



Newsletter Highlights

[Elective Rotation Spotlight: Ob/Gyn in Norway, ME](#)

[Maine Rural Healthcare Education Grand Rounds](#)

[A Message from David McLellan, MERGE Program Manager](#)

DESTINATION: MAINE

Maine is a destination for many. Some travel for the scenic coastlines. Others for the quiet countryside. Now, thanks to the MERGE Collaborative, we can add GME learners to the list of those who travel to Maine to experience something wonderful.

The first MERGE rotation was established one year ago in July of 2023. Since then, 39 rotations have been completed or signed up for in the coming months. Most participating residents are from within the state from one of our four ACGME sponsoring institutions. Starting this July, out-of-state learners are experiencing MERGE rotations as well. These high-quality rural GME experiences have caught the eye of programs from around the country. MERGE partners will host learners from New England states such as Vermont, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island in the coming months. Some residents will come from even farther away from New York City and Western Michigan programs.

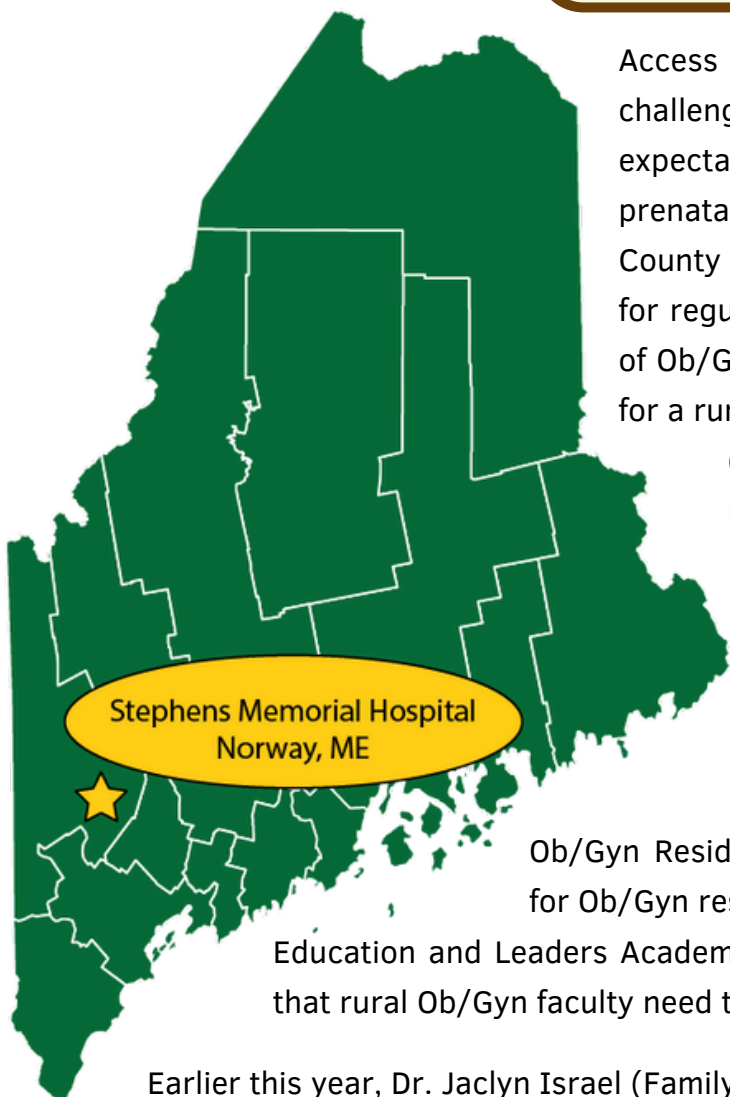
These opportunities were selected by the learners and their advisors after visiting our MERGE Website and reviewing the catalog of MERGE Elective opportunities. Some have chosen Maine for their elective time because they have family in the state. Others have a passion for rural medicine and have seen how much our state offers. No matter their motivation, we are thrilled to welcome these new physicians into our communities.



MERGE Rotation Specialties

- Family Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Emergency Medicine
- Psychiatry
- Addiction Medicine
- Carceral Medicine
- Geriatrics/Hospice
- OB/GYN
- Pediatrics
- Cardiology
- General Surgery
- Vascular Surgery
- Anesthesiology

SPOTLIGHT: OB/GYN IN NORWAY, ME



Access to obstetric care is one of the greatest healthcare challenges facing rural Maine. We hear stories every day of expectant mothers driving hours in each direction to receive prenatal care. Just last month we learned of an Aroostook County resident requiring specialty care and flying to Boston for regular appointments. It is critical that our next generation of Ob/Gyn physicians are prepared for the challenges of caring for a rural population. For this reason, MERGE is thrilled to offer Ob/Gyn rotations in rural Maine. One such offering is hosted by Dr. Jeannette Andrews at Stephens Memorial Hospital in Norway, ME.

Dr. Andrews completed her Ob/Gyn training in Washington D.C. at the Uniformed Services Residency in Ob/Gyn. During her time at Stephens Memorial, Dr. Andrews has worked with the Maine Medical Center

Ob/Gyn Residency Program to propose a “Rural Ob Concentration” for Ob/Gyn residents. Dr. Andrews is a member of the MERGE Rural Education and Leaders Academy where her scholarly project defines the unique skills that rural Ob/Gyn faculty need to teach residents in rural procedures.

Earlier this year, Dr. Jaclyn Israel (Family Medicine PGY3) from Central Maine Medical Center had the opportunity to participate in this rural elective. Speaking of her time in Norway, Dr. Israel said, “This was the epitome of what a rural OBGYN experience should be for learners. In just two weeks, I was able to experience continuity of care across the outpatient and inpatient settings, gain experience in routine pre-/perinatal care, and navigate significant clinical complications. Beyond that, working 1-on-1 with Dr. Andrews was a great learning experience and she immediately made me feel like part of the team.” Dr. Israel plans to continue her work in Rural Maine this September in her new position at Reddington Fairview General Hospital in Skowhegan.



Pennesseewassee Lake, Norway, ME

Those interested in this rotation can reach out to MERGE Program Manager David McLellan at david.mclellan@mainehealth.org

UPCOMING MAINE RURAL HEALTHCARE EDUCATION GRAND ROUNDS

- July 12th, 12:00 PM, Recognizing & Supporting Neurodivergent Traits in Medical Learners presented by Dr. Rebecca Stetzer of Albany Medical College
- August 9th, 12:00 PM, Navigating Difficult Feedback Conversations with Learners presented by Dr. Tom Gearan from Maine Medical Center
- September 13th, 12:00 PM, Wellness and Mindfulness to Increase Retention and Reduce Burnout presented by Kelley Strout, PhD, RN from the University of Maine School of Nursing

All presentations are virtual and accessible from http://bit.ly/Maine_Rural_Healthcare_Education

More information about our Grand Rounds speakers can be found on our website at:

<https://mergecollaborative.org/maine-rural-healthcare-education-grand-rounds/>



Grand Rounds presenters
Rebecca Stetzer, MD (Top Left),
Tom Gearan, MD (Top Right), and
Kelley Strout, PhD, RN (Bottom Right)

A Message from David McLellan, MBA – MERGE Collaborative Program Manager



I have the unique experience of being the only member of our Collaborative who is involved in a full-time capacity. “Unique” is the word that always comes to mind in our work because each residency program we engage with has its own culture or personality. This is true of our MERGE elective sites as

well. Each community they represent throughout rural Maine is unique and offers special learning opportunities that can’t be found elsewhere. And let’s not forget the learners that sign up for the electives. They each bring their own background, experience and ambition. The business challenge we face is bringing all of this “uniqueness” into one cohesive operation that gets the right

learner to the right place at the right time. This challenge is not unique to Maine, but the work our Collaborative has done to bring the players together is novel and has caught the eye of programs around the country. Not only have they started to send their learners, but leadership is calling to learn more about how we’ve solved the challenge of “uniqueness.” I thank all of our special partners that have come together to support GME learners to provide care for rural Maine.