they do as they will have limited capacity based on potential greater need given federal budget cuts. Jake noted that there is a component in the grant for outreach and training.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest – None

It was MOVED, SECONDED (Drew/Seidman), and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve a grant of \$225,000 to Consumers for Affordable Health Care for the Consumer Assistance Program (CAP), for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028, consistent with standard MeHAF contract obligations.

Foundation-Initiated Grant to Maine Council on Aging (MCOA): VPP Ruta Kadonoff reported that at its May 12 meeting, the Program and Grants Committee reviewed and recommended approval of a Foundation-Initiated Grant application from Maine Council on Aging for a one-year grant of \$75,000 to support their work focused on stabilizing the direct care and support workforce. It was explained that this proposal builds on the learning, successes, and challenges of the past three years, seeking support for the initial phase of planning a longer-range effort to design a new approach to funding essential care and support work in Maine. The intent is to create a system that leverages and grows existing funding sources and facilitates independent decisions about reimbursement rates to support livable wages and benefits, potentially creating a tiered system of eligibility and services to make home care accessible to those who cannot afford it and are unserved or underserved by public programs. Work will also include developing potential strategies to support access to key benefits for workers in the care economy. Maine Center for Economic Policy will remain a key partner, leading the research and analysis to develop policy proposals that partnership members and other stakeholders will consider. Plans include identifying and working to engage champions in the business, policy, and advocacy sectors, identifying the best process for moving a plan forward and beginning to build broad-based support for whatever plans are devised.

The project is highly aligned with these MeHAF strategies:

- *1b. Strengthen and expand the number, distribution, capacity and cultural competence of health, mental health, and dental workforce, and promote deployment of community-derived workers.*
- *3b. Create opportunities to improve the health of Maine's older adults, focusing on health care services, and linking health care with mental health, social services, and community supports.*

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest – The following conflict of interest was determined:

Trustee:	Conflict:
Kevin Lewis	MCOA Board member

Kevin recused himself from voting and left the meeting room.

It was MOVED (Sabattis/Lambke), SECONDED, and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve a grant of \$75,000 to Maine Council on Aging for the period July 1, 2025 thru June 30, 2026, consistent with standard MeHAF contract obligations.

Kevin returned to the meeting room.

Systems Improvement and Innovation Responsive Grants (SIIRG) and Health Equity Capacity-Building (HECB) Programs 2025 Grant Awards: SPO Charles Dwyer reminded Trustees that the SIIRG program supports systems change work meaningfully informed by communities that experience systemic inequities and health disparities in four strategic focus areas: Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder; Maternal and Child Health; Older Adults; and Rural Health. For the 2025 round of grantmaking that was initiated in January we received 65 letters of inquiry (LOIs), from which staff selected twenty organizations to invite to the full application phase. A 12-member community review panel reviewed the full applications, along with six MeHAF staff members. The reviewer panel reflected the demographics, professional, and life experiences of the applicants and those they serve. Five reviewers (2 MeHAF staff and 3 community reviewers) scored each application and their individual reviews informed a panel meeting on April 18. The panel arrived at the recommendations included in the packet by majority vote of the external reviewers, which the Program and Grants Committee reviewed and approved.

Ruta made reference to an update on the Health Equity Capacity Building program grant awards that was included in the meeting packet.

Learning Opportunity

Update on the impact of federal policy/Executive Orders on philanthropy and nonprofits

Jake welcomed Jeannette Andre (Maine Philanthropy Center), Jennifer Hutchins (Maine Association of Nonprofits), and Molly Curren Rowles (ACLU of Maine) who were invited to share their expertise on how to better understand the impact of federal policy/Executive Orders as they impact philanthropy and nonprofits.

Jennifer and Jeannette discussed the impacts of federal executive actions on nonprofits, highlighting concerns about executive orders, government funding, and proposed legislation. They emphasized the need for nonprofits to continue their equity work, collaborate with funders, and prepare for potential risks. Jeannette provided recommendations for funders to support nonprofits, including investing in digital security, funding innovation, and standing in solidarity

with grantees. They also mentioned the launch of a Rapid Response Fund to provide legal, strategic, and mental health support to the sector.

Molly presented on the current threats to constitutional rights and civil liberties, emphasizing the need for strategic planning and community engagement. She highlighted the importance of knowing rights, reviewing constitutional protections, and advocating for civil liberties through consistent communication with elected officials. The discussion encouraged attendees to prepare for potential challenges by creating safety plans, training staff, and fostering cross-party alliances.

Jeannette, Jen, and Molly were thanked for taking the time to provide this information and their perspectives to the Board.

Governance Committee – Tracey Hair (Chair), Jake Grindle (CEO)

Facilitated Discussion Regarding Future Board Recruitment: Governance Committee Chair Tracey Hair shared that the Governance Committee is currently planning for 2026 Board and Community Advisory Committee recruitment needs. There will be three Trustees vacancies (Mike Lambke, Clarissa Sabattis, and Toho Soma are terming off); and two CAC vacancies (Kenney Miller and Shirl Weaver are terming off). The current Demographics and Experience Grids were shared. Tracey noted that the Governance Committee had discussed deidentifying information on the Demographics and Experience Grids when they are shared with the Board and CAC and only having the Governance Committee have access to the completed grids to inform the recruitment process. This consideration was deemed necessary in order to limit exposure of this private information in today's charged political and cultural climate. In order to inform the recruitment priority discussion, the grids that were shared with the Board and CAC had individual names removed, and the columns of those who will be terming off were highlighted with the service term indicated.

The Governance Committee will use the Demographic and Experience Grids to identify potential prospects with experiential, demographic and geographic diversity, commitment to MeHAF's mission, the energy to serve on a nonprofit board, who can provide input and advice from personal and professional experience, and who support our efforts to advance equity. The CAC reviewed its own Demographics and Experience Grids at its meeting on June 4. Trustees discussed and identified the following:

Demographics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Franklin, Oxford, Somerset counties • Over 65 • Disability • Born in Maine • Native American 	Experience/Expertise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health/behavioral health/substance use disorder expertise • Peer/community health worker expertise • Oral health expertise • Experience working with older adults • Physical Health practitioner (doctor, nurse, NP, PA, etc.)
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It was suggested to add Wabanaki as a demographics category to allow space for another person from Aroostook County to serve on the Board.

Update on Dr. Wendy J. Wolf Leadership Award: Communications Manager Jeb Murphy shared that this is the ninth year the award will be presented. The award includes a \$10,000 grant to the nonprofit organization that the recognized leader works for or with. Fourteen nominations have been received this year, and the Award Committee will meet over the summer to select this year's recipient who will be presented the award at the October joint Board and Community Advisory Committee meeting. The Award Committee is comprised of three Trustees and three CAC members. Tracey will be on the committee and two more Trustees were asked to volunteer. Jeb noted that the commitment is six hours or less for reviewing the applications and meeting. Toho volunteered to serve.

**Nova Fund –
Jake Grindle (CEO), Charles Dwyer (SPO)**

Health Workforce Planning: SPO Dwyer reported on the April 17 *Strengthening Maine's Health Workforce Convening* that was held at Maple Hill Farm. The 125 people invited were from government, academia, healthcare, as well as from Community-Based Organizations providing social and support services. Sixty-five people representing a broad set of viewpoints attended to review the compiled strategies to help narrow and refine priorities, then created a ranked list of up to five strategies to be considered for funding from the \$1 million dollar Nova Fund allotment. The top five strategies were ranked as follows: (1) Support the gathering and sharing of data and research for health workforce planning; (2) Develop a statewide public/private cross-sector partnership for health workforce planning and monitoring; (3) Build out tele-health and digital health to support providers and reduce burden; (4) Pilot the integration and co-location of services and health workforce supports; (5) Focus on recruitment of non-traditional groups, include people at all socio-economic levels.

Next steps are to form a steering group to guide overall program and form two workgroups to develop specific proposals for funding the first two priorities over the coming months. The Data workgroup has already met once. The partnership workgroup may take some time as participants are being carefully considered. MeHAF staff expect that two to three strategic proposals from the five under consideration will result in funded proposals during 2025 with the remaining strategies considered for funding in 2026.

Trustees shared the public health impact of the financialization of health care where money is being chased at the expense of value provided. Importance was noted of having cross-sector workgroups included to have perspectives from clinicians.

Progress on Funding Strategy Reallocations: Jake shared that since the Board and CAC approved Nova funding re-allocations in April to support responsive grantmaking in light of the current political and economic environment, staff has worked within the broad set of approved categories to determine how best to use these resources. To date, we have made twelve directed grants, all within the staff approval threshold and all awarded as unrestricted general operating support, in two of the approved categories. Staff also provided this update to the Program and Grants Committee at their May 12 meeting. The grants provide support for lead organizations focused on communities at the greatest risk/being most significantly harmed by actions at the federal level. As proposed in April, we have made grants of just over half the total allocation to organizations supporting the health needs of transgender individuals and immigrants/refugees/asylum-seekers. Additional grant provide support for mass media/communications organizations committed to providing Maine people with accurate and reliable information regarding health and health-related issues.

**Executive Committee –
Sue Roche (Chair), Jake Grindle (CEO)**

Board Resolution to Create Equity Committee: Jake shared that the Equity Subcommittee (ESC), under the purview of the Governance Committee, met on April 2. The goal of the meeting was to process feedback received from the full Board and CAC at their October 2024 joint meeting, as well as to plan the ESC's work for 2025. The ESC members arrived at a workplan for the year, and also agreed to a set of recommendations that seek to operationalize the vision and themes that surfaced from the October Board and CAC discussion. These recommendations include the establishment of a standing Equity Committee of the Board to replace the ESC, along with related adjustments to the recruitment process and requirements for committee members. Jake provided background on the ESC along with its responsibilities, which were detailed in a memo in the meeting packet.

In October of 2024, the full Board and CAC reflected on the past and potential future role of the ESC, particularly in the context of the pending change in leadership, and discussed possible adjustments to the ESC's role and structure, generating a number of ideas about possible directions through a series of brainstorming prompts.

At the April 2025 ESC meeting, the committee processed the notes from the October Board and CAC session, identified themes, and developed a plan they believe is well-aligned with their capacity and the general vision of the full group. They also recommended establishing the ESC as a full committee of the Board, rather than a subcommittee of the Governance Committee. If this change is approved, next steps would include:

- Removing the requirement for Board members serving on the ESC to also serve on another committee, which may help to boost attendance by lessening the MeHAF commitments of ESC members. Membership in other committees would still be encouraged, but not required.
- After assessing the realistic availability of current ESC members for 2025, opening recruitment to additional members who have interest and can commit to participation, with a goal of a maximum of nine total committee members.
- Maintaining the overall purpose outlined in the original ESC charter as the purpose of the standing committee, while tasking the new Equity Committee with recommending changes to the specific responsibilities under that purpose.

Jake noted that a number of steps have already been implemented that support this transition, including outreach to existing ESC members about their availability for continued service and listing the ESC in the committee preference survey to all Board and CAC members. For 2025, regardless of whether this change is adopted, the committee will solely focus on developing a learning activity to set the stage for the October joint Board and CAC meeting. In 2026, the committee would be tasked with further developing the details of the future committee structure and work.

In order to establish the committee, the Board must make a formal resolution. The Executive Committee adopted this resolution at its June 6 meeting and recommends Board approval.

Board Resolution to Establish the Equity Committee:

The Board resolves that an Equity Committee shall be established under the purview of the Board of Trustees. The Equity Committee shall consist of at least two (2) Trustees, one of whom shall be the chair, and two (2) Community Advisory Committee members, one of whom shall serve as co-chair. The Equity Committee shall ensure that equity is embedded as an operational approach and as a key element of the organizational culture. The Committee will also help to identify ways to include advancement of equity as part of the actions of the Board, the Community Advisory Committee, and all other committees.

It was MOVED, SECONDED (Lambke/Sabattis), and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the resolution to establish the standing Equity Committee as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Non-Lobbying Advocacy Activity Policy: CEO Jake Grindle introduced a proposed new policy that is intended to outline when and how MeHAF may engage in non-lobbying advocacy activity, including engaging in administrative rulemaking advocacy or public expressions of support for non-legislative policy positions. This policy does not apply to lobbying activity, which is strictly limited by MeHAF's bylaws and other pertinent statutes to only be undertaken in clear cases of self-defense. In general, MeHAF engages in non-lobbying of advocacy infrequently, in order to preserve its significance on the occasions that we use it. The criteria for considering taking non-lobbying advocacy action, and the process for approval of such action was outlined in a detailed memo included in the meeting packet. The Executive Committee adopted this policy at its June 6 meeting and recommends Board approval.

It was MOVED, SECONDED (Drew/Seidman), and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the Non-Lobbying Advocacy Activity Policy as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Trustee Check-in and Meeting Evaluation – Sue Roche (Chair)

Trustees appreciated the rich information and discussion relative to the learning opportunity provided, and Sue acknowledged the importance of allowing that conversation to slightly run over time in order to give the presenters ample space to convey this timely content. Sue and staff were thanked for arranging this presentation and securing such expert speakers.

Lelia asked Trustees to remember to complete the strategic planning survey that was sent earlier this week, noting that their input will help inform the process.

Next Meeting

The Board will next meet on Thursday, August 14, 2025, at the MeHAF office in Augusta.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:56 pm. *(Sabattis/Soma)*

Respectfully Submitted,
Jake Grindle
President & CEO