

MERGE News

The Quarterly Newsletter for the MERGE Collaborative



INTRODUCING THE MERGE COLLABORATIVE

Welcome to our first issue of MERGE News, the quarterly newsletter for the newly created MERGE Collaborative. In 2022 MaineHealth received \$950,000 from the State of Maine to create the Maine GME Rural Education (MERGE) Collaborative with Northern Light Health, Central Maine Medical Center, and Maine-Dartmouth Family Residency program at Maine General Hospital. MERGE is a first-of-its-kind opportunity in Maine to develop new rural residency rotations at hospitals and community-based healthcare centers across the state with a focus on giving residents experience caring for Maine's diverse socio-economic, racial, and regional populations.

In addition to supporting residents and practitioners across the state, the MERGE Collaborative also will create a 'Rural Education Leaders Academy' for rural preceptors, an open-access learning platform for all interprofessional rural practitioners, and internship opportunities for current Maine-based medical students.

We welcome you to explore all the new MERGE opportunities showcased in this newsletter as well as at our website, www.mergecollaborative.org. The entire MERGE team looks forward to collaborating with all of our partners across the state to improve health outcomes through outstanding graduate medical education.

Newsletter Highlights

Introducing the MERGE Collaborative

Staying Connected

Elective Rotation
Spotlight: Rural Family
Medicine in Norway, ME

A Message from Dr. Kalli
Varaklis

New MERGE Rotations

Family Medicine in
Norway, ME

Addiction Medicine in
Norway, ME

Emergency Medicine in
Farmington, ME





STAYING CONNECTED

There are many ways to connect with the MERGE Collaborative. For all of the up-to-date elective offerings, please see our website at www.mergecollaborative.org. If social media is your preferred tool, you can find us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#)! The MERGE Collaborative will stay up to date on trends in rural medicine and opportunities for GME learning across the state.

ELECTIVE ROTATION SPOTLIGHT: RURAL FAMILY MEDICINE IN NORWAY, ME

With a population of just over 5,000, Norway sits in western Maine's foothills and includes the beautiful Penesseewassee Lake. Stephens Memorial Hospital serves this rural community as a part of Western Maine Health. The MERGE Collaborative is proud to welcome Dr. Laura Larosa (pictured right) from Western Maine Primary Care as one of our first MERGE Rural Elective attending physicians in Family Medicine.

Dr. LaRosa welcomes Family Medicine residents across Maine to join her for a 4-week elective. Residents should be PGY2 or above. During this rotation, residents will identify the impact of chronic conditions on patients in a rural setting, identify complex barriers to effective communication, identify barriers to healthcare access, and more. Anyone interested in this opportunity can contact MERGE through our website here.



A Message from Dr. Kalli Varaklis, PI MERGE Grant, DIO MMC-MaineHealth

It is no secret that health disparities between urban and rural settings impact states around the country and Maine is no exception. One factor is access to care and having enough trained physicians in our rural spaces to meet the needs of patients. Research shows that doctors are more likely to practice where they are trained.

With this in mind, MERGE provides training opportunities in Maine's rural places. We hope that by developing these relationships between GME learners and rural practitioners we will open new opportunities for the next generation of practicing physicians. We welcome you to the MERGE Collaborative and look forward to supporting your interest in rural medicine.