

Advisory Board of Health Meeting Minutes

A special meeting of the Advisory Board of Health (ABH) was held on Wednesday, September 28, 2011 in room 213 of Town Hall. The meeting was broadcast live on Channel 79 and also recorded for replay.

Members present: Kevin Cunningham, Chair; Jennifer Geddes; Mary Guimond, Clerk
Members absent: Dr. Jose Cara, Vice Chair
Guest: David Knauf, Director of Darien Health Department

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Chair Cunningham. Minutes of the July meeting were approved without change or comment. Mr. Knauf reviewed the Health Department's quarterly report to the Board of Selectmen dated October 2011. This report is posted on DarienHealth.com website. Discussion related to the report ensued as follows:

Flu Prevention Program. The program has been upgraded in several key areas, including online scheduling capability, increased number of flu clinics, the use of preservation-free serum and the availability of 'high-dose' vaccine for those 65. The first clinic at the Senior Center drew 60 people. The flu clinic to be held on October 6 will feature 'needle-less' administration of the vaccine using Pharmajet technology.

Beaches and Water Quality. Quality again this year has been very good. Testing occurred four times per week, providing excellent data. Goodwives River continues to have high concentrations of bacteria prompting the Health Department to send samples to Yale for DNA testing. This testing confirmed that DNA from human sources was minimal.

Drug Collection Day. Sponsored by the Federal DEA and Darien Police, the collections include over-the-counter, prescription and veterinary medications, all of which are incinerated. All collections are anonymous.

Hurricane Irene. Preparations for this event included ensuring the Health Department was responsive to the food service operators in town. Inspections were conducted throughout town on the Monday after the storm to ensure compliance.

Emergency Preparedness. A drill at Middlesex Middle School will be conducted to measure the effectiveness of mass distribution of medications via the schools. Notification will be made to parents along with a follow-up report of results.

Food Service. The Health Department wants to establish a Certificate of Excellence to reward those food service operators who have consistently met all criteria. Special recognition was made of the food service management for all Darien schools.

Ms. Guimond advised that action by the RTM may be undertaken regarding a ban on plastic bags in town. As currently envisioned, the Health Department will be charged with enforcement through the use of fines should an ordinance be passed. Mr. Knauf reported that this would be the only fine-based enforcement by the Health Department. The Public Health and Safety Committee of the RTM has the lead on this issue and will be instructed to keep Mr. Knauf involved in the process.

Ms. Geddes asked Mr. Knauf to reiterate the need for banning dogs from the beach, particularly the sand, due to the illnesses that can spread to humans from contact with dog feces.

Mr. Knauf was excused from the meeting at 7:45 pm. Chair Cunningham is preparing a letter to the Board of Selectmen requesting the addition of two members and an update to the town-wide health assessment completed in 2009. The next meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2011. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted on September 29, 2011

Mary Guimond, Clerk