



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 22, 2022

Press Contacts:

Brian McKeown

brian@mainecancer.org

207.773.2533

**Maine Cancer Foundation Creates the
State's First Comprehensive Cancer Blueprint**
The Go-To-Source for Monitoring Cancer Statistics in Maine

FALMOUTH, Maine – Maine Cancer Foundation (MCF) has announced the creation of the first Maine Cancer Blueprint, a comprehensive, interactive, data-driven tool designed to increase knowledge and awareness of issues related to cancer, expand access to care, and support lifestyle changes to reduce cancer risk. With the goal of supporting efforts to reduce disparities in cancer prevention, treatment, and outcomes for all Maine residents, measures will be displayed by race and ethnicity, insurance type, and geographic regions.

“The goal of the Blueprint is to provide credible, detailed data points to inform grantmaking and programming efforts by MCF to support targeted interventions for all Mainers,” commented John Benoit, a valued member of the MCF Advisory Group and MCF Board.

Initial data exploration shows that rates in Maine for lung and bronchus cancer are higher compared to the United States for most of the populations assessed for all-stage cancer incidence, mortality, and late-stage incidence. This is merely one of the data points that supports the primary focus area for Phase One of the Maine Cancer Blueprint being lung cancer, with actionable insights also developed for colon and rectum cancer, female breast cancer, melanoma, and prostate cancer. Phase Two and subsequent development will focus on detailed analysis and reporting for additional selected cancer types.

The Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) is supporting MCF in the development of the Maine Cancer Blueprint by exploring inequities and variations in cancer rates by examining aspects that may influence cancer risk and analyzing how factors such as social determinants of health, race, ethnicity, insurance status, and socio-economic status impact health outcomes. HSRI will develop measures and report the variations in cancer incidence, mortality, cost, screening rates, and access to care across Maine in an interactive, cohesive, and user-friendly data visualization.

The Maine Health Data Organization (MHDO), the state agency charged with creating and maintaining a useful, objective, reliable, and comprehensive health information database that is used to improve the health of Maine citizens, is crucial to the success of the Maine Cancer Blueprint. While a variety of public data sources will be explored, MHDO's data will be a

primary source, including the All-Payer Claims Database (APCD), Hospital Encounter Data Sets, and data sets linked to MHDO data, such as the Maine Vital Statistics (birth and death) Records and the Maine Cancer Registry.

“We’ve been contemplating and planning for the Maine Cancer Blueprint for some time and it’s very rewarding to see this comprehensive data-driven tool come to life, thanks to the efforts of the MCF staff in collaboration with MHDO and the dedication of HSRI,” said Benoit.

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, a Point32Health company, provided a matching grant this spring to launch the project.

“We are proud to support the Maine Cancer Foundation’s efforts to develop this data analytics tool to help us all better understand the current state of cancer in Maine and the impact it has on Maine residents,” said Bill Whitmore, Maine Market VP for Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. “With this knowledge, this initiative will help make currently available interventions more consistent and equitable for everyone regardless of income or geography and help reduce cancer incidence across the board. We encourage other members of the business community to support the Maine Cancer Foundation in this effort to create better health outcomes for all our citizens.”

###

About HSRI

Established in 1976, HSRI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research institute dedicated to assisting federal and state agencies and local communities in their quest to improve the health, well-being, and economic and housing stability of the populations they serve. HSRI's Population Health team builds data systems to collect, analyze, and report de-identified healthcare data to improve the quality of health information available for research, policy, and practice. Closely integrated with healthcare in Maine, HSRI built and operates the data warehouse for the MHDO to collect and house Maine's APCD's healthcare claims and eligibility data, hospital quality, hospital financial and encounter data, and information related to all physical health, dental, pharmacy, behavioral health, and disability-related services provided in Maine.

About Maine Cancer Foundation:

Maine Cancer Foundation is dedicated to reducing cancer incidence and mortality rates in Maine. All of funds raised by the Foundation are used to benefit the people of Maine. We lead a state-wide effort to advance the most promising and effective cancer-fighting efforts available to the people of Maine through a combination of grant-based financial support and coalition building. Learn more at <https://mainecancer.org>