

**Maine Health Access Foundation
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
August 14, 2025**

Trustees Present: Susan Roche (Chair); Beth Bordowitz, Barbara Crider, Christy Daggett, Gia Drew, Richard Evans, Jake Grindle (*ex-officio*), Tracey Hair, Michael Lambke, Kevin Lewis, Grace Odimayo, Ellen Seidman, Ian Yaffe

Trustees Absent: Anita Ruff, Clarissa Sabattis, Toho Soma

CAC Member Present: Mike Murnik

Guest Present: Commissioner Sara Gagné-Holmes (Maine DHHS)

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

Welcome

Chair Sue Roche called the meeting to order at 1:05 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/Seidman), and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve the following consent agenda items:*

- President's Report
- June 12, 2025, Board meeting minutes
- June Treasurer's Report
- June Finance Dashboard

**Strategic Planning Committee –
Mike Lambke (Committee Chair), Lelia De Andrade (CSA)**

Update on Strategic Planning Process: SPC Chair Mike Lambke and CSA Lelia De Andrade reported that the strategic planning process began this summer. Lelia has designed the strategic planning process, which relies on using the input and feedback of the SPC, staff, and community partners to draft and progressively refine the plan. To date, two out of the eight-stage planning processes have been completed. She outlined the data collection process and the analysis that will inform the iterative process of plan design. It was highlighted that this proposed process includes engaging members of the Board and CAC, at their joint meeting in October, in a discussion about draft goals and how MeHAF operates. That meeting will begin with an equity focused learning program to build understanding of power dynamics and social disparities that are central to our work and relevant to our strategic plan. As the plan is developed, we will begin identifying strategies for how we will assess progress, so we can continue to learn and adapt the plan while it is being implemented. The staff will provide updates as needed to the Board and CAC throughout the process. The SPC and staff will co-design the presentation of the final draft of the plan at the joint Board and CAC meeting in April 2026.

Lelia shared early input from the SPC and staff which highlights the desire for a community-centered strategic plan that is bold and innovative, that can be used as a daily guide to face emerging issues and upcoming challenges. It should be simple and easy to communicate with goals that look to measure progress. There are tensions being recognized in the input collected so far, for instance, wanting the strategic plan to be flexible and adaptable, yet focused and detailed.

Trustees shared their appreciation for the plan development process as presented, noting that it's good to be able to have something positive and forward thinking that we have control over in this challenging time.

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

Board and CAC Recruitment Process Update: Governance Committee Chair Tracey Hair shared that the Committee has begun its recruitment efforts to identify and select three new Board Trustees and two new Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members to be elected in April 2026. To ensure a robust pool of potential candidates from all over Maine with a breadth of experiences for the Board and CAC, we consistently add names to the large prospect list maintained by the Governance Committee. Trustees were asked to respond to an upcoming request to propose at least one name to the list. The 2026 Board and CAC recruitment priorities identified by the Governance Committee and affirmed by the Board and CAC were shared to help inform recommendations, along with recruitment next steps.

**Program & Grants Committee –
Grace Odimayo (Committee Chair), Ruta Kadonoff (VPP)**

Foundation-Initiated Grant to Maine Initiatives Immigrant-Led Organizations Fund: Program and Grants Committee Chair Grace Odimayo and VPP Ruta Kadonoff introduced the proposed Foundation-Initiated Grant to Maine Initiatives. This grant was reviewed and recommended for approval by the PGC at its July 14 meeting. The proposed grant will be for \$150,000 over three years, to support Maine Initiatives' Immigrant-Led Organizations (ILO) Fund. Since 2018, the ILO Fund has raised and mobilized \$2 million to support over 40 immigrant-led and immigrant-serving organizations. The vast majority of these grants have been for rapid response to meet critical short-term funding needs. Beginning in 2024, the ILO Fund shifted to a multi-year, participatory grantmaking process designed to be more proactive and to strengthen the capacity and the overall ecosystem of immigrant-led organizations in Maine. It was explained that, as Maine Initiatives shifts toward a more predictable, longer-term approach, it seems appropriate for our contribution to the effort to also shift to better match this more thoughtful and strategic approach. This grant is highly aligned with MeHAF strategy 3c: *Support groups that experience health inequities to build capacity to improve health in their communities.*

Trustees asked for clarification about how a multi-year grant is regarded as an expense and counted toward our 5% payout. Finance Manager Margo Beland explained that the total amount of the grant is recorded when the grant is approved, and payout is recorded as each yearly grant payment is made over the three years. There was explanation of the capacity building and technical assistant components of the grant.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest – No conflicts were declared.

It was MOVED (Lambke/Bordowitz), SECONDED, and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve a grant of \$150,000 to Maine Initiatives for the grant period August 18, 2025 through August 17, 2028, consistent with standard MeHAF contract obligations.

**Executive Committee –
Sue Roche (Chair), Jake Grindle (CEO)
(taken out of order)**

Foundation-Initiated Grant to Maine Primary Care Association: Sue and Jake introduced the proposed Foundation-Initiated Grant to the Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA) for scenario planning for Federally Qualified Health Centers. This grant was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Executive Committee at its August 1 meeting. The project will support 16 FQHCs of varying sizes, including those serving some of Maine most marginalized people living in both urbanized and rural areas throughout the state.

The proposed work has two major elements. First, is to aid health centers in gathering the data needed to evaluate and plan for shifts that will likely be required in operations to weather the anticipated losses in revenue under various scenarios, including those due to the drastic Medicaid cuts recently signed into

law. The second element is a series of facilitated workshops for health centers to discuss how they will collaborate, coordinate, and plan together for the changes ahead.

This grant is highly aligned with MeHAF strategy **1c. Support rural health care provider organizations and strategic partners to transform into new systems that coordinate and maintain essential services.**

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

Trustee:	Conflict:
Kevin Lewis	Spouse is MPCA board member.

Kevin recused himself from voting and left the meeting room.

It was MOVED (Hair/Seidman), SECONDED, and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve a grant of \$150,000 to Maine Primary Care Association for Scenario Planning for Federally Qualified Health Centers, for the period of September 15, 2025 through September 14, 2026, consistent with standard MeHAF contract obligations.

Kevin returned to the meeting room.

Foundation-Initiated Grant to Maine Behavioral Health Foundation: Sue and Jake introduced the proposed Foundation-Initiated Grant to Maine Behavioral Health Foundation (MBHF) that will support scenario planning assistance for behavioral health providers in Maine. This grant was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Executive Committee at its August 1 meeting.

Trustees were reminded that in April, the Board and CAC approved Nova funding re-allocations to support responsive grantmaking in light of current political and economic threats. One priority category approved at that meeting is “funds to support convening/networking organizations of health services providers to engage with their members around contingency and strategy planning for continuity of critical services in the face of major cuts in funding.” The project will support 35 community behavioral health providers of varying sizes, including those serving rural and underserved communities, children, and families across Maine. To support the effort, MBHF will engage with Third Horizon, a strategic boutique advisory firm with deep behavioral health expertise.

This grant is highly aligned with MeHAF strategies **1c. Support rural health care provider organizations and strategic partners to transform into new systems that coordinate and maintain essential services,** and **2a. Help to build a robust, trauma-informed, integrated behavioral health care system in Maine, with special emphasis on treatment and recovery for substance use disorders.**

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

Trustee:	Conflict:
Christy Daggett	MBHF board member.

Christy recused herself from voting and was placed in a Zoom waiting room.

It was MOVED (Lewis/Lambke), SECONDED, and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to approve a grant of \$77,320 to Maine Behavioral Health Foundation for Scenario Planning for Behavioral Health Providers, for the period of August 15, 2025 through January 31, 2026, consistent with standard MeHAF contract obligations.

Christy was returned to the meeting room.

Communications/Information Management: Jake shared that the Executive Committee and staff have discussed the personal information of Trustees, Community Advisory Committee members, grantees, and staff that is available on the MeHAF website. Specifically, how MeHAF can remain transparent and accessible without exposing our stakeholders to risk of doxing, harassment, or other negative experiences. It was decided an email will be sent to each Trustee and CAC member asking them to verify their online bios and that further security assessments of the website would follow. Trustees expressed appreciation for the care being taken with their personal information.

**Learning Opportunity –
Impacts of Federal Budget on Maine with
Maine DHHS Commissioner Sara Gagné-Holmes**

Sue welcomed Maine DHHS Commissioner (and former MeHAF Trustee) Sara Gagné-Holmes who shared a summary of federal changes related to the HR1 Budget Reconciliation and the impact it will have on MaineCare and SNAP. Among other details, the Commissioner highlighted how MaineCare work requirements will take effect in January 2027 and will affect approximately 90,000 people with potential loss of coverage for 31,000. She explained how certain immigrant groups will lose eligibility in October 2026, while the state will face cost shifts of about \$5 billion over 10 years. For SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), Trustee Ian Yaffe explained how expanded work requirements and reduced benefits are set to take effect this fall, impacting approximately 40,000 people, though the state will attempt to automate exemptions and compliance verification where possible to minimize the number of dis-enrollments. Ian detailed that the state needs to reduce its error rate from 10% to below 6% within 15 months to avoid penalties, presenting a major challenge as a 10% error rate would result in a \$30M liability.

The Commissioner shared plans for community-based outreach and education campaigns to inform those who will be impacted by these changes. There will be efforts to enhance provider portals and improve health information systems. She emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts between the state and philanthropy and community organizations to mitigate the impacts of these federal changes, and suggested that MeHAF consider including capacity building funding into its budget to help with outreach and coordination with community-based organizations. Jake shared that this is a current priority for MeHAF to keep organizations informed and supported to carry out their missions.

Trustees thanked the Commissioner and Ian for presenting this information and participating in the conversation. It is obvious that these changes will lead to significant challenges and hardships for the most underserved people in Maine. People need to understand that these cuts are coming from the federal level and that the state is doing all they can to mitigate the damage. It was recommended to find the intersection between DHHS and for-profit businesses as workers will be negatively impacted, and businesses have a stake in the wellbeing of their workforce.

It was asked how much information DHHS will be able to communicate to impacted groups in time for people to know how individuals will be affected. The Commissioner noted that an education campaign is being developed and implemented with notices being sent by mail and electronically prior to fall 2026. DHHS is building texting capacity and will expand it over the next two years in order to send renewal information and status updates. It was also noted that messengers are important, so this education and information campaign needs to include additional community organizations and coalitions to support efforts from DHHS.

**Discretionary Grants –
Fostering Creativity and Organizational Innovation and Building MeHAF's Network –
Emily Berrill (PO)**

PO Berrill presented a mid-year update for the Discretionary and Meeting Support programs. She noted that the Discretionary and Meeting Support programs are longstanding elements of MeHAF's responsive grantmaking which offer year-round funding opportunities for small, discrete projects and local, regional,

or statewide meetings that are aligned with our mission and focused on populations that face disproportionate barriers to accessing quality health care and achieving the best possible health. The maximum award for Discretionary Grant projects is \$10,000 and awards for meeting and conference support are up to \$2,000. At the beginning of 2025, the combined budget for the two programs was \$220,000. Emily explained that, given the pace at which we received successful applications, we increased the budget by \$120,000, making the new budget \$340,000. So far in 2025, we have made eighteen Discretionary grants totaling \$169,000 and eighteen Meeting Support grants totaling \$35,000 for a total of \$204,000 in grants across both programs. In comparison to this time last year, we've increased our grantmaking by \$68,592.

Trustees appreciated the update and information Emily presented, particularly noting how the conversational LOI process has led to 100% success of applications. The built-in flexibility and alternative approach leads to better connections and relationship building.

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

Trustees participated in a round robin to share reflections on the meeting. They shared hope for the future, acknowledging both the challenges ahead and the tools available to address them, while also expressing gratitude for the leadership and collaboration within the group.

Next Meeting

The Board will next meet on Thursday, October 9, 2025, jointly with the Community Advisory Committee, at Maple Hill Farm in Hallowell.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:56 pm. *(Hair/Seidman)*

Respectfully Submitted,
Jake Grindle
President & CEO