

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Ricker Hamilton, Commissioner

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**TO:** Senator Eric L. Brakey, Chair  
Representative Patricia Hymanson, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

**FROM:** Ricker Hamilton, Commissioner

**DATE:** December 15, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Public Health Nursing Program Staffing Report

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## **Public Health Nursing Program Staffing Report**

### **Introduction**

The mission of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is to promote safe, healthy, independent lives for all, while ensuring efficient and effective use of resources for Mainers that need it most. For 97 years, Public Health Nursing (PHN) has worked to make a positive difference on environments and conditions, enabling populations to achieve optimal health and quality of life in the State of Maine. Today, Maine DHHS and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) remain dedicated to honoring that history, strengthening the Public Health Nursing Program and fulfilling the statutory requirements created through LD 1108, *An Act to Restore Public Health Nursing Services* and the resulting public law, P.L. 2017, c. 312.

P.L. 2017, c. 312, § B-2 became law on October 30, 2017. This legislation requires the Department to issue a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services regarding the progress of the Department in achieving full staffing of the Public Health Nursing Program, as required by the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section 1964.

Specifically, 22 MRSA § 1964 requires the Department to “promptly fill all public health nurse positions within the Public Health Nursing Program for which funding is provided,” to “widely post public notices for public health nurse vacancies” within an established time frame, and to “recruit and hire qualified individuals for these vacant positions.” As of the date of this report, the Department has complied or is on track to comply with each of those statutory provisions. Additionally, the Department has not transferred or repurposed any dedicated PHN funds.

## **Current PHN Staffing Activity**

The Department has made strengthening the Public Health Nursing Program and fulfilling the statutory requirements a high priority, which is reflected in the amount of work hours that have been dedicated to this effort by senior staff from both the Maine CDC and the Commissioner's Office. Recruitment planning meetings, reorganization discussions, and a forum for Public Health Nurses to provide feedback began taking place the first week of October and are continuing to occur on a regular basis.

Despite a significant nursing shortage in Maine and nationwide, and a small number of Public Health Nurses retirements, seven new hires have occurred since September 1<sup>st</sup>, including a PHN Consultant on September 18<sup>th</sup> and a PHN Supervisor on October 10<sup>th</sup>, as well as three new hires since December 1<sup>st</sup>. In addition, two public health nurses have been promoted from within, and as of December 11<sup>th</sup>, they have assumed roles that will be critical to the success of the recruitment process and the program as a whole.

One of those positions is the Nursing Education Consultant. This individual will take on the responsibility of coordinating and performing essential training for our nurses through the onboarding process as well as on an ongoing basis. DHHS is seeking to ensure that our nurses are given the tools necessary to provide the highest level of health services in communities across the state. The second promotion was made in the central referral area of the program. The importance of the referral process cannot be understated, as it plays a central role for not just the PHN Program, but also the Home Visiting Program and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

## **Position Posting Requirement**

In accordance with 22 MRSA § 1964, with one exception, all vacancies were posted as of November 30<sup>th</sup>, with a number of those happening well before the statutory deadline. The one position falling outside of the statutory framework was that of the PHN Director position. The posting of this position took slightly longer, as DHHS updated the position to better describe the current needs of the PHN unit, bringing the director position, and subsequently the program, more in line with legislative intent and the shared goals of the Committee and the Department. That update required the creation of a new job description and the approval of various oversight entities. Moving forward, the Department continues to be committed to complying with the requirement that all postings occur within 30 days of a vacancy occurring.

## **Recruitment Efforts**

In addition to the postings, the Department is implementing an aggressive recruitment plan. This plan includes radio ads that began airing on December 6<sup>th</sup> on two stations with statewide coverage – WMME FM and WEBB FM. These ads were developed by DHHS communications and leadership staff, and involved interviews with a number of public health nurses. Advanced tools such as Hyperlocal Mobil Retargeting through geofencing around local areas of recruitment interest and desktop presence are being utilized to increase the effectiveness of this recruitment tool. The job listings have also been posted to Indeed and “hot cards” have been created and are

being distributed to enhance the recruitment effort. *Please see attached audio file, hot cards, and example of Indeed listing.*

This recruitment process is tailored to fit a revitalized organizational structure, which includes a strong central operations staff to support the PHN Director and the regional leadership team comprised of four PHN Supervisor positions and three PHN Consultant positions. These are organized geographically by the existing Public Health District model. The PHN Supervisor/Consultants in Public Health Districts 6, 7, and 8 will serve as liaisons to the tribal communities present in each of those districts.

### **Results of Recruitment Efforts**

To date, Maine CDC has received 30 applications for the posted PHN positions, including the PHN Director position. Of those 30 applications received, three applicants have withdrawn and two were deemed to not meet the minimum qualifications for the positions to which the candidate applied.

So far, 16 interviews have been scheduled or are in the process of being scheduled and nine interviews have been completed. Those interviews have resulted in three potential offers that are pending reference checks and the three new hires mentioned above.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, the Department and Maine CDC are fully committed to meeting the statutory reporting and staffing requirements of P.L. 2017, c. 312, § B-2 and 22 MRSA § 1964, as well as to the effort of rebuilding a well-trained and well-managed Public Health Nursing workforce in order to preserve, promote and protect the health of Maine residents.

\* \* \*

Thank you for your interest in this matter. If you have any questions or need any further information, please feel contact Commissioner Hamilton or a member of his staff at 207-287-3707.



## **Public Health Nurse II**

Department of Health and Human Services/Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention - Augusta, ME

\$42,328 - \$55,453 a year

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services/CDC is seeking talented Public Health Nurses for multiple locations in Maine. Locations include: Augusta, Bangor, Biddeford, Calais, Caribou, Ellsworth, Farmington, Fort Kent, Houlton, Lewiston, Machias, Portland, Rockland, Sanford, Skowhegan and South Paris.

### **Public Health Nurse**

**Salary: \$42,328.00 - \$55,452.80/yr.**

**Location(s): Statewide** (see above)

**Value of State-paid Health and Dental Insurance: \$397.94 bi-weekly**

**Value of State's share of Employee's Retirement: 15.12% of pay**

**Opening Date : September 28, 2017**

**Closing Date : March 30, 2018**

(for more information on these positions, contact Chris Monahan at 207.287.4000)

### **Agency Information**

The *Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)* provides supportive, preventive, protective, public health and intervention services that protect the public health and assist our customers in meeting their needs. The mission

The mission of the *Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)*, within which this position is located, is to develop and deliver services to preserve, protect, and promote the health and well-being of the citizens of Maine.

### **Job Duties**

You will be providing direct nursing services to individuals and families in Maine. Your responsibilities include care planning and management, conducting home and field visits, conducting clinics and conferences, advising and assisting civic groups on nursing and public health needs, and performing certain senior level administrative functions. Work is performed under limited supervision. State-wide travel is required.

*You will also :*

- Plan and implement comprehensive orientation and training of new Public Health Nurses and act as a preceptor for nursing/medical students
- Plan and conduct caseload and record reviews according to established review procedures

- Apply the nursing process to individuals and families including health assessment, care plan development, implementation and evaluation, resource coordination, and/or referral in order to meet demonstrated health care needs
- Plan, develop and coordinate client care with hospitals, medical providers, schools, and social services agencies in order to ensure necessary services are delivered
- Assess the need for health care clinics; and organize and coordinate physicians, volunteers, providers, families, and community agencies in order to conduct health care clinics within communities
- Observe the family environment, identify health problems or at-risk behavior, and contact appropriate resources and agencies in order to respond to family and client needs
- Act as team coordinator and collaborate with health professionals, social workers, community agencies, and volunteers in order to provide nursing services in community health programs, schools, conferences, and clinics
- Participate in response teams to prevent, minimize, and contain adverse health events and conditions resulting from communicable diseases; food-, water-, and vector-borne outbreaks; chronic diseases; environmental hazards; injuries; and health disparities

#### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

A four (4) year combination of training and experience which includes graduation from an approved nursing education program and 30 credit hours in one or more of the following disciplines: General, Abnormal or Adolescent Psychology, Sociology, Human Nutrition, Nursing Rehabilitation, Community Health - AND - one (1) year of supervised graduate nurse experience - OR - graduation from an approved nursing education program and two (2) years of experience in public health.

**LICENSING/REGISTRATION/CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:** (These must be met by all employees prior to attaining permanent status in this class).

- Licensed as a Registered Professional Nurse as issued by the State of Maine Board of Nursing. Preferred candidates will have
- Knowledge of public health programs, current nursing principles and practices, and nursing process
- Knowledge of public health nursing laws, education, and administration
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships
- Ability to communicate effectively both orally and written
- Valid Maine driver's license

#### **Application and Information**

For additional information about this position, please contact Maryann Harakall, Maternal and Child Health Program Director, 207-557-2470.

**To apply :**

**Applications are available at [www.maine.gov/dhhs/jobs](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/jobs) .**

Please forward a completed State of Maine application form, a recent resume, cover letter, and transcript (transcript needed only if education is used to meet the minimum qualifications) to:

Jeremy Wilson

Department of Health and Human Services

#11 SHS

32 Blossom Lane

Augusta, ME 04333

Telephone: 207-287-1873 (call for email address)

fax #207-287-8299

Applications must be received by the closing date.

*Only post-secondary degrees from a College or University whose accreditation has been granted by a nationally recognized accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education will satisfy educational requirements. Information can be obtained at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>. Applicants with foreign degrees must have them evaluated by the World Education Services for authentication and US equivalency, and submit such authentication and equivalency with their applications.*

*The Department of Health and Human Services is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. We provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request.*

Job Type: Full-time







*Nurturing the  
Heartbeat of  
Maine Communities*

**Become a Public Health  
Nurse TODAY!**

**- CLICK For More Information -**





Eager to start a career where you can make a difference everyday?



## **Public Health Nurses**

**Nurturing the heartbeat of Maine communities.**

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention is looking for nurses statewide, who want to be part of Maine's Public Health Nursing Team.

Join a dynamic Public Health Nursing Team today by visiting [Maine.gov/dhhs/jobs](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/jobs) and click on the Public Health Nursing position that interests you and apply today.

As a Public Health Nurse, you will provide direct nursing services to individuals and families in Maine including care planning and management, conducting home and field visits, conducting clinics and conferences, and advising and assisting civic groups on nursing and public health needs throughout the State of Maine.