

Congratulations/Recognition

To **Rebecca Spear DO**, who was recognized as a 2025 Trailblazing Advocate by the Maine Council on Aging for sustained leadership in advocating for better access and care for older Mainers. To **Tristan Reynolds DO** and **John Diefenderfer DO**, who were promoted within the UNECOM non-tenured affiliate clinical faculty track at the rank of Clinical Associate Professor of Family Medicine. To **Garrett Fontaine MD**, for speaking out



against hatred at the October “In Maine Love is Louder” rally sponsored by the Greater Augusta Unity Committee. To **Armand Auger MD**, who co-presented a talk with long-time colleague and

mentor Dr. G. Richard Polkinghorn at MaineGeneral’s “Day of Hope” on the importance of coordination of care between primary care physicians and oncologists and answered questions from patients and families. To **John Diefenderfer DO** for running the New York City marathon as a Parkinson’s Champion, raising nearly \$5000 to fight Parkinson’s in honor of his mother-in-law.



NNE Faculty & Chief Development Day 2025

On Oct 14th, 2025 MDFMR faculty joined residency programs across Northern New England for the annual NNE Development Day. Plenary speaker Karim Hanna MD presented “AI in Medical Education.” Breakout sessions included “Assessing Intern Competency,” co-facilitated by **Kate Hoffmann DO** and Laura Beth Chamberlain DO from UVM, and “Cognitive Bias in Evaluation,” co-facilitated by **Amy Trelease-Bell MD** and Derek Lee DO from Tufts. Thank you to our MDFMR faculty attendees for joining the sessions and supporting continued collaboration across the region.

Spotlight on Patient & Family Advisory Councils

In fall of 2024, we reconvened Patient & Family Advisory Councils at our MDPF and FMI clinics. In years past, we had similar councils to help us solicit feedback and provide education to a group of our patients, and the ACGME now requires that we have an advisory committee at each family medicine practice at which residents are based. We have been fortunate to engage 6-8 patients at each site, and each council meets in person four times a year. To date, we have mainly focused on educating our patient leaders on the residency program, including our history, medical training offered, patient demographics in our clinics, recruitment processes, and the life of the family medicine resident over their three years at MDFMR. We are proactively sharing data on patient experience and quality improvement with the hope of gaining crucial feedback from them to help us improve in all areas of patient care. Over time, we will find new ways to engage the committees to help us in many aspects of our clinical care and educational efforts. If you know of any FMI or MDPF patients who might have interest in joining us, please contact the committee chair, **Dr. Andy Dionne**.



MERGE Collaborative News

FM residents are now able to access a unique new training opportunity through MERGE. The **rural obstetric training intensive** leverages the MERGE Collaborative’s network of rural obstetric physicians to offer family medicine and OB/Gyn residents a 4-6 week, multi-site, longitudinal elective experience specifically designed to support a rural population. The innovative curriculum was informed by Maine women who experience obstetric care in rural settings as well as physicians practicing in rural settings. More information available here: [Rural Obstetrics Video](#) & on the [MERGE website](#).

Recent Events

FM Resident Retreat: Residents took a ferry to North Haven on Sept 23 to spend the day together at Turner Farm for



their annual fall retreat. They toured the farm, participated in team-building activities planned by the Chiefs, and shared a meal.

Share the Road with Carol: For the past 10 years, members of MDFMR and the central Maine community



have ridden their bikes to share the road in honor of MDFMR alum Carol Eckert MD, who was struck and killed while riding her bike home from work. Cyclists took to the

road this year on Sept 28 to remember Dr. Eckert and enjoy the beautiful rolling hills of central Maine. Big thanks to [Barbara Moss DO](#) and [Brianna Petrone MD](#) for organizing the event.

Foraging for Mushrooms: A group gathered in Mount Vernon on Sept 27 to share mycelium magic during an annual foraging and mushroom extravaganza organized by [Mark Sutherland DO](#).



Yoga & Osteopathy Conference: [Barbara Moss DO](#) led another successful yoga & osteopathy conference at the



Alfond Center for Health in late October. The 16-credit CME program is designed to investigate the intersection between osteopathy and yoga

and see how the practice of yoga can inform the clinical manipulative practice.

Halloween: The sports medicine fellows observed Halloween in their sports practice as two halves of an avocado,



while the FMI practice celebrated Halloween with much enthusiasm.



MGMC Medical Staff Elections

MDFMR will be well represented on MaineGeneral's Medical Executive Committee come January. ONMM & FM faculty [John Diefenderfer DO](#) was elected to a two-year term as physician at-large. In this role he will sit on the MaineGeneral Health Board of Directors in addition to participating in monthly Medical Executive Committee meetings. MDFMR alum (class of 2010) [Deirdre Heersink DO](#) was elected to the two-year position of president of the medical staff, while alum (class of 2013) [Jason Brown MD](#) was elected to serve as vice president which is a president elect position, with 2 years as VP followed by 2 years as president.

Lead Screening for Maine Children

With MaineGeneral's support, MDFMR partnered with the Maine CDC Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program on a pilot to utilize LeadCare II blood lead analyzers at MDFP and FMI. The goal of having access to these instruments is to increase timely identification, reporting, and management of elevated lead blood levels in Maine's pediatric population. At the end of the project, there will be an evaluation of the impact of point-of-care blood lead testing on testing rates and identification of lead poisoning in children, particularly among those on MaineCare.

New! MDFMR Bulletin Board Channel in Teams

A new Teams channel, "MDFMR Bulletin Board," has been created, and everyone has access to view and edit. It contains a calendar section where everyone can share community events & activities, as well as a "posts" section that functions as a community bulletin board. The Wellness Committee will be monitoring the channel. Contact [Dr. Mark Sutherland](#) with questions.

Save the Date!

Dec 2, 2025: MDFMR community dinner, *ACH*

Dec 30, 2025: PALS course, *ACH*

Dec 31, 2025: ALSO course, *ACH*

Jan 20 & Feb 3, 2026: FM candidate group visits with dinner the preceding evenings, *Waterville & Augusta*

March 19-21, 2026: MAFP Annual Update, *Samoset Resort, Rockport ME*

Have news to share? Contact Kate Hoffmann!