



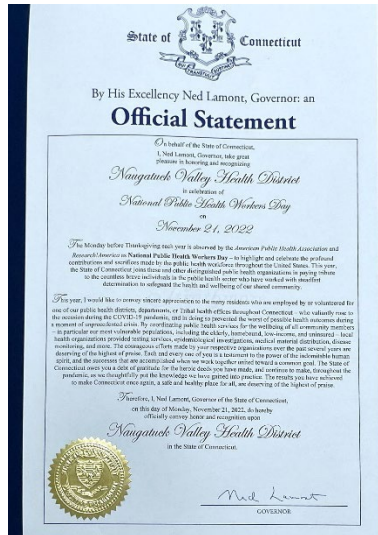
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH REPORT
Jessica Kristy, MPH
WINTER 2022
November & December

Miscellaneous

Carissa and I attended the first National Public Health Workers Day event that was hosted at the State Laboratory on November 21st. CT Department of Public Health Commissioner Manisha Juthani, MD, and the team from DPH honored colleagues from all the local health departments and districts as part of National Public Health Workers Day. As part of this special event, Commissioner Juthani presented each health department with a proclamation from Governor Ned Lamont which recognized the contributions made by all public health workers.



Picture 1: Pictured left to right are Shelton Board member Justin Rompre, Director of Health, Jess Kristy, and Assistant Director Carissa Caserta



Picture 2: A picture of the National Public Health Worker Day proclamation signed by Governor Lamont



Picture 3: Pictured left to right are Director of Health Jess Kristy, CT DPH Commissioner Manisha Juthani, and Assistant Director Carissa Caserta



Picture 4: Pictured is a large group of local public health directors and health department/district staff posing with Commissioner Juthani and some CT DPH staff members.





Carissa and I also continue to attend the virtual Valley Council for Health & Human Services meetings, which occur the first Tuesday of the month. The CT Association of Directors of Health (CADH) continues to meet virtually on the first Wednesday of the month.

Quality Improvement

NVHD has an interest in systemically evaluating and improving the quality of programs, processes, and services to achieve a high level of efficiency, effectiveness, and customer satisfaction. To achieve this culture of continuous improvement, QI efforts target the strategic organization, department, division, program, and project levels of the district. To continuously build NVHD’s quality improvement culture, and in compliance with national accreditation requirements, NVHD always maintains at least two quality improvement projects with one focused on administrative improvements and one focused on programmatic improvements. The Visibility/Communications Team held our first Community Listening Session to get local residents’ input on what they know about NVHD, and what additional programming we might consider addressing unmet community health needs. An ad was published in the menu of the Valley Diner (be sure to check it out if you go out to eat there!). The Pandemic to Endemic Transition (PET) Team continues to meet and work on their respective projects. 2 Quick QI Projects were submitted, 1 from Community Health and 1 from Environmental Health.



Additionally, during our staff meeting on November 3rd, Joan facilitated a quality improvement related team building exercise around the “Plan-Do-Study-Act” or PDSA method. PDSA is a four-stage problem solving model used to test out a change or improve a process and is used often in quality improvement (QI).

In the exercise, teams were challenged to apply the PDSA model to see which team could use the tools provided to build and fly a paper plane the farthest distance. Each team had three chances and made evaluations and improvements along the way.

Picture 5: A collage of pictures from the NVHD staff training activity on quality improvement.

Congrats to the winning team (Bea, Nancy, Amanda, and Mike) for flying 40 feet after working as a team to improve their design and flight ability!

Finally, the NVHD Branding Strategy (a PHAB required plan), was reviewed and updated by the Quality Improvement Team, with input from staff at the November staff meeting.





NVHD Gives Back Program

Amanda continued to coordinate our “NVHD Gives Back” program. During the months of October and November, we collected toys for the TEAM, Inc. Toys 4 Kids Holiday Drive along with many other Valley organizations. We were happy to help participate in this initiative that provided holiday gifts to around 2,000 children!

We will revisit the coordination of this initiative after the new year.



Picture 6: Pictured left to right are Amanda Michaud and Lisa Trupp posing with toys collected for the TEAM, Inc. Toys 4 Kids holiday collection drive.

Workforce Development

Carissa, Joan and I attended the CT Public Health Association (CPHA) Annual Conference that was held on November 1st at the Aqua Turf Club. The theme of this year’s conference was “Public Health in Connecticut: Where Do We Go From Here?” and had many great sessions. Joan helped coordinate one of the sessions on speed mentoring. I participated as a mentor during this session which gave public health students and prospects the opportunity to meet and greet with professionals to learn more about our career paths and public health experiences.

With funding from one of our NACCHO MRC grants, I was able to attend the national American Public Health Association (APHA) Conference in Boston from November 6-9. Amanda was not able to attend in person but was able to attend the virtual conference sessions. The theme of this year’s conference was celebrating 150 years of creating the healthiest nation and leading the path towards equity.



Picture 7: Pictured left to right are Jess, Carissa, and Joan at the CPHA Conference.



Picture 8: Pictured left to right are Brittan Williams, Senior Accreditation Specialist and NVHD’s Accreditation Specialist with Jess at the APHA Conference.

Legislative Changes Impacting Public Health

I continue to participate on the CT Lead Poisoning Prevention and Treatment Legislative Workgroup and attend additional meetings related to Public Act 22-49.

EPA Air Quality Monitoring Grant

We were pleased to find out that the CT DPH Office of Climate and Public Health was awarded the grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). NVHD is a sub-contractor on this grant, and we are awaiting our contract. The project will establish a network of low-cost air sensors to provide real-time measurements of pollutants in environmental justice communities (Ansonia and Derby) and provide training modules and an education and outreach campaign for community members to lead long-term air sensor network operation. A digital dashboard that will provide information about the effects of poor air quality days on health and link to existing programs to support community health will also be created. Staff from both Environmental and Community Health Divisions will be supporting this grant.





Community Health Assessment (CHA/Index) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

Carissa, Joan, and I continue to participate in the CHA/Index advisory committee. Lisa T. has also joined us as we venture into the new CHIP. The Index unveiling event was held on November 15th at Center Stage in Shelton. I was invited to return as a panelist alongside Pat Charmel, CEO of Griffin, Dr. Reese Morales of Ansonia Public Schools, David Morgan, President/CEO of TEAM, Inc., Bill Purcell from the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce, and Mark Abraham of DataHaven. Thank you to our Board members who attended the event! It was great having both staff and Board representation among the audience. The event was recorded and can be watched on YouTube using this link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm_3IDd0tuB1NKB4c7gzaWA.



Picture 9 & 10: Pictures from the Valley Community Index Unveiling event on November 15th at Center Stage in Shelton.

On December 15th, the CHIP Steering Committee hosted a public workshop to narrow down our 3 priority areas for the 2022-2024 Community Health Improvement Plan. I co-facilitated the workshop with Monica Oris from Griffin Health. Joan, Lisa T., and Beth (Yale-Griffin Prevention & Research Center) also attended the event and helped with logistics, attendance, and facilitation within the smaller working groups. We were pleased to have Mayor Cassetti join us at the start of the workshop to share some welcoming remarks as the event was held at the Ansonia Armory. The 3 priority areas for our CHIP include: Substance Use, Mental Health, and Equitable Access to Health Services. Recruitment and meetings will begin in early January.



Picture 11: Pictured left to right are Monica Oris, Griffin Health, Ansonia's Mayor Cassetti and Jess at the CHIP Workshop on December 15th at the Ansonia Armory.

On December 28th, I was interviewed by John Voket, Director of Public Affairs for Connoisseur Media CT as part of his radio segment "For the People." The radio interview talked about NVHD in general, the Valley Community Index and the CHIP. This is part of a series of interview related to the Valley and our community health assessment and work related to it. The interview aired on January 8th on 95.9 The Fox, WICC-AM, WICC-FM, WEBE 108, Star 99.9, and 99.1 WPLR. The interview is available to listen to online on those respective radio station websites and https://audioboom.com/posts/8225514-new-reach-vcf-index-pt-3-valley-health-district-green-village-initiative-gvi-pt-1?fbclid=IwAR3rplswCGtDIIMCMnRtTF3HS1RB8lqJFtg5fH_HliAbpIPEjvOqmmmvU.





Maternal & Infant Health Coalition

While this may not be a CHIP priority area, this coalition will continue to meet and work towards improving maternal and infant health in the Valley. The Coalition has officially launched efforts to promote CT's Breastfeeding Friendly Employer initiative, starting with securing NVHD's certification. We have also recruited a Fairfield University undergraduate in the Public Health program to support this project as part of his senior practicum starting in the spring 2023 semester.

Naugatuck Valley Overdose Prevention & Education (NOPE) Program

I continue to monitor overdose and substance use data. We are awaiting our contract with the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) for the 2-year Academic Detailing on Opioids Safety (ADOPS) grant. This is an evidence-based interactive educational outreach to physicians and prescribers to provide unbiased, non-commercial, evidence-based information about medications and other therapeutic decisions, with the goal to improve patient care. Lisa T., Carissa, and I will work with Lorrie McFarland from BHcare's Alliance for Prevention and Wellness on this project. NOPE Program work will be reported to the Substance Use CHIP Workgroup.

Emergency Preparedness

ESF 8: Public Health & Medical Services, Chair

I facilitated the Region 5 ESF 8 meeting on November 4th and December 2nd.

Surveillance & Outbreak Response Team (SORT)

- COVID-19 Pandemic – Status: Response
- Monkeypox Outbreak 2022 – Status: Standby
- Ebola Virus Disease 2022 Uganda Outbreak – Status: Standby
- Influenza, RSV, and other respiratory viruses: Monitoring

While we are monitoring and are prepared for response to other emerging infectious diseases, our Surveillance and Outbreak Response Team staff are still primarily working on the COVID-19 pandemic response. Congratulations to Paulina who has been promoted to the SORT Program Coordinator! The following update is provided by Paulina:

The team continues to meet with our school districts bi-weekly on Wednesdays to discuss case rates and mitigation strategies. We have requested a no-cost extension for our ELC1 grant but Paulina has still been working on preparing the SORT staff to transition to the ELC2 grant work plan (new grant contract and deliverables). As part of this work, the Team has updated a manual that outlines case protocol, staff expectations, reference documents and information, and more. Paulina has updated and created new vehicles to track our ongoing activities and deliverables.

The team did a big push to distribute our supply of home test-kits ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday. On December 20th, NVHD received a shipment of 12,060 test kits – which was great! With that being said, the test kits that we received are expiring on January 26, 2023 (which includes the extended shelf-life date). With the assistance from NVHD staff and community partners, we were able to distribute 7,650 of those test-kits by December 31st.

A special **thank you** to our community partners that helped join our holiday distribution: City/Town Halls: Ansonia, Derby, Seymour & Shelton; Ansonia, Derby, Seymour & Naugatuck Housing Authorities; Derby, Seymour & Shelton Libraries; Naugatuck & Seymour Police Departments; Derby, Naugatuck & Shelton Senior Centers; Seymour & Shelton Community Centers; Naugatuck Parks and Recreation; Shelton Office of Emergency Management; Echo Hose Ambulance; Derby Veterans Community Center; Naugatuck YMCA; United Way Beacon Falls; Valley Adult Regional Education; WIC; 67 Family Diner; Spooner House; Master's Table Community Meals; Naugatuck Soup Kitchen; My





Sister’s Place; The Salvation Army (Greater Valley); Abundant Life Ministries Church (Ansonia); St. Michaels Episcopal Church and food pantry (Naugatuck); Griffin Hospital’s Childbirth Center; Griffin Hospital Community Outreach Programs; BHcare’s Parent Child Resource Center; BHcare’s Clinical Services; Baker Pediatrics (Trumbull – IAP Jurisdiction); Children’s Medical Associates; Northeast Medical Group Family Medicine (Stratford – IAP Jurisdiction); Pieces of the Puzzle Learning Center; Julia Day Preschool; Joanne Scollin Childcare; and Laurel Ledge School.

Kits were also picked up by numerous residents from our office and **kits remain available for pick up at the office**. If you know anyone in need of test kits, please have them call Paulina at 203-881-3255 x 118 as soon as possible since these kits expire January 26th.

Table 1. Adult Case Statistics (18+)

	November	December
Total Cases & Contacts Managed	650	1,264
Successful Phone Contact	73	25
Attempted Contact-Letters Mailed	354	477
Attempted Phone Calls for Abbreviated Interviews	58	403
Not Attempted due to Delayed Report	111	15
No contact or attempt	54	343

Laboratory reported cases in November were 6% lower than in October and 42% lower than cases compared to November 2021. However, cases this December increased by 94%. A large surge of cases during a staff transition period resulted in more case letters being mailed out. Health education materials and a quarantine and isolation flow chart are accompanied with the case letters.

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

	November	December
Total Cases & Contacts Managed	74	155
Successful Phone Contact	18	17
Attempted Contact-Letters Mailed	0	0
Attempted Phone Calls for Abbreviated Interviews	36	81
Not Attempted due to Delayed Report	12	40
No contact or attempt	8	18

Similar to the increase in adult cases, from November to December we saw a 110% increase in positive cases. Additionally, 77 (November) and 173 (December) positive home-tests were reported to us by our school partners. These test results were predominantly for children. With the continued increase cases among the younger population, the SORT staff continue to prioritize outreach and interviews related to cases among minors and adolescents.





COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES REPORT
Carissa Caserta, MPH
Assistant Director
WINTER 2022
November & December

Community Health Programs

A Matter of Balance

A new Matter of Balance-Falls Prevention class started at the Derby Senior Center. We have a total of nine participants expected to complete the program.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Lisa T. was trained as a Lead Inspector/Lead Risk Assessor during a weeklong offsite training, provided free by CT DPH. This is in preparation for the new lead standards that will be instituted January 2023. The new standards will lower the level of blood lead levels in children that are actionable from 5.0ug/dl to 3.5 and will also lower the standards for necessary environmental home inspections incrementally over the next three years, which will increase the need for home inspections and therefore require more certified inspectors at the local level.

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

Lisa T. became a certified QPR instructor which is a great addition to our community programs. She has scheduled a few of these trainings already for January.

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

Our community health outreach team working on the COVID-19 Immunization Action Plan (CAP) grant continues to be heavily active out in the community attending events to promote our services and COVID clinics.

Nancy and Vanessa continue to excel in their outreach efforts by meeting the community out at various events and organizations. A few highlights during this reporting period include:

- Naugatuck YMCA: Greeted visitors and participants to the newly renovated YMCA in Naugatuck! They met several families and visitors and provided them with COVID-19 vaccine information as well as offered them assistance with scheduling appointments.
- Salvation Army Food Pantry: Contacted over 60 families to ensure they receive their Holiday food baskets along with distributing COVID-19 Test Kits and ensured they were aware of our Booster/Flu clinics held at NVHD on Thursdays.
- Valley Adult Regional Education Center: They met with students from the ESL and GED programs and provided them COVID-19 vaccine information and assisted them with scheduling appts. We hope to host a Vaccine Clinic in January.



Picture 12: Nancy Serrano, CAP Program Coordinator assisting a student at the Valley Adult Regional Education Center with information on COVID-19.





- St. Michael's Christmas Bazaar: Spoke with attendees on of how to stay safe and safeguard against COVID-19/Flu viruses to ensure a safe Holiday season with their families.



Picture 13: Pictured left to right: Vanessa Lopez, CAP Outreach Worker, Deb Deptula, Event Organizer, and Nancy Serrano, CAP Program Coordinator at the St. Michael's Christmas Bazaar.



Picture 14: Bea Allen, SORT Program Specialist handing out child friendly health education materials to a child at the St. Michael's Christmas Bazaar.

The Surveillance & Outbreak Response Team (SORT) and COVID-19 Immunization Action Plan Team (CAP)—have been working throughout various stages of the COVID-19 pandemic to provide reliable information and support to the public, in areas such as COVID-19 guidance, contact tracing, and immunization, often in tandem.

An example: in early December, Beatriz Allen, Program Specialist with SORT, called a Valley Resident who was COVID-positive. English was not their first language and this individual felt more comfortable speaking Spanish. NVHD is fortunate to have two bi-lingual, Spanish translators on staff. Vanessa Lopez, CAP Community Outreach Worker, was able to assist Beatriz with providing the resident vital isolation and quarantine guidance.

While the SORT team is a trusted source of COVID-19 information in the Valley, they are also able to provide residents with referrals to community resources and programs. This resident welcomed the help. They were given information regarding mortgage assistance from MyHomeCT.org and later met CAP's Nancy and Vanessa at Ansonia Salvation Army, where the team often volunteers and engages with the Valley community; there, food assistance and a donation of coats for the family was provided, and the resident learned of more resources available to them. The teamwork of the SORT and CAP teams enabled this family of six to get through a challenging time a little easier, and is a great reminder that public health is a joint effort.



Picture 15: Nancy and Vanessa pose with the unidentified woman who received multiple assistance for her family with the help of NVHD staff.





Clinic & Immunizations

NVHD staff have completed all scheduled flu clinics throughout October and November. We continue to provide flu vaccines into the New Year, as needed. Throughout the flu season so far, NVHD's nurse Kristie and our per diem/volunteer nurses administered 1,040 flu vaccines!

The weekly COVID-19 vaccine clinics are still on Thursdays 1:30-3:30pm. Nurse Kristie provided 67 COVID-19 vaccines throughout the months of November and December at the weekly clinics and is still conducting homebound visits.

In between flu/COVID clinics, Kristie has also been administering school vaccines to children. She has vaccinated 4 vaccines to those in need.

The scheduling link has been working and we will continue to use bit.ly/ValleyVaccine for individuals to make their vaccine appointments online. This has been posted on our website and social media and our flyers.

Miscellaneous

Community health has a lot of exciting grant projects starting in January! More details are forthcoming. See our website calendar of events <https://www.nvhd.org/category/events/> and social media pages for updated flyers on a LiveWell with Chronic Pain and Diabetes.





ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES REPORT

Melanie Dokla, BS, RS

Assistant Director

WINTER 2022

November & December

Food Service Establishments

Food service renewal applications were sent out mid-November. There were 642 renewal applications sent out to existing establishment, permits expire December 31, 2022. Establishments failing to renew their permits by the expiration date will be subject to a penalty of 10% of the annual permit fee per day until January 5, 2023.

A phone call was sent out via Easylink Service System to all food service establishments on December 8th informing them of the renewal application mailing. Reminder phone calls were sent out via Easylink Service System on December 28th and a “live” phone call will be made to the outstanding establishments on January 5th.

As of January 5, 2023, there are several establishments (59) that have not renewed their food service permit.

Staff continue to conduct plan views and inspections for food service establishments that are new or changing ownership.

Body Care

Staff continues to conduct plan views and inspections for body care establishments that are new or changing ownership.

Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems (SSDS)

Rich Jackson, 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.

Rich also continues to train staff in the SSDS program.

Housing Complaints

As the temperature becomes cooler the department is seeing a rise in housing complaints. These complaints are for no heat, no hot water and/or heat that is not reaching the required 65°F (Connecticut General State Statues Section 19a-109).

Emergency Reponses After Hours

	Date/Time	Location	Description of Event
1.	12/26/22 3:45pm	The Station, Naugatuck	Frozen/burst pipes

