



Town of Darien

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Health Department

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Quarterly Report to the Board of Selectmen

Winter brings several additional responsibilities to our list of normal activities. January is renewal time for the annual operating permits of all food service facilities in Darien. Semi-annual cosmetology salon inspections are due in February. Program details follow:

1. Regionalization and other Legislative Initiatives

- Once again the regionalization of local health departments is on the table for discussion with a legislative roundtable scheduled to discuss this issue sponsored by the City of Bridgeport on January 17, 2019. The Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH) has prepared comments for the meeting and I will provide reports back to the Selectmen. (This meeting was CANCELLED.)
- This office, and CADH, will support legislation being proposed this session that would increase the legal age to purchase tobacco related, and vaping products, to 21.
- We also support legislation that would require estheticians, eyelash technicians and nail technicians to meet minimum education requirements and get a license.

2. Flu Prevention Program

- In March of every year, flu vaccine orders are placed based on an assumed number of shots that we will administer in the fall. Until last year, demand for vaccine had steadily declined in the past several years and our orders have attempted to match that decline. However, we are now approaching the demand level last noted four years ago.

	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015- 16	2014-15
Shots given	283	250	208	296	333
Doses ordered	250* (320)	250* (340)	300	350	400

Note: * is the original vaccine order. Number in parentheses is the final order.

- Our on-line scheduler has been utilized with 60 individuals making appointments for vaccine. 223 doses of vaccine were administered in four open clinics.

3. Food Protection Program

- As mentioned in several previous reports, CT has adopted the FDA Food Code which was supposed to go into effect July 1, 2018. Due to several factors, implementation was delayed until January 1, 2019 and that has been delayed yet again for an unknown period of time. We received the DRAFT inspection forms in October and the State has provided a single training webinar to a limited number of attendees. Proposed regulations regarding the new Code have been submitted to OPM for their review and assuming approval there, a 30 day

public comment period will follow. This delay will provide local health departments with ample time to prepare for the changes, get used to the forms and hopefully ensure a smooth transition, including maintaining the ratings program. This department is working with the other departments in the State that issue ratings in an effort to develop a uniform “scoring” system.

- In cooperation with our software provider, we now receive weekly reports of public access to the Ratings section of our website. Since October 1, 2018, there have been 223 viewings of the Ratings page.
- The Annual Permit renewal process includes cooperating with the Tax Collector and Public Works Department to ensure no permits are issued unless facilities are current with tax payments and up-to-date with their fats, oils and grease recovery systems, so critical in keeping our sewer lines clear of potential blockages from grease in the sewer lines.
- **Inspection Activities:**
 - September 1 to December 31, 2018
 - Inspections – 120 with 6 Failures (5% Failure Rate)
Enforcement – 1 hearing; 3 reinspection fees assessed due to multiple failing inspections within one year.
 - Temporary Events – 8 events with 16 vendors
 - July 1 to September 30, 2018
 - Inspections – 118 with 15 failures (12.7% Failure Rate)
Enforcement – 3 Hearings
 - Temporary Events – 9 events with 28 vendors
 - April 1 to June 30, 2018
 - Inspections – **128**, with 11 Failures (8.6% Failure Rate)
Enforcement – 2 Hearings
 - Temporary Events – 10 with 41 vendors
 - January 1 to March 31, 2018
 - Inspections – **105**, with 15 failures (14% Failure Rate)
Enforcement – 2 Hearings

4. Radon Testing Program

- January is *National Radon Awareness Month*. Radon, which can occur naturally in homes, is considered by CDC to be second to cigarette smoking as a leading cause of lung cancer. Since radon is not visible and has no odor, the only way to determine whether it exists is to test. Free Radon test kits are again available at the Health Department office. Notice has been provided to local media, posted on our website and regularly noted on Twitter.

5. Mosquitoes & Ticks – 2018 summary:

- Mosquitoes: As in other years, mosquitos positive for West Nile Virus were found at the two trapping stations located in Darien, but there were no reported cases of illness. Due to the wet weather, the CT Ag Station reported mosquito populations at the highest level ever recorded and DPH reported 23 cases of WNV in CT, resulting in one death. In December, the Commissioner of Health circulated a letter advising communities that routinely have WNV positive mosquito pools to consider larvaciding programs. As an alternative, this office recommends an aggressive public awareness campaign regarding minimizing the summertime risks associated with mosquitoes, ticks and too much sun.
- Ticks: The Department submits ticks brought into this office to the CT Agricultural Experiment Station for testing with results as follows:

	Mar/Apr/May/June	July/Aug/Sep	Oct/Nov/Dec	2018 TOTALS
Total Sent:	83	22	14	119
Total tested:	38	9	10	57
Lyme Pos	10	1	5	16 (28%)
Anaphlasmosis	1	1	1	3
Babesiosis Pos	1	1	1	3

- The percentage of positive ticks found is consistent with that found in years past. However, it is important to note that we are now finding “lone star” ticks which were not even known to exist in Connecticut until 2017. If bitten by a lone star tick, people can develop an allergy to red meat and the same tick is also associated with other diseases such as ehrlichiosis and spotted fever rickettsiosis. The species does not transmit Lyme disease and unfortunately, the CAES lab does not test these ticks for disease. As a result, our public health nurse has been advising residents who submit lone star ticks to consult with their physician. This underscores the importance of personal vigilance in doing complete body scans after being outside or in wooded areas.

6. Salon Update

- All twenty eight (28) facilities are due for semi-annual inspections in February. Inspection reports are available on-line.

7. Emergency Preparedness

- Darien is in the Region 1 Emergency Planning area with 14 other communities along the I-95 corridor. At this time, there are 8 “Mass Dispensing Areas” (MDAs) which serve as drop-off locations to rapidly deliver large amounts of medication for dispensing by respective communities. The State has determined that there are too many MDAs in Region 1 and have charged member communities to reorganize to reduce the number of MDAs, possibly to one or two. This reorganization is due by April 1, 2019.

8. Reportable Diseases and Conditions

- Research has shown that 97% of individuals who have presented at emergency rooms with substance abuse issues seek treatment if they meet with a “recovery coach” before discharge. In an effort to build on that impressive result, we have begun collaborating to establish a pilot program whereby “Recovery Coaches” could be available for Darien residents 24/7. Data obtained from the recently activated “Syndromic Surveillance System” indicates there have been 41 alcohol and 22 suspected overdose related emergency room visits by Darien residents since April, 2018. Presumably having “coaches” available as an option should lower those numbers.

9. Social Media

- Our Public Health Nurse maintains the “Community Calendar” on the Health Department website. The calendar is intended to provide residents with a central informational resource for the multitude of health and wellness events being offered in Darien and the surrounding communities.
- Timely public health and wellness information is regularly posted on the Health Department Twitter account <https://twitter.com/darienhealth>

**Respectfully Submitted by David Knauf, Director of Health
January 15, 2019 (revised 01-22-19)**