



# Town of Darien

## Health Department

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Summer brings several additional responsibilities to our list of normal activities. In addition to the regular responsibilities of inspecting restaurants, salons, septic systems, submitting ticks for testing, issuing recreational shellfishing permits and responding to complaints and inquiries from residents, we also inspect all public pools, seasonal food service facilities, the farmers’ market and the many special events that serve food to the public on weekends and in the evenings.

### Staff Update

- Mindy Chambrelli, REHS, has been recertified as a lead poisoning prevention specialist enabling her to investigate cases of childhood lead poisoning. She has also recently been certified as a Certified Pool Operator enabling her to perform detailed analyses of problems with public pool water quality; is President-Elect of the Connecticut Environmental Health Association (CEHA) and Chair of the CEHA ad-hoc advisory committee on cosmetology salon regulation and licensing.
- Paula Sutcliffe, RN. As a member of the Thriving Youth Task Force, Paula has volunteered to serve on the By-Laws Committee and has recently attended training sessions on Measles response, Tuberculosis, and Elder Abuse. She is also working with Post 53 and SEMS to better identify the incident reporting system so we can identify those calls that may be related to substance abuse. Paula also maintains the Health and Wellness Calendar on the Health Department website.
- I recently attended the National Environmental Health Association Annual Education Conference and co-presented the findings of the Goodwives River DNA study entitled “*Microbial Source Tracking: An Analysis of Three Connecticut Watersheds of Long Island Sound*”. The power point of the presentation is on our website.

### Reportable Disease Summary F/Y 2018-19

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

	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2015-16</u>
1) Chlamydia (and other STDs).....	23	36	25	30
2) Influenza.....	22	4	10	12
3) Campylobacteriosis.....	11	4	5	8
4) Hepatitis C.....	11	7	5	4
5) Lyme .....	12	3	2	3

The reports indicate that most STDs occur in the 19 to 24 year old age group. We plan to follow up on the STD issue by developing an informational resource for our website and working with the Thriving Youth Task Force. We will be adding Fact Sheets on our website for both Campylobacter and Hepatitis C.

EMS Reports – falls remain the #1 reason for EMS calls, followed closely by traffic accidents. For the last quarter, these two categories represent 134, or 34% of calls. As previously noted, we are continuing our discussions with EMS to perhaps modify coding to determine how many calls may be due to substance misuse.

Syndromic surveillance system:

- June to December 2018, alcohol related emergency rooms visits (59) outnumbered drug overdoses (24).
- January through June 2019, alcohol related emergency rooms visits (51) again outnumbered overdoses (9 )

**Beaches, Bugs and Shellfishing**

- Water samples are being collected and tested for bacteria once a week at Pear Tree Point and Weed Beaches. We continue to monitor rainfall amounts and maintain the beach HOTLINE (203-656-7323) and communicate with the Parks & Recreation Department to inform residents whether beaches are open or closed.
- The CT Agricultural Experiment Station has resumed testing of mosquitoes for West Nile and other diseases for the summer. There are two collection stations in Darien. As in past years, we anticipate that mosquitos positive for West Nile virus will be found in Darien and public advisories will be provided as needed.
- The percentage of ticks found to be positive for Lyme Disease has been increasing throughout the State. So far this year, almost 50% ticks submitted from Darien are carriers of Lyme or other associated illnesses. Residents who have submitted ticks that test positive receive an email from our PH Nurse advising them to contact their physician. Reminders for personal vigilance are routinely posted on Twitter and the Health Department website.
- In May, we sponsored an event at the Library entitled “Fight the Bite” which featured speakers from the CAES discussing mosquito and tick safety. The VIMEO presentation is posted on our website.
- In FY19 (July 2018-June 2019), 78 annual recreational shellfishing permits were issued and 71 were issued in FY 18. Comparing the first six months of the last two years:  
January 1 – June 30, 2018: 42 permits  
January 1 – June 20, 2019: 56 permits

**Cooperative Water Sampling Program with the Commission on Coastal Waters**

In 2016, at the behest of the Commission on Coastal Waters, the Town entered into an agreement with Harbor Watch to conduct a screening program of Goodwives River, in large part because of the data we already had that showed elevated levels of bacteria in the River from the DNA study. Their project involved testing outfalls from storm drains discharging into the river in an effort to find bacteria sources. The sampling spanned two years and a single location was identified as having extremely high bacteria levels, indicating a possible sewage influence. A suspect property was identified and dye testing was conducted to demonstrate the existing septic system was leaking into the road storm drain. That home has recently connected to the available public sewer

and the following is an excerpt from the Harbor Watch report: *“The difference in bacteria concentrations observed at site GOO-13-CB after the home was connected to the sanitary system is remarkable. We are happy to report that the hard work of the Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters (in partnership with Harbor Watch), and the Darien Public Works and Health Departments has resulted in a 99.8% reduction in bacteria concentrations entering Gorham’s Pond from this location!”*

## **Food Protection Program**

- Status – inspections remain current & up-to-date.
- Website viewing of Ratings: using Google Metrics, there were 268 viewings of the Ratings page so far this quarter, compared with 313 viewings last quarter and 223 in the last quarter of 2018.
- As previously mentioned, seasonal FS facilities, such as those located at the beaches, country clubs and pools, have received their seasonal permits and are inspected throughout the Summer, as are many outdoor special events.
- FDA Code Adoption – in June 2018, legislation was passed to delay the implementation of the FDA Code from July 1, 2018 to January 1, 2019. DRAFT regulations from DPH still have not yet been approved by OPM so legislation to postpone the new Code until January 1, 2020 was adopted in the past legislative session. This further delays our ability to update our regulations. As a reminder, the new system involves the use of an inspection form that does not have “scoring” which completely impacts how we enforce correction of violations. It will necessitate revision to the Ratings program, the fee schedule and our local regulations. We are continuing the discussions with other Health Departments who issue Ratings in an effort to develop a uniform statewide Rating system based on the new Code.

## **Inspection Activities:**

### April 1 to June 30, 2019

- Inspections – **106**, with 1 Failure (<1.0% Failure Rate)
- Temporary Events – 10 with 37 vendors
- Ratings Summary (only Class 3 & 4 year round facilities):
  - A: 43
  - B: 22
  - C: 3

### January 1 to March 31, 2019

- Inspections – **121**, with 7 failures (6% Failure Rate)
- Ratings Summary
  - A: 49
  - B: 33
  - C: 9

### October 1 to December 31, 2018

- Inspections – **135**, with 6 failures (4% failure rate)
- Temporary Events – 8 events with 16 vendors
- Ratings Summary
  - A: 68
  - B: 27
  - C: 7

July 1 to October 1, 2018:

- Inspections – **118**, with 15 failures (12.7%);
- Temporary Events – 10 with 41 vendors
- Ratings Summary
  - A: 44
  - B: 32
  - C: 11

**Upcoming Special Events**

- *Farmer's Market*: As we did last year, we will maintain a booth at the market once a month in July, August & September to provide free blood pressure screening along with public health advice and literature to shoppers.
- On October 24<sup>th</sup>, we will sponsor an event at the Library targeting the dangers of vaping which has reached epidemic levels especially in adolescents.

**Emergency Preparedness**

Reorganization of the Region 1 plan for delivery of services and funds is still underway. Grants are being administered through a new fiduciary, no longer Yale, and the seven Mass Dispensing Areas in the Region have been reduced to one located in Stratford. We will be updating our Public Health emergency Response Plan accordingly.

**Legislative Session:**

Proposed State funding cuts to local public health were NOT approved and current funding levels have been maintained for the next two years for those jurisdictions that receive per capita funding (Darien is not eligible).

The other PH successes for the year include testimony in support of a bill raising the smoking/vaping age to 21, working to oppose the proposed reduction of child blood lead levels that would have mandated health department action, opposed the approval of recreational marijuana and adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code which would have fundamentally impacted our workloads, while supporting the only approved bill that may impact some health departments - regarding licensing and regulation of nail/eye techs and estheticians.

**Stamford Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment**

As the Darien Health Department representative, I am a member of the Stamford Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment Advisory Committee which has been meeting for the past two years. The assessment of the Hospital service area, which includes Darien and Stamford has been completed and identified three primary areas of concern: behavioral health; access to health & human services; and nutrition. The next step will be to form three specialized committees to develop policies to address these concerns. The Advisory Group will oversee these committees with the end result being to develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for the Hospital to meet the needs of Darien and Stamford residents.

**Respectfully Submitted,  
David Knauf, Director of Health  
July 16, 2019**