

# 33rd Annual Maine Geriatrics Conference

Where Policy Meets Practice



**Tuesday, May 19 –  
Wednesday, May 20, 2026**  
Harborside Hotel, Bar Harbor, Maine

## TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026

### 8 a.m. **Opening Session and Welcome**

Marilyn R. Gugliucci, M.A., Ph.D., Chair, Maine Geriatrics Conference Planning Committee and Gwendolyn Mahon, Ph.D., Provost, University of New England

### 8:30 a.m. **Breaking the Age Code: How Our Age Beliefs Determine How Long & Well You Live**

Becca Levy, Ph.D., Professor, Epidemiology and Psychology, Yale University

This presentation will explore the impact of age beliefs on health and longevity. The talk will delve into three crucial areas: the motivations behind writing the book *Breaking the Age Code: How your Age Beliefs Determine How Long & Well You Live*, key scientific highlights of Dr. Levy's research on ageism, and practical solutions for overcoming ageism. With evidence from her cross-cultural, experimental, and longitudinal studies, the presentation will demonstrate the extent to which ageism affects the health and well-being of older adults. Additionally, it will present findings that demonstrate how positive age beliefs can enhance health outcomes for older individuals. The aim is to inspire attendees to challenge ageism within their personal and professional spheres.

### 9:45 a.m. **BREAK: Exhibit Hall Open**

### 10:15 a.m. **WORKSHOPS SESSION A**

#### **A1. Fireside Chat with Becca Levy**

Becca Levy, Ph.D., Professor, Epidemiology and Psychology, Yale University

This Fireside Chat provides an opportunity for an open and dynamic discussion that may (1) expand the topic from the morning keynote, (2) include insights from Dr. Levy's work nationally and globally, and/or (3) explore areas Dr. Levy holds dear to support aging and older adults. Actively engage in the discussion or be an active listener; either way, attendees will find this chat inspiring.

### **A2. Driving Fitness, Health, and Aging: The Clinician's Role in Driver Licensing in Maine**

Tom Meuser, Ph.D., Research Analyst and Educator, Maine Bureaus of Motor Vehicles and Highway Safety

Driving is a complex and demanding instrumental activity of daily living. Aging-related changes in health and function can impact driving fitness and increase risks to personal-public safety. This presentation will detail the intersection of these factors with clinical care, family concerns, and driving licensure. The Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) relies on formal input from licensed clinicians to ensure that drivers meet basic standards. Participants will learn about the BMV's Functional Ability Profile (FAP) system and its application to more than a dozen health conditions. Case studies and resources will be reviewed.

### **A3. Aging Alone with AI Companions: Exploring Benefits, Risks, and the Human Connection**

Andy Chandler, C.R.I.S.C., C.I.S.M., Cybersecurity Professional and Educator

AI companions are increasingly marketed as tools to reduce loneliness and support independence. But what can they really offer to older adults aging alone – and where do they fall short? This interactive workshop explores the promises and pitfalls of AI for companionship, safety, and daily support. Through live demonstrations and guided audience interaction, participants will discover both the potential and the limits of AI tools. Attendees will leave with practical strategies to help older adults use AI safely and meaningfully, while reinforcing the irreplaceable value of authentic human connection.

**Repeated on Wednesday, May 20, in Session D3**

## TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026 (CONTINUED)

### A4. Maine's Public Health Response to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias: Progress, Partnerships, and Future Directions

*Marissa Romano, Maine CDC, and Jill Carney, Alzheimer's Association*

Alzheimer's disease is a serious public health issue due to its high prevalence, substantial costs, and significant impacts on Mainers. The Maine CDC's Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) Prevention and Support Program, in collaboration with partners across the state, developed the State Plan on ADRD, which guides collective efforts to improve Maine's response to dementia in six key areas: access to care, caregiver support, legal and safety, public awareness and education, research and data surveillance, and workforce development and training. This session will provide an overview of progress to date, explore priorities for future action, and identify opportunities for collaboration.

**11:30 a.m. LUNCH: Exhibit Hall Open Networking Lunch Tables**

**11:45 a.m. SPECIAL SESSIONS:**  
*Open to all attendees*

**Dirigo Geriatrics Society Luncheon Discussion**  
*Cliff M. Singer, M.D., Northern Light Health Care*  
We are facing both daunting challenges and exciting developments affecting dementia care in Maine. This informal lunchtime gathering will include a guided discussion on future priorities to build on the accomplishments of the HRSA-funded Maine Rural Dementia Care Project, and Maine CDC's State Alzheimer's Plan and BOLD projects.

**12:15 p.m. SPECIAL SESSIONS:**  
*Open to all attendees*  
**Learn the Electric Slide Line Dance or Just Dance!**  
*Marilyn R. Gugliucci, M.A. Ph.D., Dance Instructor*  
According to National Institute on Aging (NIA) research, the number one way to stave off dementia is to take dance lessons...  
We can do this with style and have a blast!

**12:45 p.m. Plenary Presentation**  
**Age-Friendly Everything: Building Connections Across the Age-Friendly Ecosystem**  
*Rani E Snyder, M.P.A., President, John A. Hartford Foundation*

This plenary session will explore how the Age-Friendly Health Systems movement serves as a foundation for creating an "Age-Friendly Everything" approach across care and community settings. Participants will learn how the 4Ms Framework (What Matters, Medication, Mentation and Mobility) can align with efforts in caregiving, public health, and policy to create a coordinated, person-centered Age-Friendly Ecosystem. The presentation will highlight strategies, partnerships, and lessons learned from the national movement to ensure that every older adult and caregiver receives care that supports their health, independence, and what matters most to them.

**1:45 p.m. Plenary Presentation**  
**There's No Expiration Date on Healing and Transformation: What We Can Learn from the Most Resilient Older Adults**

*Regina Koepp, Psy.D., A.B.P.P., Founder and CEO, Center for Mental Health and Aging*

Older adulthood is not only a time of loss and decline; it can also be a powerful season of healing and transformation. In this presentation, Dr. Koepp shares inspiring stories and research on post-traumatic growth in later life. She highlights what we can learn from resilient older adults who have overcome adversity, and how their lessons can guide individuals, families, and communities to see aging as a period of continued possibility.

**2:45 p.m. BREAK: Dessert and Exhibit Hall Open**

## TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026 (CONTINUED)

### 3:15 p.m. WORKSHOPS SESSION B

#### B1. Fireside Chat with Rani Snyder

Rani E Snyder, M.P.A., President,  
John A. Hartford Foundation

This Fireside Chat offers an excellent opportunity for open discussion on the topic from the plenary address: picking up on points about the work the John A. Hartford Foundation is leading and its successes with age-friendly health care.

This session allows for a deeper dive into topics of interest, sharing thoughts, reactions, questions, and wonderments to this chat. This chat may take many directions, depending on the area the participants and speakers want to explore!

#### B2. Time to Prognosis: An Approach to Providing Patient (Person)-Centered Care

Sarah Hallen, M.D., Assistant Designated Institutional Officer, MaineHealth, Maine Medical Center

Learn, refresh skills, or understand how health care professionals can use prognosis and the concept of "time to benefit" to guide the development of older adult patient (person)-centered care plans. Participants will learn how to use common prognostic tools and how to apply effective communication strategies to share prognostic estimates with patients.

Being equipped with tools or understanding how to integrate prognosis into clinical conversations and treatment planning will aid in providing meaningful and personalized care plans.

**Repeated on Wednesday, May 20, in Session C4**

#### B3. Fireside Chat with Dr. Regina Koepp

Regina Koepp, Psy.D., A.B.P.P., Founder and CEO, Center for Mental Health and Aging

In this Fireside Chat, attendees can dive deep into health and transformation or other aging-associated topics with Dr. Koepp. She will engage audience members in a dynamic discussion.

Expect a spirited and informative dialogue that is sure to be provocative and informative.

#### B4. Age-Positivity in Health and Health care: A Prevention Approach

Kimberly I. Snow, M.H.S.A., Senior Research Associate; Catherine Cutler Institute, Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine; and Kathryn Vezina, R.N., M.S.N., J.D., Equity and Healthy Aging Director, Maine Council on Aging

Ageism has infected our society deeply and pervasively with negative consequences that are greater than many known carcinogens. Health care is not immune, but a shift in perspective and well-designed action steps can be transformative. How we focus and frame health messaging can shift unproductive views to those that are more positive and health-affirming — both for community members and those working in health. This session will offer background, recommendations, and opportunities to explore primary and secondary prevention strategies to lead society toward making our health span match our growing life span and all of us thrive as we grow into older age.

## WEDNESDAY MAY 20, 2026

8 a.m.

#### Welcome and Announcements

Marilyn R. Gugliucci, M.A., Ph.D., Chair, Maine Geriatrics Conference Planning Committee

8:15 a.m.

#### Dr. Dennis McCullough Memorial Lecture — Healthy Brain Aging: Advancements in Education on Addiction: Finding Hope and Healing in Recovery

Joseph Skrajewski, M.A., M.F.T.I., Executive Director, Medical and Professional Education, Hazelton Betty Ford Foundation

An exploration of groundbreaking strategies on addiction education within health care settings will be put forth revealing effective models and techniques that have empowered countless professionals to advocate for hope and healing in the context of treatment and recovery.

Drawing from extensive professional experience as well as a personal journey that includes transitioning from a career on Wall Street and navigating the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy, Joseph offers a unique perspective on addiction education. Dive into the nuances of addiction, dispel misconceptions, and equip yourself with the knowledge and compassion to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those (that includes older adults) affected by addiction.

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026 (CONTINUED)

**9:15 a.m. Advancing Policy for Older Mainers: Maine State DHHS/OADS Updates**  
*Elizabeth (Betsy) Hopkins, Director of OADS, Office of Aging and Disability Services, Maine*  
In this presentation, Director Hopkins will discuss the priority placed by the Mills Administration on aging policy, the Cabinet on Aging work, and the Department of Health and Human Services' plans to improve health and long-term services and supports for older Mainers.

**10 a.m. BREAK: Exhibit Hall Open**

**10:30 a.m. WORKSHOPS SESSION C**  
**C1. Fireside Chat: Diving Deeper into Substance Use Disorders and Related Topics**  
*Joseph Skrajewski, M.A., M.F.T.I., Executive Director, Medical and Professional Education, Hazelton Betty Ford Foundation*  
This Fireside Chat provides an opportunity for attendees to engage and discuss topics presented by Joseph Skrajewski during the McCullough lecture related to substance use disorders (SUD) and areas of interest within the field of addiction and addiction medicine. Conversation expands on the plenary content, offering a dynamic interaction between the audience and Joseph to augment understanding, learning, and breadth of knowledge on this topic.

**C2. Serious Illness Conversations in Geriatrics: Getting to What Matters Most**  
*Lisa Smith, D.O., Maine General Medical Center and Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center*  
How do we help older adults to express what matters most to them as health changes? This interactive workshop explores practical approaches to serious illness conversations and advance care planning in geriatrics. Through an engaging values-based card activity, participants will experience firsthand how preferences shift over time, and how clinicians and caregivers can support dignity, resilience, and person-centered care in the face of uncertainty.

**C3. Positive Approach to Care (PAC)®: Dementia Recognition and Care Techniques**  
*Jordan Servetas, B.S.N., R.N., Clinical Educator, PAC Certified Trainer, St. Joseph Hospital*

The mission of dementia care specialist Teepa Snow and the Positive Approach to Care (PAC)® organization is to radically transform the experience of dementia into a more positive dementia care culture; Teepa believes that by offering both a theory to help understand what is happening to the brain, and practical techniques, you cannot just survive, but thrive as a care partner. This workshop will focus on understanding key differences between "normal" and "not normal" aging in relation to various cognitive functions, and introduce two evidence-based care partnering techniques — Physical Approach™ (PPA) and Hand Under Hand™ (HUh).

**C4. An Approach to Providing Patient (Person)-Centered Care**

*Sarah Hallen, M.D., Assistant Designated Institutional Officer, MaineHealth, Maine Medical Center, Geriatrics*

Learn, refresh skills, or understand how health care professionals can use prognosis and the concept of "time to benefit" to guide the development of older adult patient (person-centered) care plans. Participants will learn how to use common prognostic tools and how to apply effective communication strategies to share prognostic estimates with patients. Being equipped with tools or understanding how to integrate prognosis into clinical conversations and treatment planning will aid in providing meaningful and personalized care plans.

**Repeat of session B2**

**11:45 a.m. LUNCH: Exhibit Hall Open Networking Lunch Tables**

**11:45 a.m. SPECIAL SESSIONS: Open to all attendees**  
**Maine Arts Commission**

The Maine Arts Commission is located in the homeland of the Wabanaki, the People of the Dawn. We recognize and honor the Abenaki, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot nations and all of the Native communities who have lived here for hundreds of generations in what is known today as Maine.

# WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026 (CONTINUED)

1 p.m.

## WORKSHOPS SESSION D

### D1. Aging Policy Year in Review

*Jess Maurer, Esq./J.D., Executive Director, Maine Council on Aging; Jess Fay, Policy and Advocacy Director, Maine Council on Aging*

This fast-paced session will look at state and federal actions, policy changes, and legislation enactments that impact older people. From Maine initiatives to address hunger, climate, housing, and transportation to the elimination of federal agencies and benefits, this session will explore the changing policy landscape in Maine as it relates to older people and what we can all do to address emerging challenges. The session will take a deep look at efforts to address Maine's growing care gap and workforce shortage.

### D2. The 3Ds in Geriatrics: Delirium, Dementia, and Depression – Diagnosis, Management, and Prevention

*Rebecca Spear, D.O., Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency*

This 75-minute interactive session explores the "3Ds" in geriatrics – Delirium, Dementia, and Depression. Participants will learn to differentiate these conditions, apply screening tools, and implement evidence-based management strategies. Through case discussions and interdisciplinary small group work, the session emphasizes practical approaches for screening, diagnosis, and prevention. Attendees will leave with actionable tips and resources to improve care for older adults experiencing cognitive or mood changes.

### D3. Aging Alone with AI Companions: Exploring Benefits, Risks, and the Human Connection

*Andy Chandler, C.R.I.S.C., C.I.S.M., Cybersecurity Professional and Educator*

AI companions are increasingly marketed as tools to reduce loneliness and support independence. But what can they really offer to older adults aging alone – and where do they fall short? This interactive workshop explores the promises and pitfalls of AI for companionship, safety, and daily support. Through live demonstrations and guided audience interaction, participants will discover both the potential and the limits of AI tools. Attendees will leave with practical strategies to help older adults use AI safely and meaningfully, while reinforcing the irreplaceable value of authentic human connection.

**Repeat of session A3**

### D4. Improving Health Care for Older LGBTQ+ Adults: Community-Informed, Case-Based Discussions

*Toby Nicholson, M.D., Sc.M., A.A.H.I.V.S.*

*Izzy Ostrowski, Director of Network for Older Adults and Community Engagement, Equality Maine*

This session explores the unique experiences of older LGBTQ+ adults and the implications for their health care. A brief didactic will review how the LGBTQ+ rights movement in the United States shapes health care engagement today, followed by small-group discussions using community-identified priorities and case examples to frame conversations. Participants will compare social networks available to LGBTQ+ older adults with those typically assumed in aging care and examine how current sociopolitical dynamics affect well-being. Attendees will leave with practical insights to improve equity, trust, and support for LGBTQ+ patients in clinical settings.

**2:15 p.m. BREAK: Dessert and Exhibit Hall Open**

### 2:30 p.m. CLOSING ATTENDEE FORUM

#### Aging in Maine: Action Is Key to Address Unique Challenges and Opportunities

*Noël Bonam, B.Sc., M.P.M., Maine State Director, AARP; Megan Walton, M.B.A., President and CEO, Southern Maine Agency on Aging; Betsy Sawyer Manter, L.M.S.W., President and CEO, SeniorsPlus*

Maine is the oldest state in the nation (both in terms of the median age and number of older adults). The closing forum offers a dynamic atmosphere for information sharing and action. Based on the Maine Sunday Telegram's special edition published October 19, 2025, key topics included retirement finances, navigating health care challenges, making difficult life decisions, connecting with community resources, and legal planning. The closing forum will provide foundational insights from experts in the field and then inspire the attendees to think proactively, focusing on community and connection to identify unique partnerships and ways to actively engage in making Maine THE place to age.

## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026 (CONTINUED)**

### **3:25 p.m. 33rd Maine Geriatrics Conference Wrap-up... Passing the "Key" to the Conference**

Mary DeSilva, Sc.D., M.S., M.S.F.S., Director of UNE Center for Healthy Aging, will become the chair for the 34th Maine Geriatrics Conference. Marilyn R. Gugliucci is stepping down after 33 years of chairing this conference (including two years during COVID). Marilyn will continue full time at UNE COM, and is the Chair of the Gerontological Society of America Board of Directors working with colleagues nationally and internationally.