

FALL 2025

HEALTH EQUITY & SAFETY

FEATURING:

BOMAZEEN LAND TRUST

DISABILITY RIGHTS MAINE

KATAHDIN KITCHEN

**MAINE COALITION TO END
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**MAINE HOSPICE COUNCIL
AND END-OF-LIFE CARE**

NIBEZUN

MaineShare Quarterly



Disability Rights Maine's Disability Pride 2025. Photo credit: Luke Kaneb



Dear Reader,

Physical and mental health are the most significant determinants of our quality of life. They shape our capacity to show up fully and genuinely in all of our relationships, across family, friendships, work, and in our communities. In the United States, access to affordable and effective healthcare remains wildly unstable. It's a system that works best for those who hold financial, racial, gender and/or able-bodied privileges, while the rest of us navigate the precarities of making do with less or going without.

The World Health Organization's constitution frames the all-encompassing nature of health and healthcare beyond our country's fraught and uneven systems:

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.

Health is more than simply "not being ill"- it is our ability to thrive in our lives. To promote healthy communities, we must have health equity, where everyone has the opportunity to pursue their healthiest selves regardless of their identities, geography, or circumstances. Barriers to health equity include unaffordable medications, lack of culturally informed and sensitive providers, language barriers, insufficient transportation to healthcare centers, federal funding cuts, legislative attacks on reproductive rights and abortion access, and more.

Healthcare is a human right, and our MaineShare partner organizations committed to [health equity & safety](#) work tirelessly to address and improve unequal health access in Maine. They lead statewide work including free health insurance counseling hotlines; pedestrian and biker safety on our roads; culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services for immigrant communities; legal defense for Mainers with disabilities; end-of-life care education and advocacy; responsive services to those impacted by domestic violence and assault; preservation of Indigenous land, lifeways, and medicinal practices; food sovereignty and more.

I encourage you to read their stories below, learn more about these organizations, and support this work through the [MaineShare Giving Platform](#). A single donation to the Health Equity & Safety focus area supports 31 organizations leading health equity efforts across the state.

Thank you for reading,

Amanda Scarpone
MaineShare Director

Bomazeen Land Trust

PERRY, MAINE

“Bomazeen Land Trust advances health equity by organizing with the Wabanaki community to create land-based cultural activities that foster a sense of emotional and cultural well-being through traditional ceremonial practices and land stewardship.



These activities strengthen our communities and help cultivate the relationships to the land and each other. Our programs aim to bring people back onto the land, create avenues for land-based activities, growing food, and healing the land.

When I think about the health of Wabanaki people, I think of our relationship to land and our connections with all of our relations. Our relations extend to the trees, rivers, rocks, all the animals, and all the plants. They teach us about our lifecycles, from birth to death. We need the land to heal our minds and bodies, for good mental health practices, to hunt and fish, and to grow food.

Our traditional lifeways are still practiced, but these practices have dwindled more and more with each generation. This has affected us both mentally and physically, our communities have some of the highest rates of disease and poverty. Our lands and communities have suffered because Wabanaki people have been restricted from interacting with our ecosystems the way our ancestors did.



Our traditional harvesting places have become private property, and parking lots, subject to prohibitive conservation laws and surveillance. Our waters are no longer safe to drink or fish from. Yet, it has been recognized by the environmental science community, as well as the United Nations that Indigenous sovereignty directly corresponds to healthy environments. **When Indigenous people can reunite with their homelands, the landscape and the community both respond.”**

Disability Rights Maine

AUGUSTA, MAINE

“DRM advances health equity by fighting discrimination and removing barriers to care for people with disabilities—both individually and systemically. We work to change the policies and systems that allow inequities to persist, including gaps in data, training, and access. By promoting better education for healthcare providers and administrative staff and improving access to health information, DRM helps ensure that every Mainer with a disability can receive the care and respect they deserve.



For us, a healthy community means all people have a fair and just opportunity to achieve good health and well-being. This means addressing systemic and structural barriers that have created unequal access to health information and services, particularly for people with disabilities. A truly healthy community is one where accessibility and inclusion are built into every aspect of the health system—where information is available in multiple formats, facilities are physically and programmatically accessible, and providers are trained to deliver respectful, person-centered care.

It's a community where everyone, regardless of ability, can make informed choices, access the care they need, and thrive.

Progress toward disability-inclusive health policies and funding has slowed. Funding cuts are putting essential programs and services at risk. DRM has already faced funding cuts that reduced staff and limited our ability to serve Mainers with disabilities. Despite federal equal access requirements, inconsistent implementation across states and healthcare systems continues to leave many without equitable access to care. Inadequate data on disability and health outcomes further obscures where disparities exist, making meaningful progress harder to achieve. Sustained investment and commitment are needed to build a truly equitable and effective health system for all.”

Katahdin Kitchen

VEAZIE, MAINE

“ We feel through our unique approach to food, we create more discussions on what foods are on our plates. We also support local farmers and producers, where it comes down to being able to hand select certain produce. Our next phase will heavily lean into this framework, which we look forward to sharing, once established.

Healthy community looks like people supporting each other, trading their skills, knowledge and passions. Having discussions centered around food and connection. Creating deep relationships with the land and history of food systems.



The current challenge impacting our ability to meet our community's needs is the inequity that is present in food distribution, more now than ever are we seeing how broken the system has been. It's a hard discussion to have, but we need to commit ourselves to the power of establishing sustainable local and nature-based food systems. Katahdin Kitchen only represents a fraction of the perspectives that arise from our community; we feel that there are also many perspectives and challenges that come from the individual.”

Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence

AUGUSTA, MAINE

“The Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV) envisions a world where respect is our norm, and where all people thrive in their homes and communities – nurtured, healthy, joyful, and free.

Healthy communities include our own workforces. We want the people working for MCEDV and our members, over half of whom identify as survivors, to be able to thrive and find joy and fulfillment in their work. Recently we've been exploring consolidating the domestic violence helplines from across the state into one on nights and weekends. An increased need for services, combined with a significant drop in the number of helpline volunteers post-pandemic, has overburdened our network's already understaffed resource centers. A consolidated line would take the pressure off of staff who are working around the clock to ensure there is always someone there to answer a survivor's call. For our communities to be healthy, we need to ensure that our teams are healthy, too.”

Maine Hospice Council and End-of-Life Care

AUGUSTA, MAINE

"The Maine Hospice Council's sole mission is to improve access to quality of life for individuals and families living with serious or life-limiting illness. **Given the changes we are witnessing in the healthcare environment, it is more important than ever to collaboratively address challenges individuals and families are facing, especially those who are disenfranchised or underserved.** One current example is our collaborative work with the Medicaid office and HHS on a future Palliative Care benefit for Maine people.

We believe strongly that a healthy community is co-created. It's about partnerships. Many voices have contributed significantly to MHC's success over the years, as reflected by the numerous listening sessions we have conducted. These sessions have helped create buy-in and trust leading to successful strategies and recommendations.

However, funding remains an on-going challenge. Our work relies on the goodwill of our donors. What MHC does with a modest budget is quite amazing. For the past 35 years, through innovation, education, advocacy and collaboration we have focused on improving access to high quality end-of-life and palliative care for ALL Maine people." A goal certainly worth achieving.

Nibezun

PASADUMKEAG, MAINE

"Our communities are facing challenges such as historical trauma, geographic isolation, natural resource decimation, chronically underfunded healthcare, and lack of autonomy and sovereignty. **When nibezun thinks of healthy communities, we envision connected communities nurturing the unbroken balance on Mother Earth, coexisting with the land in harmony and abundance.**

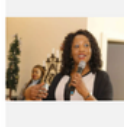
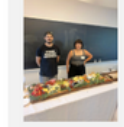
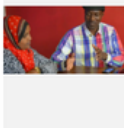
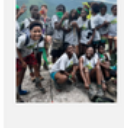
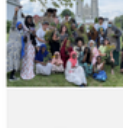
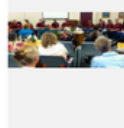
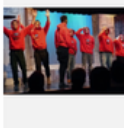
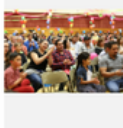
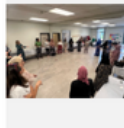
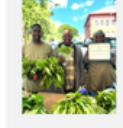
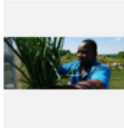


This sacred balance, however unbroken, has been greatly disrupted. With great care and intention, nibezun provides the cultural practices, Indigenous knowledge, and healing resources necessary to combat health inequities and promote healing by prioritizing culturally-grounded wellness and land-based resource initiatives, improving accessibility in Indigenous communities, and providing long-term programming. These efforts water the seven seeds of healing: Mind, Body, Spirit, Social Connection, Culture, Language, and Earth, ensuring that communities can achieve prosperity now and for generations to come."

MaineShare is a donation platform that lets you give to Maine Initiatives' grantee partners directly.

You can support all 93 organizations with a single donation, or tailor your gift by selecting focus areas or programs that align with your values. Whatever you decide, your donation will be distributed equally among your choices, strengthening a growing network of community-based nonprofits advancing justice and equity in Maine.

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