

Naugatuck Valley Health District
Monthly Board of Directors Public Health Report

Jessica Kristy, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
September 2023

Miscellaneous

It is bittersweet to announce Joan Lane's last day at NVHD was Friday, September 29th. Joan has worked at NVHD as a Public Health Specialist and Public Health Accreditation Coordinator and her contributions in administrative areas like quality improvement, performance management, community health improvement planning, strategic planning, accreditation activities, and more will be sorely missed. Joan's part-time position was funded by the Preventative Health & Human Services Block Grant (PHHSBG). The latest contract period started October 1, 2019, and expired on September 29, 2023, after a one-year no cost extension was granted. DPH decided to change this funding to a competitive grant focused on evidence-based preventive health strategies. Carissa has previously reported that our application was awarded and is set to start in February 2024.



Group picture of NVHD staff and 2 community partners gathered at a celebration breakfast on Joan Lane's last day.

Save the Date!

To enhance the relationship between the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and municipal and district departments of health, the DPH commissioners request the opportunity to visit each of Connecticut's 61 local health departments in 2023. Through these visits, they expect to gain an even better understanding of the valuable services we provide and hope our meeting leads to collaborative opportunities to further enhance those services. Staff, Board of Directors, and Chief Elected Officials are encouraged to attend.

Commissioner Manisha Juthani and Deputy Commissioner Lisa Morrissey will be visiting NVHD on Tuesday, November 7th from 9am-11am.

Building Signage

With approval from Fischel Properties and the ability to utilize ELC-2 grant funds, we were able to add a "Naugatuck Valley Health District" sign to the large sign board that is at the end of our driveway and faces Bank Street. This will help increase our visibility to clients trying to locate our office. Thank you to Carissa for working with Paragon Signs & Graphics to get this installed in a very quick turnaround.



Other

I continue to serve as Vice-Chair for the Town of Seymour Safety Committee. We met on September 19th.



CT Association of Directors of Health (CADH)

Positions held: Member, Board of Directors, Emergency Preparedness Committee Chair, Advocacy Committee Member

The CT Association of Directors of Health continues to meet virtually on the first Wednesday of the month. The CADH Board of Directors meeting was held on September 19th.

Workforce Development

Lisa T. continues to chair the NVHD Workforce Development Committee. Staff continued to work on completing the required two online training courses this quarter. I presented a staff training on food safety as part of our monthly staff meeting and in alignment with National Food Safety Education Month.

Quality Improvement

At the monthly staff meeting, Joan presented the summary of the Visibility Team Project. The QI Committee meeting was held on September 12th, which highlighted the transition from Joan Lane to Paulina Cherkasov serving as QI Committee chair. The Committee completed the annual review and revision of the QI Plan. Joan also facilitated a QI fish bone exercise to kick off the new project of cleaning up our electronic files on our shared network drive.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism (IDEA) Committee

The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism (IDEA) Committee continues to be chaired by Paulina. The committee met and has begun compiling NVHD's version of an IDEA Glossary, pulling terms from similar documents from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) and American Medical Association (AMA). This is a new accreditation requirement.

Maternal & Infant Health

Maternal & Infant Health Coalition

Savannah Prince, Public Health Fellow/Intern and senior at Southern CT State University, continued working with Joan and the Valley MIH Coalition to continue rolling out the Valley Breast/chest-feeding Friendly Worksite (BFW) initiative. Carissa will be overseeing Savannah through the end of her fellowship and has also volunteered to step up as Co-Chair of the MIH Coalition after Joan's retirement.

WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, otherwise known as "WIC" continued to be provided for Valley residents in partnership with the Waterbury Health Department out of our Community Health Annex (100 Bank St) on "WIC Wednesdays" from 9am-4:30pm for the month of September. Waterbury will be turning over their WIC Program to Optimus Healthcare starting October 1st. I met with Lauren Keenan, Manager of WIC Nutrition Services and Verletha Santiago, Director of WIC Services with Optimus on September 28th.

Naugatuck Valley Overdose Prevention & Education (NOPE) Program

CHIP Substance Use Workgroup/ Valley Opioid Task Force

I have partnered with the Derby PD and Derby Youth Service Bureau to host a medication take back event On Saturday, October 28th at Bradley School (Derby). Lisa T. will be working at the event with me.

Academic Detailing on Opioids Safety (ADOPS)

Status: Contract Executed with CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

Carissa, Lisa T., Lorrie (APW), and I continue to train and prepare for upcoming Academic Detailing sessions.





Implementing Overdose Prevention Strategies at the Local Level (IOPSLL)

Status: In-Kind Partner Participation

We wrapped up the IOPSLL regional project led by the New Haven Health Department.

Overdose Data to Action: Limiting Overdose through Collaborative Actions in Localities (OD2A)

Status: Application Approved! Awaiting subcontract from New Haven Health Department.

The New Haven Health Department, Waterbury Health Department, and health districts/departments across New Haven County, including NVHD, jointly applied (New Haven will be the fiduciary) for federal funding up to \$10.4 million over five years to reduce health inequities and fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses by launching a New Haven county-wide campaign to reduce accidental overdoses and close gaps in access to care. The purpose of the initiative is to implement strategies that will decrease fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses, decrease illicit opioid and stimulate use, improve health equity, increase adoption of harm and stigma reduction strategies, and improve care by tracking data on connections to and retention in care. NVHD along with 5 other local health departments/districts will be hiring a total of 9 full-time Navigators (1 will be hired by NVHD for our jurisdiction) to link people who use drugs to care and support their retention if care in the Valley. We will have more information once we receive our subcontract from New Haven.

Air Quality and Climate Change

EPA Air Quality Monitoring Grant

Status: Application Approved; Awaiting Sub-Contract from CT DPH; Phase: Training and Planning Meetings

We are still awaiting our sub-contract from the CT DPH Office of Climate and Public Health for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)

I attended the Region 5 PHEP workgroup meeting for health directors and program staff hosted by the Region 5 CRI Lead, Torrington Area Health District, on September 12th. DPH hosted the first session of their new Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Capabilities Training Series on September 28th. The Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator grant funded position is posted.

ESF 8: Public Health & Medical Services, Chair

I facilitated the Region 5 ESF 8 meetings on September 8th. I attended the Region 2 ESF 8 meeting on September 20th and attended the Region 2 REPT meeting on September 15th. I am on the planning teams for the Region 2 and Region 5 Pandemic Influenza Tabletop Exercises.

CT Healthcare Coalition, Public Health Representative & Voting Member

I attended the CT Healthcare Coalition special meeting on September 20th and the CT HCC MRC Funding meeting on September 26th.

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

I continue to meet with the other 4 Regional Leads and our State MRC Coordinator to review/revise the Statewide MRC Strategic Plan goals and objectives. I attended the Region 2 MRC meeting on September 11th.

I attended Lisa T.'s evening QPR Suicide Prevention Training on September 21st and conducted a Loyalty Oath for 2 MRC Volunteers at the end of the training. Under State statute, MRC Volunteers are required to participated in a loyalty oath that can only be legally administered by a Director of Health, Emergency Management Director, or Town Clerk, every two years to be eligible for CT Title 28 liability coverage while activated to perform volunteer duties.





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CT DPH is now requiring all MRC volunteers to also have a background check completed in the CTResponds! online volunteer management system. I processed 2 background checks and submitted 3 activations for nurse support at upcoming flu clinics in October.

ELC Grant: Surveillance & Outbreak Response Team (SORT)

- COVID-19 – Status: Endemic Response
 - *An endemic means a disease is spreading in a community at normal or expected levels*

The following update is provided by SORT Coordinator, Paulina:

Cases of COVID-19 in the Valley have remained consistent throughout September; the higher numbers have prompted more rigorous case investigation, with the SORT team attempting to reach as many positive residents as possible. Please note that the numbers below only represent completed phone calls and sent letters—they do not show if staff left a voicemail, the resident disconnected the call, etc.

NVHD received ELC 2 funding at the start of September; the team will be focusing on more outreach projects in the upcoming months, such as health promotion campaigns and more structured rapid test kit distribution.

SORT successfully distributed the remaining shipment of test kits from August; NVHD is in the process of purchasing rapid COVID kits from iHealth and is accepting names for a waitlist. If you are interested in receiving bulk quantities of test kits, please contact Paulina at (203) 881-3255, ext. 118.

Table 1. Adult Case Statistics (18+)

	August	September
Total Cases & Contacts Managed	147	116
Successful Phone Contact	24	22
Attempted Contact: Letters Mailed	14	25

Table 2. Youth and Teen Case Statistics (0-17)

	August	September
Total Cases & Contacts Managed	6	17
Successful Phone Contact	1	8
Attempted Contact: Letters Mailed		



Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

Jess, Joan, Lisa T., and I continue to serve on the CHIP Steering Committee. Additional staff including myself, Jess, Joan, Lisa T., Kristie, and Bea have been participating in the new CHIP for 2022-2024 workgroups, which include equitable access to health services, mental health, and substance use.

During the month of September, we adapted the Rapid Community Assessment (RCA) method for our Community Health Improvement Plan. We opted to use this approach after the CAP team’s successful immunization RCA. Over three weeks, we held planning meetings, conducted interviews with residents across the Valley, held weekly debrief meetings, and are now finalizing our analysis of the information we collected.

Jess did a radio interview with Sharon Closius from the Valley Community Foundation on John Voket’s show “For the People” which aired on September 24th on 99.1 WPLR, 95.9 The Fox, Star 99.9, WEBE 108, and WICC 600, Apple Podcasts, iHeart Radio, and more. The interview highlighted The Valley Index (our community health assessment) and the CHIP work. Listen to the interview on the web: <https://bit.ly/ForthePeople9-24-23>. It was also an opportunity to promote our upcoming public forum on October 12th at Griffin Hospital from 5-6:45pm. Jess will be co-presenting with Monica from Griffin at that event. Individuals are encouraged to attend the event, but it will also be professionally recorded and broadcast on cable TV and Facebook Live.



Pictured left to right is Nancy, Vanessa, and Joan at the Naugatuck Harvest Festival where NVHD had a health education table and conducted interviews for the CHIP RCA.

Community Health Programs

A Matter of Balance

Two Matter of Balance programs ended at the end of September in Shelton and Ansonia. A new program started in Naugatuck and will continue into November. I held a Coach training for this program at the end of August and trained 7 new coaches from Chesprocott Health District, Town of Orange, and one of NVHD’s staff.



Group picture of the Shelton MOB graduates with Carissa and Lisa T.

Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP)

Kristie is currently enrolling participants for a phone DSMP program in November. See the flyer for details!

Chronic Pain Self-Management (CPSM)

Lisa T is also currently enrolling participants for two phone CPSMP programs in late October. See the flyer for details!

Question, Persuade, & Refer (QPR) Suicide Prevention Training

Lisa T. has planned QPR sessions for all Ansonia Board of Education employees! She will be visiting each school to offer the program to teachers and all staff, which is very exciting!

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

Lisa T. will be planning a MHFA in the near future.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Lead case management is a daily task that Lisa T. completes by reviewing an online database that shows any new testing results and updates needed. Lisa has been busy updating all our lead case files and reaching out to families in need.

Immunization Grants & Clinical Services

Immunization and Vaccines for Children COVID-19 Supplemental Funding

NVHD has been awarded \$409,222 that will be used for the contract period of September 1, 2023* to June 30, 2026. We submitted our work plan and budget request but are still waiting for our contract to be executed by the State.

Immunization Action Plan (IAP) and COVID-19 Immunization Action Plan (CAP) Grant Programs

Elizabeth, Nancy, Vanessa, Jess, and I attended the quarterly meeting for the IAP grant provided by CT Department of Public Health. This meeting is full of updates, vaccine representatives, grant insights, and more.

IAP: Elizabeth completed 1 virtual IQIP visit and 1 in-person site visit in September.

CAP: Nancy and Vanessa attended several back-to-school nights to promote our programs and services at Salem School (Naugatuck), Booth Hill (Shelton), and Andrew Ave School (Naugatuck). They also provided health education materials and talked with community members to help us learn more about barriers to health and social services as part of our Community Health Improvement Plan at the Naugatuck Harvest Fest. Lastly, they attend the monthly CT Foodshare food bank in Beacon Falls and Naugatuck to help serve hundreds of families.



Pictured left to right is Nancy, Carissa, Kristie, and Vanessa at the Annual Influenza Conference.

Clinical Services

Kristie has continued to be very busy with back-to-school vaccines for our school districts, especially Naugatuck. In September, she provided 60 vaccines to children in the Valley.

Community health & CAP staff attended the annual Influenza Conference at The Woodwinds in Branford. These conferences are full of new information related to vaccines, data, and what to expect for this upcoming flu season.

Flu clinics have begun! We had two clinics in September: UConn Waterbury employee clinic and Senator Kelly’s Health Fair. Offsite public flu clinics this fall:

Monday	10/2	10am-12pm	Beacon Falls Senior Center
Thursday	10/12	10am-1pm	Seymour Community Center
Friday	10/13	9-11am	Naugatuck Senior Center
Tuesday	10/17	11am-1pm	Derby Senior Center
Thursday	10/19	10am-12pm	Ansonia Senior Center

Appointments are also available by calling Nurse Kristie at 203-881-3255 x 107.

Healthcare-Associated Infections & Antimicrobial Resistance & Infection Prevention & Control

DPH continues to host a monthly meeting with the CT DPH HAI-AR staff and local health departments/districts building capacity in Infection Prevention & Control (IPC). Jess attended virtual meetings held on September 19th and September 27th.

Tuberculosis (TB)

Kristie attended the fall Tuberculosis conference in Hartford, which is provided by CT Department of Public Health, and provided updates to the TB program, information on billing, and lab results reading.

Miscellaneous

Connecticut Public Health Association Health Education Committee

Lisa T. hosted a CT health educator’s meeting at NVHD which is a great meeting to share ideas and thoughts related to programs and grants offered among CT health departments. There are several health educators from around the state who meet every other month to discuss ideas/thoughts about all different topics.

Events Recap

Lisa T. and Bea attended the Senator Kelly Health Fair at Shelton Senior Center to offer information on our programming. Carissa, Kristie, and Caitlin (ELC grant-funded LPN) were also in attendance providing flu vaccines for those interested.



Pictured left to right is Carissa, Caitlin, and Kristie



Pictured left to right is Bea & Lisa T.



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Pictured is a line of people waiting at the Beacon Falls Mobile Food Pantry



Pictured is Vanessa at the Beacon Falls Mobile Food Pantry



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES REPORT

Melanie Dokla, BS, RS

Assistant Director

September 2023

Food Service Establishments

Sanitarians continue to conduct seasonal inspections for itinerant vendors (food truck/trailers), concession stands at sporting events and temporary events.

We also continue to conduct routine inspections, plan views and inspections for food service establishments that are new or changing ownership.

A total of **48** temporary event inspections were conducted.

Body Care

The deadline for the renewal of all existing Body Care permits was September 30th. A reminder phone call was sent out via the OpenText MyPortal Broadcast System on September 28th. As of this today (October 4, 2023) **30** applications are still pending. Beginning October 2nd, a late fee of \$20/day will be assessed for all applications that miss the expiration. If applications and fees are not received by October 9th the business will be ordered to close immediately.

The inspectors are conducting annual inspections of the salons as the applications are received and processed. Staff continues to conduct plan views and inspections for body care establishments that are new or changing ownership.

Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems (SSDS)

Nicolette O'Kelly, Head Sanitarian, continues to conduct SSDS inspections, B-100 visit, soil testing, B-100 plan reviews, new SSDS plans reviews, and has issued permits to discharge.

Nicolette also continues to train staff in the SSDS program.

September 18-22, 2023 marked the 11th annual SepticSmart Week. Staff created and shared a fact sheet on septic system basic information.

Housing Complaints

Environmental staff continues to investigate housing code violations and complaints.

Lead

Lead abatement plans submitted by lead abatement contractors are being reviewed and property owners are issued written orders from this office. Once the project has received approval and work is completed, a final inspection is conducted to ensure work was done as specified in the plan.

On 9/6/23 I attended a lead poisoning prevention update meeting hosted by DPH. New regulations and changes in code definitions were discussed.

There was 1 case with elevated blood level that required site visit investigation in Derby.

Miscellaneous

Two sanitarian positions remain vacant; both positions are posted on our website, social media accounts (including LinkedIn), Indeed, and disseminated monthly to the CT Environmental Health Association membership and their website. Due to the lack of training at the Department of Public Health Food Protection Program and the competitive salaries at other departments/districts these positions will likely remain vacant for some time. All staff continue to do their best to keep up with the increased workload and we will continue to prioritize inspections based on needs (i.e., plan review, complaints and known “problem” establishments).

A per diem food inspector, Glenda, has continued to assist in conducting food service inspections after-hours and on the weekend up to 20 hours a week.

I completed the Food Inspector Training Officer (FITO) field training on September 20, 2023. This will allow me to train new staff members to become a Certified Food Inspector (CFI).

Emergency Responses After Hours

	Date/Time	Location	Description of Event
1.	Saturday 9/9/23 10:30AM	Wendy’s, Shelton	Smoke

Temporary Events

	Date	Event	Location
1.	9/9	Derby Day	Derby
2.	9/8-9/9	St. Michael’s Village Green Fair	Naugatuck
3.	9/15-9/16	Harvest Moon Festival	Naugatuck
4.	9/17	Pumpkin Festival	Seymour
5.	9/30	Harvest Festival	Ansonia