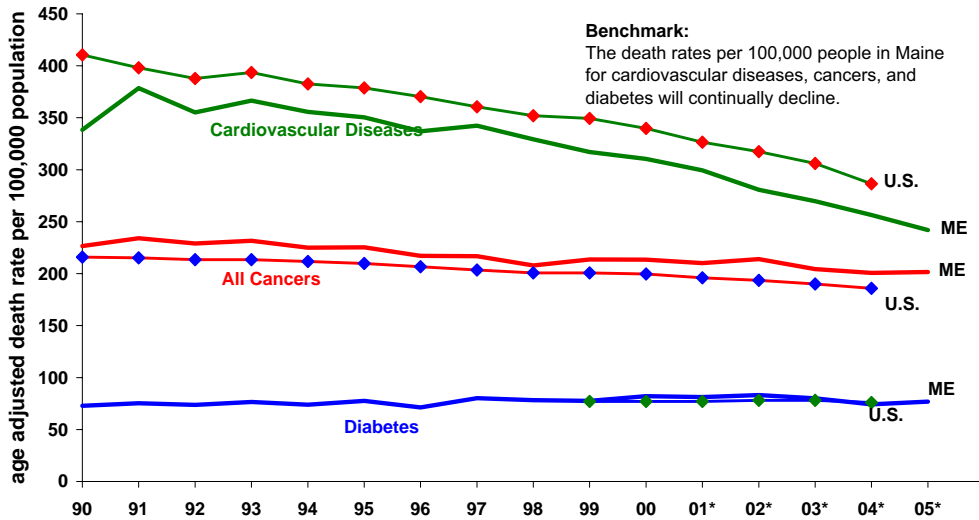


## 20. Chronic Disease



**Benchmark:** The death rates per 100,000 people in Maine attributed to cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and diabetes will continually decline.

**Death Rates from Select Chronic Diseases  
U.S. and Maine, 1990-2005**



**Data Source:** Maine Mortality Data Files, Prepared by: Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Data, Research and Vital Statistics

### Death Rate\*\* for Cardiovascular Disease Continues to Fall

The estimated death rates for only one of the three chronic diseases tracked in the graph declined from 2004 to 2005. The death rate for cardiovascular disease decreased by 5.7% - 14 people for every 100,000. The death rate for cardiovascular disease has decreased by almost 29% since 1990. The death rates for both cancer and diabetes rose by 0.4% and 3.5% respectively from 2004 to 2005. Since 1990, the death rate due to cancer has decreased by over 11%. Unfortunately, the death rate due to diabetes has increased by over 5% for that same time period.

The term “chronic disease” refers to a wide variety of health conditions that are not contagious and that can rarely be completely cured. Death rates in Maine attributed to the three major chronic diseases – cardiovascular diseases, cancers, and diabetes – are impacted by lifestyle choices such as smoking, diet, and exercise.

Chronic diseases negatively impact the quality of individual lives and the larger community. Costs associated with lost work time, hospitalization, and treatment of these often-fatal diseases also affect our economy. Death rates serve as a proxy for the incidence of chronic disease in Maine, or the number of people living with these chronic diseases. Caring for people living with chronic diseases comprises a significant part of Maine’s health care costs.

\* Data from 2001 to 2005 is preliminary. Data on chronic diseases were age adjusted to the year 2000 standard population. Age adjusted rates are useful for comparison purposes only, not to measure absolute magnitude. Age adjustment is a technique for removing the effects of age from crude rates, so as to allow meaningful comparisons across populations with different underlying age structures.

\*\*Death rates serve as a proxy for the number of people living with chronic diseases.