



# Town of Darien

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## Health Department

January, 2018

### Quarterly Report to the Board of Selectmen

Winter brings several additional responsibilities to our list of normal activities. We are seeing a definite spike in public interest in obtaining flu vaccine, especially recently and January is also renewal time for the annual operating permits of all 155 food service facilities in Darien. Semi-annual cosmetology salon inspections are due in February. Program details follow:

#### 1. 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. Over the past three years, demand for vaccine has declined and our orders have attempted to match that decline. However, as of this week's tragic flu death, we have seen an immediate dramatic increase in flu vaccine demand. As of Tuesday, January 16, all vaccine was distributed and an order for an additional 90 doses was placed.

	2017-18	2016-17	2015- 16	2014-15
<b>Shots given</b>	250	208	296	333
<b>Doses ordered</b>	250* (340)	300	350	400

- Our on-line scheduler has been heavily utilized with over 50 people making appointments for vaccine over the past two days. A joint press release with the Health Office of the Darien Public Schools was issued on January 16.
- Our Public Health Nurse has delivered flu shots to several homebound seniors who were unable to travel to Town Hall for an appointment or to attend one of the open clinics.

#### 2. Staff Update

- Elaine Kilbourn, who has been with the town for 33 years and serves as the Office Administrator for the Health Department AND Human Services has announced her retirement, effective May 1. Her ability to provide an exemplary level of service to the public while maintaining two Departments will not be easily replaced, if possible at all. Advertising the position will begin immediately.
- Paula Sutcliffe, the PH Nurse, has begun discussions with Human Services to perform out-reach work and follow-up visits by request regarding injuries due to falls which account for the largest number of EMS calls every month. Additionally, she will perform home visits for repeat asthma hospitalization visits, especially those involving children, and as noted above, administer flu vaccine to home-bound seniors.
- To maintain the required frequency of inspections for food service facilities, we employ a part-time food inspector. For various reasons, that individual has been unable to perform

those inspections and the services of a different inspector, who will only be available on weekends, has recently been secured.

### **3. Food Protection Program**

- Inspection Activities:
  - October 1 to December 31, 2017
    - Regular Inspections – **56\***, with 6 failures (10% failure rate)
  - July 1 to October 1, 2017:
    - Regular inspections – **117**, with 9 failures (7.6%);  
Enforcement: 2 Notices of Intent to Suspend Permits to Operate and 3 Hearings
    - Temporary events - 9 with 32 vendors
  - April 1 to July 1, 2017:
    - Regular inspections – **126**, with 10 failures (7.9%);  
Enforcement: 1 Notice of Intent to Suspend Permit to Operate and 2 Hearings.
    - Temporary events – 11 with 43 vendors  
(\* represents the impact from the loss of service of the part-time inspector)
- As previously reported, the State has adopted the FDA Food Code which will impact every aspect of our food program when it becomes effective on July 1, 2018. Unfortunately, the State Department of Public Health (DPH) has not provided enforcement guidance so the associated revisions to our food service regulations and any needed fee schedule adjustment are on hold. All food establishments have been notified of impending changes in conjunction with Permit renewals which have just been completed.

### **4. Microbial Source (DNA) Tracking Study Update**

The DRAFT is awaiting final review from our partners at Yale. We have submitted the report to the National Environmental Health Association for approval as a presentation topic for the 2018 Annual National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) Annual Education Conference in Anaheim.

### **5. 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. Last year, 50 kits were distributed and four (4) locations were found to exceed the EPA limit. Follow-up advice is provided in each case.

### **6. Ticks & Mosquitoes** – 2017 summary:

- Mosquitos: As in other years, mosquitos positive for West Nile Virus were found at trapping stations located in Darien, but there were no reported cases of illness in Darien.
- Ticks: 163 ticks were submitted the Connecticut Agricultural Station for testing; of 124 tested, 48 were found to be positive for Lyme Disease, which is a rate of 38%. The rate for previous years was approximately 30%, but the local rate this year is consistent with that found statewide. This increase underscores the importance of personal vigilance in doing complete body scans after being outside or in wooded areas.

### **7. Salon Update**

A manicure/pedicure awareness PowerPoint public advisory has been posted on our website [www.darienhealth.com](http://www.darienhealth.com) and we are planning to film a PSA on this issue with Channel 79. All

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

### **8. Emergency Preparedness**

The revised and updated Health & Medical Annex to Town Emergency Operations Plan has been reviewed and approved by the ABH and will be submitted for inclusion in the overall town EOP.

### **9. Opioid Overdoses and Drug Abuse**

While municipalities receive death data from the Medical Examiner, there is no method of tracking the occurrence rates for overdoses in the State of Connecticut. As the co-chair of the Substance Abuse Ad-hoc Committee of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH), I submitted testimony supporting the addition of overdoses to the list of mandated reportable diseases/conditions as established by the Commissioner of Health. In the opinion of local health directors, having this information is critical in assessing the health of the communities we serve. Unfortunately, that recommendation was not accepted and instead overdose reporting was relegated to a new system of “syndromic reports” which hasn’t been made available yet and only gives aggregate data.

- AmeriCorps Program – In cooperation with the Community Fund of Darien and the Police Department, staff are working with a part-time AmeriCorps person to collect prescription data from pharmacies, promote safe use, storage and disposal of prescription medication and institute a physician training program on pain medication.
- Coordination with EMS and Darien Police Department – Staff recently met to establish a system of monthly reporting/communication on local Narcan use and overdoses.
- Building on the success of the unwanted drug collection box, the Police Department will initiate a program of collecting unwanted medication from homebound seniors.

### **10. Social Media**

- Staff is working to maintain and promote the “Community Calendar” on the Health Department website. The calendar was developed 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 17, 2018**