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## **MAINE HOSPITALS RECOGNIZED FOR TOBACCO-FREE ACHIEVEMENTS**

32 Hospitals Celebrated through Annual Gold Star Standards of Excellence Program

Augusta, ME – The 9<sup>th</sup> annual Tobacco-Free Hospital Gold Star Standards of Excellence Awards Celebration, hosted by the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence’s Breathe Easy initiative, was held on September 27<sup>th</sup> at the Maine Hospital Association. The event, attended by hospital and public health stakeholders from across the state, recognized efforts by Maine hospitals to address tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure. Thirty-two hospitals and three individual Gold Star Champions were highlighted for their achievements in advancing their campus smoke and tobacco-free policies as well as promoting tobacco-free lifestyles.

All Maine hospitals were encouraged to apply for 2018 recognition. Participating organizations that met at least seven of ten standards were recognized with a plaque. 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 2018, all applying hospitals met at least the gold level with 9 of 32 meeting the new tobacco-free platinum distinction. To meet the platinum level, hospitals must meet all Gold Star Standards and include specific policy language and strategies for five additional requirements.

At the celebration event, each hospital was recognized with a plaque, celebrating their efforts. At the celebration, Kenneth I. Lewis, Senior Director for the Center for Tobacco Independence stated that, “Hospitals serve as examples for health and wellness in their communities, having strong policies and procedures addressing around tobacco use and exposure sends an important message.” He continued, “Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death, we applaud these 32 Maine hospitals for their ongoing efforts to meet the Gold Star Standards of Excellence.”

The 2018 Gold Star Standards of Excellence Awardees include; at the Platinum Level: LincolnHealth, Maine Medical Center, MaineGeneral Medical Center, Mid Coast Hospital, Mount Desert Island Hospital, New England Rehabilitation Hospital, and Southern Maine Health Care; at the Gold level: Blue Hill Memorial Hospital, Bridgton Hospital, Calais Regional Hospital, Central Maine Medical Center, Charles A. Dean Memorial Hospital, Down East Community Hospital, Franklin Memorial Hospital, Houlton Regional Hospital, Inland Hospital, Maine Coast Memorial Hospital, Mayo Regional Hospital, Mercy Hospital, Millinocket Regional Hospital, Pen Bay Medical Center, Redington-Fairview General Hospital, Rumford Hospital, Sebasticook Valley Health, Spring Harbor Hospital, Stephens Memorial Hospital, The Aroostook Medical Center, Waldo County General Hospital, and York Hospital.

Applying hospitals were invited to nominate an individual or department that had championed tobacco-free efforts at their organization. Three Gold Star Champions were highlighted at the event: Michele Michaud of Southern Maine Health Care, the Prevention and Wellness Team from St. Mary’s Regional Medical Center and Donna Chamoff from Maine Medical Center.

For more information about Gold Star Standards of Excellence recognition program, please visit [BreatheEasyMaine.org/Gold-Star-Standards-of-Excellence](http://BreatheEasyMaine.org/Gold-Star-Standards-of-Excellence).

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The Breathe Easy Tobacco-Free Hospital 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.

Celebration photos are available on [Facebook](#).