

HealthMatters

A Journal of Wellness and Good Health Care

Here ^{at}
Home.



Here ^{for the}
Future.

HealthMatters

HealthMatters is published as a service for the people of the Kennebec Valley region. Information is written by MaineGeneral's Marketing and Communications staff.

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Message from the CEO

"We're with you" is not just a tag line, but our promise to the Kennebec Valley since we opened the Alford Center for Health twelve years ago.

So much has happened in these twelve years: a long pandemic; workforce challenges; rising costs and reimbursements that do not cover the cost of care; and, this year, the loss of Northern Light Inland Hospital.

Health care is facing challenges across the country, but our commitment to you and our community is unwavering. MaineGeneral is here for the long haul—today and for generations to come.

Through all these challenges, MaineGeneral continues to expand access to the high-quality care you have come to expect from us. Our 5,000 employees focus every day on our mission: to enhance, every day, the health of our patients, our families and our communities.

We understand the need for quality care provided locally, which is why we have successfully expanded:

- Maternal and pediatric care;
- Cancer services;
- Surgical and non-surgical treatments; and
- Primary care options.

In this issue, you'll read about:

- Health care challenges that are not unique to our area, but are national in scope;
- Our response to the need for critical services in our region;
- Expanding state-of-the-art technology and services used by our expert clinical teams; and
- Progress on the construction and expansion of the Harold Alford Center for Cancer Care and a recap of our Day of Hope.

These updates are just one way of sharing with you how we put into practice our promise to you and your family that we're with you – now, and in the future.



Nathan Howell
President & CEO
MaineGeneral Health





The State *of* Health Care

The closure of Northern Light Inland Hospital in June heavily impacted the delivery of health care in the Kennebec Valley.

MaineGeneral is committed to meeting our community's needs, and we're here for the long haul.

Challenges that led to the closure of Northern Light Inland Hospital are not limited to our area of the state or the country. These challenges include:

- Low reimbursement rates for care provided
- Increased denial rates from insurance companies
- Impending federal cuts to Medicaid and Medicare which will increase the number of uninsured individuals
- Increasing costs of doing business

These are uncertain times in health care. Decisions at the state and local level will continue to impact our ability to keep high-quality services and clinical staff.

MaineGeneral is proactively addressing these challenges. We remain focused on keeping our health system independent, and continuing to offer critical services right here in the Kennebec Valley. 🦋

Want to make sure you get the latest information on health care policy, legislation and regulations that impact your local health care?

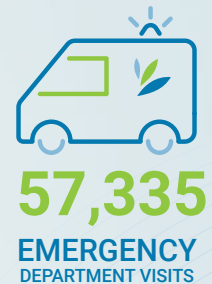
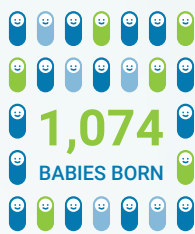
Sign up to get timely information on these topics by signing up to our email list at

www.mainegeneral.org/health-policy.



You can keep informed about the state of health care by visiting these websites:

- The Maine Hospital Association – A great source of information about the state of health care in Maine: www.themha.org
- The American Hospital Association – For tracking federal health care issues: www.aha.org



Expanding Care *in the* Kennebec Valley: *Meeting our Community's Needs*

As the leading health care provider in the greater Kennebec Valley, we recognize our important role in the community. This is even more true with the closure of Northern Light Inland Hospital earlier this year.

MaineGeneral has made key investments in people and services. Recent expansions include:

- Primary Care
 - › Hired five of Northern Light Inland Hospital's primary care medical staff, four of whom now work in MaineGeneral primary care offices
 - › Working with patients of these primary care medical staff to transition their medical records and schedule appointments
 - › Recruiting additional medical staff
 - › Expanded virtual visits to several practices, which have reduced wait times

- Inpatient Beds
 - › Expanded inpatient bed capacity by converting inpatient rehabilitation beds to med/surg beds
- OB/GYN
 - › Continue to hire additional medical staff
 - › Patients can be seen in Augusta and Waterville for appointments; deliveries are in Augusta
- Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care new construction and renovation
 - › On schedule to be fully completed Spring 2026
 - › Raised \$34.2 million to date

- Specialty Care – new medical staff hires
 - › Ear, Nose & Throat
 - › Eye Center
 - › Gastroenterology
 - › Psychiatry

The health system is also looking to invest in a major upgrade to Epic – a fully integrated electronic health records system.

We're committed to maintaining and strengthening essential services across our region and giving care teams the tools, training and resources they need to provide high-quality care now and for years to come.

Are you still looking for a primary care practice? You can fill out a form on our website at www.mainegeneral.org/pcp-interest or call 1-855-4MGH INFO (1-855-464-4463). ↗

A Message *from* Medical Staff Leadership

At MaineGeneral, the story of health care isn't written in policies or balance sheets; it's written in people.

It's the newborn whose first cry echoes in our delivery rooms.

It's the grandmother who gets to cheer at her grandson's basketball game after recovering from surgery.

It's the neighbor who rings the bell after finishing cancer treatment.

These are the moments that remind us why we chose medicine and why keeping care local matters so deeply.

Health care everywhere is under strain, and Maine is no exception. We are proud to remain an independent, nonprofit health system, rooted in the community we serve. That independence allows us to make decisions based not wholly on profit margins, but on what's best for our patients.

In the months ahead, you'll see us making investments to strengthen that care, from new technology that speeds up diagnosis, to upgrades in our electronic health record that connect you to your providers more seamlessly, to programs that ensure critical services stay close to home.

These advances aren't about machines or software. They're about people and about giving every patient in our region the chance to heal, thrive and live life to the fullest right here at home.

With pride in our community,

MaineGeneral Medical Staff Leadership



Jason Brown, MD



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Amy Rico, MD



John Thaller, MD

We are grateful for the community support that makes so much of our work possible. There are many ways to give if you wish to demonstrate your support of local health care. With your support, we can remain strong and independent, building a healthier community for generations to come.

Give online at give.mainegeneral.org/give-today

Mail donations to:
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Surgeon Highlights



As a surgeon I believe it is a unique benefit to our community to be able offer such a comprehensive range of surgical options between both of our campuses. We are now able to offer shoulder replacement surgery at Thayer, previously performed only in Augusta. Patients can go home the same day from our Thayer location, offering them the ability to recover in the comfort of their own home.

Cassandra Sanko, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon



Ali Jardaneh, MD, MS, provides urologic care and services to patients as part of the MaineGeneral Urology medical staff. He joined MaineGeneral Medical Center's active staff in September 2024 after completing a urology residency at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, TN. Dr. Jardaneh performs urologic surgery at the Thayer Center for Health in Waterville and the Alford Center for Health in Augusta.



The Thayer Center for Health in Waterville offers state-of-the-art surgery options, including robot-assisted surgery for the full spectrum of your surgical needs including:

- Dental
- Ear, Nose and Throat
- General
- Gynecologic
- Hand
- Ophthalmologic
- Orthopaedics, including outpatient total shoulder
- Plastic
- Podiatry
- Robot-assisted General and Gynecologic
- Urology
- Vascular

The total number of surgeries at the Thayer Center for Health between September 2024 and September 2025 was **4,235**. These were performed between five different operating rooms, five days per week!

The Thayer Center for Health provides outpatient surgeries (same-day discharge) that provide patients care in a setting that gets them back to their lives as efficiently as possible. To learn more about surgery at the Thayer Center for Health, please visit www.mainegeneral.org/surgery.



Comprehensive Care

and Cutting-Edge Technology: A Student Athlete's Surgery Journey

For many young athletes, a major injury can feel like the end of their sports career. For 17-year-old Hadley Farwell, it marked a new beginning. In 2024, freshly healed from leg surgery, Hadley, then age 16 and a sophomore in high school, experienced a devastating tear to her right leg's ACL while playing lacrosse.

"I was playing defense and there was no contact. I stepped the wrong way and felt a pop," Hadley said. "I could tell immediately that something was wrong. There was a lot of pain, and it was hard to process."

On the sidelines that day was MaineGeneral Athletic Trainer Pat Norwood, who rushed to her side.

"Pat quickly responded, which was comforting," said Laurie Farwell, Hadley's mother.

Once off the field, it was clear that Hadley needed further care. The Farwells knew exactly where to turn. Hadley had previously been treated by Dr. Daniel Shubert, an orthopaedic surgeon at MaineGeneral, and they trusted his approach.

"Dr. Shubert explained everything to us in a way that we could understand. He provided all the information with pictures and a description of the procedure and humanized it for us," says Hadley. "He made me feel very comfortable and I felt very confident going into the surgery."

Dr. Shubert recommended a procedure known as fertilized ACL reconstruction. It's a relatively new approach that uses the patient's own stem cells and growth factors, combined with bone grafting, to create a favorable healing environment.

"The data on the fertilized ACL shows promising early outcomes, including decreased pain, quicker recovery and improved return-to-sport timelines," Dr. Shubert said.

Hadley underwent surgery in June 2024 performed by Dr. Shubert and assisted by Physician Assistant, Brooke Heathco. Recovery required dedication, especially in physical therapy. Laurie and Hadley credit MaineGeneral Physical Therapist

Monique Huber and Psychologist Corey Smith, PsyD, for Hadley's successful rehab.

"Monique customized every single PT session to what Hadley needed. She was fantastic. Hadley also spoke with Dr. Smith and if she didn't do that component, I don't know where she would be now. The collaboration of the whole MaineGeneral Orthopaedics family, sports medicine and psychologists working together helped with her success. If she didn't have the mental support, the physical wouldn't work." Laurie said.

Seven months after surgery, Hadley returned to the court for her first basketball game.

Less than a year later, she competed in a national lacrosse tournament, proudly representing Maine. Her team came in fifth place, and her knee held strong.

"She didn't even question her knee," Laurie said. "The procedure that Dr. Shubert did promoted such good

healing. I don't think she would be where she is right now without that whole team."

Dr. Shubert completed the first all-inside fertilized ACL reconstruction in New England and many more since. To date, he has completed over 75 fertilized ACL reconstructions over the last two years, with zero re-tears.

“

For Dr. Shubert and his team to be doing that kind of procedure here in Augusta, right in our community, is huge. To have access to that level of expertise right here in Central Maine, where you can stay close to home for surgery and physical therapy, that's incredibly special.

Laurie Farwell

The availability of this advanced care close to home made a lasting impact on the Farwells.

The experience has also shaped Hadley's future.

"After my experience with these doctors, physical therapists and sports psychologists and the impact they have on people, it made me realize that I want to go into sports medicine as a career. I want people to leave whatever appointment we have and feel like they can have surgery and feel good about it; that they are strong enough to do it, which includes the physical and mental side of it," Hadley concluded.

To learn more about our sports medicine surgical team, please visit www.mainegeneral.org/sports-medicine-surgery. ➤



MaineGeneral Health DAY of HOPE



The Day of Hope, held on Saturday, Oct. 4 at the Augusta Civic Center, was a day filled with warmth, both from the sunny skies and the outpouring of support that filled the space. More than a thousand attendees gathered to demonstrate their support and rally around our cancer community.

This year's theme, "Your Walk is Our Walk" truly embodied the spirit of

unity and support that makes this event so special. After an inspiring opening ceremony and the Walk for Hope, hundreds of attendees took part in health screenings, sampled integrative therapies and visited the Education Pavilion. These activities offered an impact that goes beyond the day and wellness information beyond clinical treatments.

Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, volunteers and attendees, the Day of Hope raised over \$215,000 to support the expansion and programs of the Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care – far

exceeding the event's goal of raising \$200,000. These funds will help ensure that cancer patients and their families continue to have access to the best possible care, close to home.

The success of the Day of Hope is a powerful reminder that together we can overcome any challenge and that no one here faces their fight alone. Donations are still being accepted, and every contribution helps make a lasting impact on the lives of those affected by cancer. 🌿

**Thank you to our
presenting sponsor!**



To learn more, visit give.mainegeneral.org/hope



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to the many Honoring a Legacy, Shaping the Future Capital Campaign donors who have helped us shape the future of local cancer care so far! This list honors those who have made a capital gift or pledge as of June 30, 2025.

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