

## Healthy Hancock Community Description

Healthy Hancock is a coalition of five (5) coalitions serving all of Hancock County as well as some of Waldo County\*. The towns included in our service areas are: Gouldsboro, Sorrento, Sullivan, Steuben, Winter Harbor, Ellsworth, Aurora, Hancock, Dedham, Otis, Osborne, Mariaville, Franklin, Amherst, Waltham, Eastbrook, Great Pond, Bucksport, Orland, Verona Island, Prospect\*, Trenton, Lamoine, Bar Harbor, Mount Desert, Swan's Island, Southwest Harbor, Tremont, Frenchboro, Cranberry Island, Blue Hill, Sedgwick, Brooklin, Castine, Penobscot, Surry, Deer Isle, and Stonington.

Hancock County can be broken down into five regions: (1) Greater Ellsworth, (2) Mount Desert Island (MDI), (3) Bucksport, (4) Blue Hill Peninsula, and (5) the Schoodic Region. Each region has a definite center that includes: (1) Ellsworth, (2) Bar Harbor, (3) Bucksport, (4) Blue Hill, and (5) Gouldsboro. The total population of Hancock County is 51,791 (U.S. Census, 2000). According to the U.S. Census 2000, Ellsworth's population is 6,456, Bar Harbor's population is 4,820, Bucksport's population is 4,908, Blue Hill's population is 2,390, and Gouldsboro's population is 1,941; for a total population between the five towns of 20,515, or about 40% of Hancock County's total population.

Hancock County boasts wonderful assets that provide opportunities for residents to enjoy fishing, boating, kayaking, snow shoeing, and other outdoor activities. As a rural county, social supports exist largely through local organizations and associations. Schools, churches, local granges, chambers of commerce, and service organizations provide opportunities for residents to participate in community affairs. Culture and entertainment are provided by local theaters; The Grand Auditorium in Ellsworth, and seasonal events such as Summer Theatre, the Blue Hill Fair, and Schoodic Arts for All.

Hancock County is facing very uneven growth, with the coastal communities having a relatively slow rate of year-round population while inland communities grew rapidly. For example, the Mount Desert Island towns had a 7 percent population increase between 1990 and 2000 compared to a 50 percent increase for the same time period for Mariaville. Overall, the county's year-round population increased by about 50 percent between 1970 and 2000 compared to a 28 percent increase for the state as a whole.

The median household income in Hancock County is only \$35,811, while the median household income in the state of Maine is \$37,240. Only 34.4% of Hancock County residents hold a high school diploma, while 33.9% have attained an associates degree or higher. Although the majority of the population have at least a high school diploma, high wage positions are difficult to find as reflected by the low median household income. Hancock County (80%) significantly lags behind Maine (87%) and the US (89%) in the percent of population covered by health care insurance. Factors contributing to low coverage include seasonality of jobs, a large share of small employers and high rates of self employment. (Source: Public Health Resource Group Eastern Maine Healthcare Community Needs Assessment, 2002)

Healthy Hancock's service area has an aging population. The median age in Hancock County increased from 35.8 in 1990 to 40.7 in 2000. This can be attributed to more younger residents leaving the area for better paying jobs, people returning to the area to retire, or families having fewer children or no children at all.