

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **MAINE HOSPITALS AND HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS RECOGNIZED FOR TOBACCO-FREE ACHIEVEMENTS**

33 Hospitals and 5 Healthcare Organizations Celebrated for Leadership through Annual Gold Star Standards of Excellence Program

The annual Gold Star Standards of Excellence Hospital and Healthcare Organization Program Awardees have been announced for 2020. The program of the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence's Breathe Easy Initiative recognized thirty-three hospitals, five healthcare organizations and five individual Gold Star Champions for efforts to address tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure. Celebrated organizations received a plaque for their achievements in advancing their campus smoke and tobacco-free policies as well as promoting tobacco-free lifestyles.

All Maine hospitals and healthcare organizations were encouraged to apply for recognition. This year marks the eleventh annual hospital Gold Star Standards of Excellence Program and healthcare organizations were invited to apply for recognition for the first time. Award levels are based on best practice criteria such as a smoke and tobacco-free campus policy, annual screening for tobacco use, referral to tobacco treatment and supporting employee education related to tobacco treatment. In 2020, all participating hospitals were recognized at the silver, gold and platinum levels.

"We applaud the ongoing efforts of Maine hospitals and healthcare organizations to address tobacco use, secondhand smoke exposure and nicotine dependence by meeting the Gold Star Standards of Excellence," says Kristen McAuley, Tobacco Prevention Services Director for the Center for Tobacco Independence. She continued, "Addressing tobacco use has continued importance during the current pandemic, as the US CDC states that being a current or former cigarette smoker increases your risk of severe illness from COVID-19."

Applying hospitals were invited to nominate an individual or department that had championed tobacco-free efforts at their organization for recognition. Five Gold Star Champions are being celebrated including Robin Winslow of Hometown Health Center – Newport, Jane Danforth and Bob Peterson of Millinocket Regional Hospital, and Casey J. Ellis and Leanne Temple of Waldo County General Hospital.

For more information about the Gold Star Standards of Excellence, please visit [BreatheEasyMaine.org/GSSE](https://BreatheEasyMaine.org/GSSE).

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The Breathe Easy Initiative at the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence is dedicated to providing Maine's hospitals with the information and resources needed to make all organizations smoke and tobacco-free.

The program is funded by Maine Prevention Services. Maine Prevention Services is an initiative through the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention working across the state to impact tobacco, substance use, and obesity.

**2020 Hospital Gold Star Standards of Excellence Awardees:**

Platinum Level:

Cary Medical Center	Franklin Memorial Hospital
Houlton Regional Hospital	LincolnHealth
Maine Medical Center	MaineGeneral Medical Center
Mid Coast Hospital	Millinocket Regional Hospital
New England Rehabilitation Hospital	Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center
Northern Maine Medical Center	Pen Bay Medical Center
Redington-Fairview General Hospital	Southern Maine Health Care
Spring Harbor Hospital	St. Mary's Regional Medical Center
Waldo County General Hospital	

Gold Level:

Bridgton Hospital	Calais Regional Hospital
Central Maine Medical Center	Down East Community Hospital
Northern Light AR Gould Hospital	Northern Light Blue Hill Memorial Hospital
Northern Light Charles A. Dean Memorial Hospital	Northern Light Maine Coast Memorial Hospital
Northern Light Mercy Hospital	Rumford Hospital
St. Joseph's Hospital	Stephens Memorial Hospital

Silver Level:

Northern Light Inland Hospital	Northern Light Sebecook Valley Hospital
VA Maine Healthcare System	

Individual Gold Star Champions:

Jane Danforth, Millinocket Regional Hospital	Casey J. Ellis, Waldo County General Hospital
Bob Peterson, Millinocket Regional Hospital	Lianne Temple, Waldo County General Hospital

**2020 Healthcare Organization Gold Star Standards of Excellence Awardees:**

Platinum Level:

Cape Integrative Health	Casco Bay Dental
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Gold Level:

Hometown Health Center	Oasis Free Clinics
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Silver Level:

India Street Clinic

Individual Gold Star Champions:

Robin Winslow, Hometown Health Center - Newport