



# Town of Darien

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## Health Department

July, 2016

### Quarterly Report to the Board of Selectmen

Summer brings several additional responsibilities to our list of normal activities. In addition to inspecting restaurants, salons, septic systems, holding training sessions for food handlers, submitting ticks for testing, issuing recreational shellfishing permits and responding to complaints and inquiries from residents, we also inspect all public pools, seasonal snack bars, the farmers' market and the many special events that serve food to the public on weekends and in the evenings. Other notable programs and initiatives are as follows:

#### 1. Beaches and Water Quality

Water samples are being collected and tested for bacteria once a week at Pear Tree Point and Weed Beaches. *So far this summer, there have been no beach closures for any reason.* We monitor rainfall amounts and maintain the beach HOTLINE (203-656-7323) to inform residents whether beaches are open or closed. A detailed report addressing concerns recently raised by "Save the Sound" and the media is attached for your review.

#### 2. "A Ton of Drugs!"

Darien began participating in the unwanted drug disposal program in 2010 when we had the twice a year drop off days for residents at the Town Garage. Since then we have installed the 24/7 collection box in the Police Department lobby. In June, we reached the 2000 pound mark for disposed medication in Darien. That is a "Ton of Drugs!" safely disposed that could have ended up in the wrong hands or been improperly discarded. We are planning outreach programs to better inform the public that this service exists and will meet with our local pharmacies and doctors' offices to provide additional information to customers and patients.

#### 3. Health Fair

We are in the early phase of planning a themed "health fair" for the fall to be focused on the opioid and heroin crisis.

#### 4. Health Needs Assessment

This is the first year of a three year State grant to fund a health needs assessment for the town. We have developed the goals of comparing to the previous assessments last performed in 2007, looking at comparable towns (population, income, etc.) to determine if Darien is in-line with similar communities, and identifying emerging problems in the community. To date, data has been aggregated from a variety of sources, including US Census, public health, environmental, and law enforcement databases. We have also been meeting with community leaders, law enforcement, hospitals, and other community-based healthcare organizations in order to gather data and solicit more information about non-obvious trends in the community. A FOI (Freedom of Information) request has been submitted to the State Health Department

to obtain statewide hospital admission data for Darien residents. It is our goal to have this analysis complete and available for the Health Fair this fall.

## **5. Food Protection Program**

- A proposal to modify our restaurant Rating system to post letter grades, similar to the system used in New York City, will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen this fall. The Advisory Board of Health has reviewed and approved the concept and also authorized a proposal to assess fines for those establishments that do not post the most recent rating in the window or doorway by the entrance of each facility.
- Additionally, QR Codes will be added to rating forms to enable patrons to scan the code with smart phones to access our website to view the detailed inspection report.
- We remain current with all mandated inspections, including seasonal facilities and temporary events that offer food service.

## **6. Asthma**

In conjunction with the “Putting on Airs” program and Stamford Hospital, this office will provide guidance to residents seeking advice on addressing chronic asthma problems and eliminating asthma triggers in the home. Thus far, we have investigated and provided assistance to one family. Referrals are being made to discharged patients at Stamford Hospital and clinics that partner with “Putting on Airs”.

## **7. “Don’t Fry Day”**

Is a public information program focused on skin cancer prevention. Pamphlets (see the attachment) have been developed and are being given out to residents obtaining beach stickers, shellfishing permits and fishing licenses. Posters are being put up at public pools, country clubs, as well as our parks and beaches.

## **8. ZIKA & West Nile Virus Update**

To this date, there have been no cases of Zika transmitted by mosquitos in the mainland US; all reported cases have been travel related with a few cases having been sexually transmitted. Continued vigilance through the summer will include monitoring by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station for the type of mosquito that is considered most likely to transmit the virus. This will be in addition to the on-going monitoring of mosquitos for West Nile Virus. This office will issue press releases and advisories as the situation warrants.

## **9. Twitter**

- Public health advisories, topics related to public health and Elaine’s lunchtime walk regimen are features of our twitter account <https://twitter.com/darienhealth>
- Breaking news and general information are maintained and regularly updated on our website [www.darienhealth.com](http://www.darienhealth.com)

**Respectfully submitted by: David Knauf, Director of Health  
July 1, 2016**