



Town of Darien

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Health Department

Quarterly Report to the Board of Selectmen October 23, 2018

Autumn brings several additional responsibilities to our list of normal activities. In addition to the regular responsibilities of inspecting restaurants, septic systems, offering flu shots to the public, submitting ticks for testing, issuing recreational shellfishing permits, reviewing and updating our public health emergency response plan, and responding to complaints and inquiries from residents, we also inspect the many special/temporary events that serve food to the public on weekends and in the evenings. September/October is also renewal time for the annual operating permits of the thirty (30) personal service cosmetology salons located in Darien. Specific activities for the past and upcoming quarters include:

1. Staff Update and Special Events

- Michelle Varrone, our Administrative Assistant, has completed the transition of our permit application process from in-office only to on-line.
- Mindy Chambrelli recently presented an overview of our Cosmetology program entitled “It’s No Longer Just a Haircut” at the annual New England Yankee Conference on Environmental Health in Portland, Maine and has been invited to present at the Connecticut Public Health Nursing Association in November. We continue to serve as a model in for others developing regulations for the personal service salons. Permit renewals are underway for our Cosmetology salons – we now have 30 facilities, and our office continues to receive inquiries on new establishments looking to open in town.
- Paula Sutcliffe, RN, has provided 30 free blood pressure checks at the two Farmers’ Markets where we have had an information booth; eighteen of those tests were found to be in the “at-risk” or “high” category and those individuals were advised accordingly. We are scheduled to participate at the market for the third and final time on October 24.
- To recognize the value of work done to improve public health by Environmental Health Professionals (Sanitarians), August 24, 2018 was proclaimed to be “Environmental Health Professionals Day” by Governor Malloy. A copy of the Official Statement is attached.

2. Flu Prevention Program

The Department has held two flu shot clinics and administered 124 flu shots so far this season. There are two additional clinics scheduled, one on October 25th and another “Vote & Vax” in Room 119 on Election Day. Appointments may be also made with the nurse using our on-line scheduler at www.darienhealth.com.

3. Recreational Water Quality

- As in years past, water samples were collected and tested for bacteria levels at Weed and Pear Tree Point Beaches weekly from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Testing has concluded for this year with no closures due to elevated bacteria but the beaches were closed for three days due to rainfall events that exceeded one inch. Testing done in the past indicated that bacteria levels routinely exceed EPA safe water quality standards when there

is more than one inch of rain. For more information on this issue, see the DNA study following in this report.

- Unfortunately, the UV meters that were located at the beaches were found to be unreliable so the vendor was asked to remove them.
- All (18) public pools were inspected at least every other week throughout the summer to ensure proper safety equipment was available and that the water was safe for swimming.

4. DNA Source Tracking Study of Goodwives River

As mentioned in previous reports, this department partnered with the Westport/Weston and East Shore Health Districts in an effort to use bacteria DNA to determine the source of bacteria in our streams and beaches, especially after a rain. As previously reported, we were unable to determine the actual source but could conclude that the source was not human. This report has been presented nationally at two different venues and will be presented locally at the CPHA (CT Public Health Association) annual meeting on November 8th and again in Westport on November 29th for the Scasco Brook Pollution Abatement Committee. We are actively engaging the State for additional grant funding so we may expand the scope of the study to better ascertain the source of bacteria.

5. Food Protection Program

- As mentioned in several previous reports, CT has adopted the FDA Food Code which was supposed to go into effect this past July. Due to several factors, implementation was delayed until January 1, 2019. Two essential pieces of information all local health departments need to effectively transition to the new process is the new inspection form and regulatory (enforcement) guidelines. We received the DRAFT of the inspection form on October 15th and have been in touch with our software providers who will not be able to provide us with an on-line electronic version until February or March, with the price of changes pending. Regulatory guidance has not yet been provided. Permit renewals are due January 1 but we will not have sufficient time to make adjustments to the fee schedule and enforcement regulations by that time.
- In anticipation of the new Code requirements, we have added an on-line Food Manager training program to compliment the Food Handler training program which is also on-line. We have also updated our in-house “classroom” food handler training program which we will begin offering on an as-needed basis.
- There has been considerable turnover in food establishments with six new establishments which have either just opened or are soon to open.
- In cooperation with our software provider, we can now view receive weekly reports of public viewings of the Ratings section of our website. Unfortunately our current web provider does not provide that service.

- **Inspection Activities:**

- 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

- October 1 to December 31, 2017

- Inspections – **56**, with 6 failures (10% failure rate)

6. Flooding and Recent Extreme Rainfall Events

Recent flooding has impacted several food service establishments as well as residences and other businesses in town. Overflows of our public sewer system have been associated with these rainfall events which presents significant potential health hazards to those affected. We have had discussions with public works concerning evaluating the sewer system for water infiltration leaks that compromise the integrity of the system. All future development of the community depends on a functional sewer system, in any kind of weather.

7. Mosquitos & Ticks

The CT Agricultural Experiment Station has ended testing of mosquitoes for West Nile and other diseases for the year. As in past years, mosquitos positive for West Nile virus were found in Darien. No associated illnesses were reported in Darien this year, but there were 21 cases reported in the state, the highest total ever. According to the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, this was also a record year for numbers of mosquitos and that is directly associated with the wetter than normal summer we had. The Commissioner of Health has announced that he will encourage communities to larvacide for mosquitos in an effort to control the mosquito population next year. Both Norwalk and Stamford apply larvacide to catch basins and had a positive rate of WNV in mosquitos of 0.45 and 0.54% respectively while the rate of positive mosquitos in Darien was 0.26%.

This year, the percentage of ticks found to be positive for Lyme Disease has been increasing throughout the State. So far this year, the rate of positive ticks submitted from Darien is currently 40%, compared to 30% last year. Reminders for personal vigilance are routinely posted on Twitter and the Health Department website.

	Apr/May/June	July/Aug/Sep
Total Sent:	77	22
Total tested:	32	9
Lyme Pos	9	3
Anaphlasmosis Pos	1	1
Babesiosis Pos	1	1

8. Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

Syndromic Surveillance is a new on-line data system recently unveiled by the State Health Department that enables local health departments to query hospital emergency room data and get real-time information on reasons for treatment, including drug overdoses for the towns they serve. There is no identifying data provided, but some demographic information such as age and sex of patient is viewable. This is very useful information since our first responders only responded to two overdoses, while local hospital reported 18 from April through September 25. Interestingly, hospitalizations for alcohol totaled 20 for the same time period.

9. Radon Testing Program

We have once again signed up to partner with DPH to offer free radon test kits to residents.

**Respectfully Submitted By
David Knauf, Director of Health**