



ChallengeME MONTHLY MINUTE

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Monthly topic:

Cancer Awareness

What is cancer?

Cancer is a group of more than 100 related but separate diseases caused by an uncontrolled division of abnormal cells in a part of the body.

What are the different types of cancer?

Cancer is named for where in the body it begins. Cancer can begin in the skin (**carcinoma**), bone, cartilage, fat, muscle, blood vessels (**sarcoma**), blood-forming tissues such as bone marrow (**leukemia**), cells in the immune system (**lymphoma and myeloma**), or in the tissues of the brain and spinal cord (**central nervous system cancer**).

What causes cancer?

Cancer can be caused by your actions, such as tobacco use or dietary choices, or too much exposure to ultraviolet light, chemicals, or certain substances. The risk of developing certain types of cancer (such as breast cancer) might also be inherited.

What are the signs of cancer?

Some people experience early signs, such as unexplainable fatigue, weight changes, or visible tumors/growths. Others might have no early symptoms. Cancer can be discovered through routine physical exams, examination of a lump/growth, lab testing, screening tests (Pap test, mammogram, etc.) or through x-rays and digital imaging. It is important to get regular checkups. Early detection can be lifesaving.

If cancer is suspected, your health care provider will schedule tests to confirm. These could include a biopsy, blood or urine test, or imaging studies.

What do our benefits cover?

Lab work and imaging services provided by in-network independent facilities are covered at 100%. This includes preventive and diagnostic services.

Learn more at cancer.gov

Breast Cancer Testimonial

One Co-Worker's Story

My journey began in May of 2017 when I found a lump in my breast. To this day, I do not know how I found the lump because I was never one to do the self-examinations that are always encouraged, but I found it. I called my doctor's office and asked for a referral for my annual mammogram that was a few months overdue.

On May 23rd, I had my mammogram and was immediately sent to have an ultrasound where it was confirmed that I had three spots of concern. On May 26th, I had biopsies taken of the three spots. On June 5th, I received the devastating call from my primary care doctor confirming that I had breast cancer. My first thought was: how was I going to tell my family? I reached out to my sister who met me at my parents to break the news to them.

My cancer was ductal, invasive, hormone negative, and HER2-positive, resulting in a long treatment protocol of three rounds of chemo/immune therapy, 25 radiation treatments and a double mastectomy. Round two of the harsh chemo was the worst of all my treatments. Treatments were once every two weeks for 4 treatments/8 weeks. I was told week two would be rough and to not overdo it. I learned that just doing some everyday things, like taking a shower, can be overdoing it.

I started treatments on July 19, 2017, and I will finish my treatments on October 31, 2018. I have my follow up surgery on December 20, 2018.

Through this all, having the support of my family, friends, co-workers and community has helped me stay positive and I know that this could have been worse. I am in remission and want to thank everyone who has been there for me during this journey. Your support has been greatly appreciated.

-Barbie-Jo

"You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

-Christopher Robin, Winnie the Pooh

MSECCA's 38th Year!

The 2018 Maine State Employees Combined Charitable Campaign has officially begun!

The MSECCA goal this year is set at **\$505,000**. MaineDOT's goal is **\$47,900** (last year MaineDOT employees donated a total of **\$53,846!**).

Donate \$1, \$2, \$4, \$5, \$10, or more biweekly and help provide meals for the elderly, vaccinations for shelter animals, services for people with Alzheimer's, clothing for homeless American children, help for victims of sexual assault, hospital beds and oral morphine for hospice patients, and much more!

Learn more and donate today at maine.gov/msecca

If EVERYONE gives a little, it will help A LOT.



This Month

- 1-30th:** Marathon in a Month
Way 2 GO MAINE Challenge
- 1-7th:** Fryeburg Fair
- 5-7th:** Freeport Fall Festival
- 5-8th:** Damariscotta Pumpkin Festival
- 6th:** Mountain Top Yoga, Bradbury Mtn.
- 6-8th:** Fall Foliage Festival, Boothbay
- 13th:** Maine Applecycle, Alfred
- 13th:** Walk for Hope, Augusta
- 20th:** The Great Pumpkin Hunt, Boothbay

Marathon in a Month

Can you complete 26.2 miles of walking or running by Halloween? Lace up those shoes and get ready to participate in the **Marathon in a Month!** The challenge is to complete 26.2 (marathon), 50 (ultra-marathon), or 100 (ultra-ultra-marathon) miles between October 1st and 31st!

Sign up at: events.healthcode.org/marathon2018



Coming Up November: Stress, Time Management, Holiday Eating

*Comments, questions, ideas, or submissions?
Please email: kara.a.aguilar@maine.gov*