Fall 2026 Quarterly Pulse Survey Summary

The Alignment Pulse Survey results from this quarter reveal an escalation in concerns about upcoming MaineCare policy shifts and barriers to accessing health and mental health care. "New Mainers" and unhoused residents continue to bear the heaviest health disparities. Cross-sector collaboration remains rated as moderate. ***Disclaimer:*** *This survey had a total of **29 respondents**, who represent a small subsection of both the Alignment network and Greater Portland community. This summary is not a holistic representation of priorities, barriers, or resources experienced in Greater Portland. Pulse survey results may differ from quarter to quarter.*

At a Glance:

- The Biggest Strains on the Community were identified as **Access to Basic Needs & Health-Related Social Needs** (n=11) and **Access to Health & Behavioral Health Services** (n=10).
- **Collaboration Rating**: The average effectiveness of cross-sector collaboration is approximately **3.1 out of 5**.

Cited Barriers (n=29 respondents):

Most frequently cited barriers:

- **MaineCare Policy Changes & Benefit Loss** (n=8): Looming loss of coverage due to policy changes (especially for immigrant communities), lack of clear guidance, long wait times for MaineCare application processing.
- **Healthcare & Mental Health Access** (n=8): Long wait lists for providers and services, lack of available primary care and mental health providers
- **Housing Instability & Rental Affordability** (n=7): Lack of affordable housing, eligibility restrictions on rental assistance programs
- **Immigration Enforcement & Safety Concerns** (n=4): Increased immigration enforcement in public spaces

Other cited barriers include **transportation access** and **rising costs of basic needs.**

Those Experiencing Heaviest Health Disparities in Greater Portland (n=26 respondents):

- 53% of respondents identified **Immigrants, New Mainers, & Asylum Seekers** as the group experiencing the heaviest disparities. **Low-Income, ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)** individuals were also noted to experience significant barriers.
- Other vulnerable populations identified include **Unhoused Populations, Older People, People with Disabilities, New Mothers.**

★ **Important to note:** Many responses mentioned that fear of ICE and lack of health insurance and other benefits are primary barriers to access for populations experiencing the heaviest disparities.

Opportunities for Coordination / Ad Hoc (n=8 respondents):

- Most responses fell into two themes: **Cross-Organizational Referral Mapping**, and **Benefits Disruption Navigation**. Suggestions included convening regional partners to streamline patient navigation and clarify roles, establishing best practices for referring individuals who lose MaineCare coverage, and leveraging CHWs to bridge provider-client communication.

Community Successes & Resources to Amplify:

Various organizations offered or suggested: Amplifying immigrant-serving organizations, an upcoming CHW leadership series, listening sessions with affected populations, and a Disability Rights Maine training on making services more inclusive.