

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**June 20, 2019**

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**Maine Organizations Highlighted as Gold Stars for Addressing Tobacco Use and Exposure**

South Portland, Maine – Addressing tobacco dependence and exposure to secondhand smoke, requires organizational commitment, resources and dedication. On Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> during the Annual Tobacco Treatment and Prevention Conference, the Breathe Easy Gold Star Standards of Excellence program recognized behavioral health organizations and institutions of higher education for their ongoing policy, prevention and treatment efforts. Eighteen organizations from across the state and eight individual champions were celebrated for achievements in advancing their campus smoke and tobacco-free policies as well as promoting tobacco-free lifestyles.

“We applaud the proactive efforts of these honored organizations to address tobacco use, which remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death,” said Kenneth I. Lewis, Senior Director of the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence. Lewis continued “these organizations have implemented evidence based strategies that benefit their staff, clients, students and communities.”

All Maine behavioral health and higher education organizations were invited apply for this annual recognition opportunity. The Gold Star Standards of Excellence program is an activity of the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence’s Breathe Easy Initiative. Participating organizations that met at least six of ten standards were recognized at the Gold, Silver or Bronze level with a plaque. Award levels are based on best practices including implementing a smoke and tobacco-free campus policy, providing referrals to tobacco treatment, promoting smoke-free lodging options to visitors and divesting from tobacco industry stock.

While implementing tobacco-free campus policies and treatment initiatives can have its challenges, the celebrated organizations are showcasing how addressing tobacco is an important strategy for their organization and supports their wellness mission.

For more information about the Breath Easy initiative and Gold Star Standards of Excellence recognition program, please visit [BreatheEasyMaine.org/GSSE](http://BreatheEasyMaine.org/GSSE).

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The Breathe Easy initiative at the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence is dedicated to reducing exposure to secondhand smoke through the promotion of strong voluntary policies that lead to reduced tobacco use and increased tobacco-free living throughout Maine.

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.

Additional Information on the Gold Star Standards of Excellence: [BreatheEasyMaine.org/GSSE](https://BreatheEasyMaine.org/GSSE)  
Awards Celebration Photos: [Google Photos](#)

### **2019 Behavioral Health Awardees**

Gold Level: *Met all 10 Standards*

- County Behavioral Medicine
- Discovery House - Bangor
- Evergreen Behavioral Services
- Life By Design
- Maine Behavioral Healthcare – Rockland
- The Northern Lighthouse
- Your Journey

Silver Level: *Met 8 or 9 of 10 Standards*

- Aroostook Mental Health Center
- Mid Coast Hospital Addiction Resource Center
- Pine Tree Recovery Center

Individual Gold Star Recipients:

- Cody Tompkins, The Northern Lighthouse
- Randi Bruneau, Pine Tree Recovery Center
- Mary-Helena McInerney, County Behavioral Medicine
- Mathew Salch, County Behavioral Medicine
- April Monahan, Maine Behavioral Health - Rockland

### **2019 College/University Awardees**

Gold Level: *Met all 10 Standards*

- Central Maine Community College
- Northern Maine Community College
- St. Joseph's College
- University of Maine Orono
- University of Maine Presque Isle
- University of New England
- University of Southern Maine
- York County Community College

Individual Gold Star Recipients:

- Penny Remick, York County Community College
- Emily Bauer, University of Southern Maine
- Linda Mastro, University of Maine Presque Isle & Northern Maine Community College

