



# Town of Darien

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## Health Department

July, 2017

### Quarterly Report to the Board of Selectmen

Summer brings several additional responsibilities to our list of normal activities. In addition to the regular responsibilities of 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.

#### 1. Staff Update

- Our Public Health Emergency Preparedness consultant for the past six years, Scot Phelps, resigned effective May 1<sup>st</sup>. He has been replaced by Mike Vincelli who is serving in the same capacity for Wilton and the Westport/Weston Health District.
- The Public Health Nurse, Molly Larson, resigned June 30<sup>th</sup>, due to personal reasons and will be succeeded by Paula Sutcliffe, R.N., in August.
- This year, we were fortunate to have a High School Intern who provided critical assistance in the creation of a Community Health Calendar (see [www.darienhealth.com](http://www.darienhealth.com)) and Twitter publicity campaigns regarding Nail Salons and the Medication Drop-Box located in the Police Department lobby.

#### 2. Health Assessment Report Presentation

The assessment has been completed, reviewed by the Advisory Board of Health and is attached. I will be attending August 14<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectmen meeting with the consultant who gathered the data to discuss the findings in greater detail and answer questions. Among other issues, we have identified the need for an expanded role for the public health nurse who will develop programs to address the following health concerns:

- Falls, the #1 EMS response category
- Immunization rates are lower in Darien than in surrounding communities
- Substance abuse
- Educational outreach for cancer screening
- STD education

#### 3. Reportable Disease Summary F/Y 2016-17

A mandated responsibility of this department is to monitor reportable infectious diseases. Over the years, the most frequently reported condition has always been influenza. However, since 2015-16, sexually transmitted diseases, especially Chlamydia, have become the number one reportable condition.

For the past two years, the most commonly reported were:

	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2014-15</u>
1) Chlamydia (and other STDs).....	25	30	23
2) Influenza.....	10	12	50
3) Campylobacteriosis.....	5	8	9
4) Hepatitis C.....	5	4	17
5) Lyme .....	2	3	11

Reduced reports of influenza rates may be due to more people taking advantage of the easy availability of vaccines at local pharmacies or physicians may be performing diagnostic testing in their offices without utilizing outside laboratories that are required to report results. Similarly, Lyme Disease reports are very low due to in-office diagnosis and the lack of confirmatory testing.

**4. Emergency Preparedness**

- In an effort to reduce the cost overhead for grant administration, the State Health Department will no longer be disbursing public health emergency preparedness funds; Yale will serve as the fiduciary. DPH indicates funding amounts will remain the same for at least one more year which will enable us to retain our consultant for at least that long.
- With the new consultant, we are updating our Pandemic Flu Plan to align with recent guidance issued by CDC.
- In the event of a regional public health emergency, Stamford will serve as the lead agency in distributing meds to Darien. We are updating our plans to coordinate that process and to pick up and transport meds while utilizing our schools for mass dispensing sites. A drill to test that capability is in the advanced planning process. The existing MOU with the BOE for the use of school property will be reviewed and updated if necessary.

**5. 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 continue to monitor rainfall amounts and maintain the beach HOTLINE (203-656-7323) to inform residents whether beaches are open or closed.

**6. Mosquitos & Ticks**

- The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) maintains two monitoring sites for the collection and testing of mosquitos that transmit West Nile Virus and Zika. So far, test results have been negative for both, but West Nile Virus is found in the mosquito population every year. This office will issue press releases and public advisories as the situation warrants.
- This office accepts ticks found on residents (no dog ticks) and sends them to the CAES lab to be tested for the presence of disease producing bacteria. The CAES had warned of an increase in the tick population this summer due to the relatively mild winter. We have confirmed an increase in the tick population – last year we submitted 68 ticks by this date with 16% being positive for Lyme Disease, while this year we have submitted 117 ticks, with a positive rate of 42%.
- An information table dedicated to Lyme Disease prevention and tick avoidance has been added to our resource library in the hallway outside of the Health Department office.

## 7. Food Protection Program

- The State of Connecticut has adopted new regulations pertaining to food safety which will necessitate a complete overhaul of our food protection program, including the Rating system, food handler training sessions and the fee schedule. These changes will necessitate significant staff time and effort in attending educational and new certification training programs, yet to be developed by DPH. Significant out-reach to our food service establishments will occur once details and guidance is provided by DPH. The changes are to go into effect on July 1, 2018.
- We are current with all inspections, including those of seasonal facilities.
- The following is a summary of inspections conducted and Ratings for the past four years:

Year	2016 - 17	2015 - 16	2014 - 15	2013 - 14
<b>Total Inspections</b>	469	461	494	381
<b>'A' or 'GOOD' Rating</b>	214	232	274	226
<b>'B' or 'FAIR'</b>	98	112	104	40
<b>'C' or 'POOR'</b>	38	63	48	26
<b>% 'A'</b>	61	57	64	77
<b>% 'C'</b>	10	15	11	9

### Notes:

1. The increased number of inspections from FY 2013-14 to 2014-15 reflects the addition of a part-time inspector.
2. The relatively high percentage of 'POOR' Rating in FY 2015-16 was largely due to some difficulties in getting newly opened facilities into compliance.

## 8. Opioid and Substance Abuse Programs

- I am a participant in a regional task force "*NoRxAbuse.com*" that is an effort to prevent the misuse of prescription drugs. See the website [www.NoRxAbuse.com](http://www.NoRxAbuse.com) for more information.
- Appointed co-chair of CADH Committee on substance abuse.
- I managed to get myself invited as the Darien representative and a non-voting participant in statewide grant program "CORE", which is the **C**onnecticut **O**pioid **R**Eponse Initiative. Only six jurisdictions in CT, all large population centers, received funds for this program. My hope is to learn of plans and policies that will help address this epidemic locally.
- I am serving as the Darien representative in the Stamford Hospital Community Health Improvement Committee which will have the opioid crisis as an agenda item.

## 9. Social Media

For breaking news and important health related information, please refer to our website [www.darienhealth.com](http://www.darienhealth.com) and Twitter: [www.twitter.com/darienhealth](http://www.twitter.com/darienhealth).

**Respectfully Submitted by David Knauf, Director of Health**  
**July 7, 2017**