The Lunder-Dineen Health Education Alliance of Maine
In collaboration with Massachusetts General Hospital

This new educational collaboration with Massachusetts General Hospital expands healthcare education and awareness programs to providers, patients, families and veterans throughout Maine. Named for a long-time Massachusetts General Hospital primary care physician, James J. Dineen, MD, a Gardiner native, the project is funded by a generous challenge grant from Peter and Paula Lunder and the Lunder Foundation.


The Lunder-Dineen Health Education Alliance is guided by the unique needs of Maine healthcare professionals and the people they serve. The alliance offers a spectrum of multimedia educational programs at no cost to participants. Providers are broadly defined and may include primary care physicians, psychologists, allopathic and osteopathic physicians, hospitalists, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, social workers, dieticians, and community first responders such as ambulance drivers, clergy and others.

As the country tries to rein in healthcare costs, Maine, like many states in a struggling economy, is left with the task of caring for its residents. Maine has the additional challenge of being home to one of the oldest populations in the nation (OneMaine Health ’10). Add in a growing epidemic of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and a shortage of healthcare providers serving rural areas, the task of keeping its citizens healthy becomes even more daunting.

Above: James J. Dineen, MD, at the A1 Diner, Gardiner, Maine

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Budget cuts mean that health-related education programs are often on the chopping block, making it harder for healthcare professionals to update their competencies, expand their knowledge and make connections with colleagues. Public health programs designed to prevent or treat problems like obesity, substance abuse or smoking are also at risk. States are forced to become more creative at finding cost effective ways to teach and train providers, patients, their families and the public.

Appreciative of the care they received at Massachusetts General Hospital and its commitment to education, Peter and Paula Lunder and their family challenged the hospital to find a way to improve health care in their home state of Maine. It soon became clear that Massachusetts General Hospital could share knowledge using its expertise in developing education programs.

Maine and Massachusetts General Hospital working side-by-side

“I'm very impressed with what's going on with Maine medicine,” says Dr. Dineen, who also served as former team internist for the New England Patriots and the Boston Bruins. “There are a lot of great institutions here, and we're just trying to fill any gaps that might exist by using modern educational techniques. We have a strong commitment to collaboration and working with Maine leaders to understand their healthcare challenges and opportunities.”

The initiative builds upon two well-established and recognized Massachusetts General Hospital health education initiatives:

- The MGH Academy, an education center of excellence for providers, patients and families, develops and evaluates programs for specific conditions;
- The Norman Knight Nursing Center for Clinical & Professional Development provides more than 200 certification and training programs annually to advance the knowledge and competencies of nurses.

A special focus on service men and women

In collaboration with the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program, the alliance will provide health education services to Maine service men and women who have returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation New Dawn with combat- or deployment-related stress and traumatic brain injury. It is estimated that 20 percent of service men and women experience post traumatic stress syndrome, traumatic brain injury and/or depression.

The building blocks to a healthier future

The project’s first phase involves identifying areas that could benefit from additional training and education for medical professionals, patients and families. The second phase involves the development of health education programs where gaps exist that meet the needs of Maine residents.

Maine native Jeanette Ives Erickson, RN, DNP, FAAN, senior vice president for Patient Care Services and chief nurse at Mass General, is one of the leaders of this ambitious project.

“What makes this alliance unique is that we introduce data-driven innovative educational programs as determined by Maine stakeholders,” says Dr. Erickson. “Our programs are linked to healthcare reform efforts. Moreover, we ensure quality by measuring the impact and outcomes of the programs.”

Residents and visitors alike will benefit from the Lunder-Dineen Health Education Alliance of Maine’s efforts to train and educate health professionals, patients, families and communities.

For information about the program, please visit www.mainehealtheducation.org or contact Denise O’Connell at 207.385.3185 or at denise@mainehealtheducation.org. To make a gift, please contact Labrini Nelligan at 617.724.6435 or at labrini@mainehealtheducation.org.

To learn more about the program, please visit: www.mainehealtheducation.org