



Islesboro Energy Hub & Community Energy Coordinator are new resources for the island

Earlier this year, Islesboro was one of the lucky winners of the first round of the Department of Energy’s “Energizing Rural Communities” prize. The \$100k prize is a capacity building and planning grant, providing small towns like Islesboro the time, personnel support, and technical assistance to develop funding strategies and plans for clean energy projects with contractors, community organizations, and residents.

By bringing Kizzi Barton onto our team to lead community outreach, we are fulfilling a key objective of Islesboro’s Prize plan. As the Energy Coordinator, she will be working with businesses, residents, and community organizations to better understand our needs and barriers to making energy upgrades. Through the “Islesboro Energy Hub” (islesboroenergy.org), we will gradually build our offerings of guidance, access to funding, and group upgrades for heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, insulation, and solar. The Energy Hub and Coordinator are funded by the Rural Energy Prize and facilitated by the Islesboro Energy Committee.

We are now organizing free Home Energy Assessments this winter, as our first community program. Contact Kizzi Barton to arrange a visit by an energy assessment professional. These evaluations will help us find additional assistance for island homes. Your participation will also help Islesboro be competitive in the second round of the Rural Energy Prize, which will award \$200k seed funding for clean energy projects. Residents will have no obligations to purchase services after the assessment.

The longer-term Prize goals look to greater community involvement in planning for both personal and island-wide resilience and improvements to our energy infrastructure. In the meantime, we encourage you to reach out to Kizzi with questions regarding potential energy upgrades for your home, business, or organization at her cell (207-505-0617) or email (kizzi@islesboroenergy.org).

Submitted by Cressica Brazier and Kizzi Barton

Islesboro Health Center institutes electronic medical records.

Beth O’Mara, FNP-BC reports that the IHC is beginning the process of moving from paper charts to electronic records. With the purchase of the Azalea Health software (a platform that offers “cloud-based electronic health record (EHR) and revenue cycle management solutions”), the Islesboro Health Center is getting up to speed.

An electronic health record is the systematized collection of patient information in a digital format which can be shared across different health care settings, much like Google drive where anyone who has been granted access can work with the same document. Records can include a patient’s medical history, diagnoses, medications, immunization dates, radiology images, lab results, demographics, and billing information.

The IHC has been using the Azalea program for billing and scheduling for a year and is now ready to implement the EHR component. Beth explains, “EHR improves outcomes by improving continuity of care and communication between outside providers and the Islesboro Health Center. It helps us maintain records and share them easily.”

For a couple of decades, the Federal Government has been encouraging the use of EHR through both incentives and disincentives. Not all practices use the same EHR platforms but new Federal standards require all programs be designed in such a way that ensures the reliable exchange of information. However, larger institutions like Maine Health (the umbrella entity for Waldo County and Pen Bay hospitals) use a platform called “Epic” which includes the “My Chart” feature and that is not part of the Azalea capacity. Within the next few months or so, IHC patients will be able to access their health information through an “in-house” electronic portal called “My Health Spot”.

In order to facilitate the process of sharing information IHC is hoping within the next six months to access the State-based system called HealthInfoNet- a secure online portal that allows authorized healthcare providers to access patient health information from the statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE). Beth says, “What’s great about HealthInfoNet is that we can *automatically* share information with them and they with us about care across the State; not just Maine Health that we currently have a read-only access to, but also Northern Lights, Maine General in Augusta, Togus and a lot of the ambulatory care practices also participate. We will be communicating with the community more about this as we get closer.”

Beth also explained that IHC staff recently worked with a consulting firm to better understand the regulations around billing and finances in a rural health clinic and has learned a few things. “For example”, Beth explains, “we just



SLRC December Update

Over the course of the past several weeks, the Islesboro Sea Level Rise committee has been working hard to move the Islesboro Narrows Flooding Adaptation project into its next project phase: acquiring preliminary engineering designs for the community to determine what engineering designs will move forward for the site. After hiring Shri Verrill, our Project Manager and coastal resilience expert, in April and undergoing several months of community outreach and project planning, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was sent to qualified firms in mid-October. The SLR Committee reviewed the proposal and conducted interviews, which were insightful and rewarding, and successfully concluded in mid-November.

The SLRC is pleased to announce that GZA Engineering firm has been selected to begin work on developing alternatives and creating preliminary engineering designs to adapt the road at the Narrows to increasing sea-level-rise and storm surge. GZA will work to identify an innovative solution that meets the criteria that will be established by the community’s risk tolerance, site specific conditions, salt marsh ecosystem health, fundability and that will align with Maine Climate Council’s Sea Level Rise scenarios. GZA will provide three 15% preliminary design alternatives based on models that incorporate these factors and the guidance to prepare for 1.5ft to 8.8ft of sea level rise, then one of the alternatives will be selected by our community to move forward toward 30% preliminary design. While there are a range of potential outcomes, we are confident that GZA will provide scientific, site specific, and scenario-based analysis to determine which adaptive alternative is feasible for implementation at The Narrows.

GZA Geoenvironmental Inc. is headquartered in Norwood, MA with an office in south Portland, ME. and has worked on an array of coastal engineering projects along the New England coastline. Their past experience with similar projects, including the NH Route 1A Coastal Revetment Design and Roadway Resiliency project and the Mason’s Island Roadway Resiliency and Living Shoreline project in Stonington, CT, highlights the level of expertise that they will bring to our project.

The Narrows Flooding Adaptation project will be managed by GZA’s “Design with Nature” Studio group, which focuses on sustainable and resilient land management, principally using Natural and Nature-Based Features and Low Impact Development principles. The SLRC’s Narrows Project team consists of two Project Directors, Shey Conovor and Janet Anderson, our consulting Project Manager and coastal wetland expert, Shri Verrill, and Islesboro’s Island Institute Fellow, Liv Lenfestey, serving as the project’s Communication Manager. They will work closely with GZA and the SLRC to ensure that community standards are met, and that feasibility, longevity, and the health of the Crow Cove Marsh are prioritized. In the coming weeks, the SLRC and GZA will conduct a kick off meeting in which the communities’ tolerance for risk, project expectations, and priorities will be further discussed. Community data and feedback gathered from our small group discussions will be included in this process.

As the Narrows Flooding Adaptation Project moves into the next phase, members of the SLRC will begin broadening their focus to other points of concern on the island. We are looking to further develop our library of available resources to coastal property and homeowners. If you have done any work on your property to protect against erosion due to rising seas, storm surge, or increased wave action, we would love to hear your story! Have you installed riprap on your shoreline? Have you lost several feet of coastal property in a storm? Are you considering implementing a nature-based solution? Some other solution? Please reach out to Liv Lenfestey at olenfestey@islandinstitute.org to share your experience.

Submitted by Liv Lenfestey

learned that there are no patient copays associated with tele-health visits. So, instead of making an appointment to discuss lab results say, we could suggest an appointment for a tele-health consultation if that’s preferred.” She notes that this also helps IHC be more responsible with the tax dollars that support it.

As mentioned in a previous issue, a tele-health set up is available for use at the ALP Library. While many may not have known, IHC has been providing that service already, and is happy to facilitate tele-health consultations with mainland providers; a patient can call to schedule the appointment and a room will be made available with a computer. If vital signs need to be taken as part of the appointment or the providers need to speak together, that can be part of the visit too.

Lastly, Beth wanted to mention that the sliding scale for payment has been revised. A patient only needs to provide a stated income; no pay stubs are needed, no proof of application to MaineCare is needed. The financial guidelines are currently 300% of the poverty guidelines (usually 200%).

There is also a “prompt pay” discount available for self-pay...talk to Brandy Cilley at the front desk about it.

