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“Committed to improving the quality of life for Stratford residents through the promotion of health, prevention of disease, and by assuring a clean and safe environment.”



Strategies for Health

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our nearly three year journey towards becoming a nationally accredited local health department ended in March when the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) awarded us national accreditation! The Stratford Health Department is only the third health department to be recognized in Connecticut. And really, our journey has just begun. Our department has been transformed through the PHAB accreditation process fueling a culture of performance management and continuous quality improvement. We look at our work differently, collecting data on the work we do, analyzing it for trends to inform us if there are areas for improvement — all with the ultimate goal of improving the health of Stratford residents.

Our work continues to be guided by our five-year Strategic Plan, which we recently updated. One of our strategic goals is to continue our work with local partners to improve health outcomes. We are integral partners of the Primary Care Action Group (PCAG), a coalition of our two area hospitals, federally qualified health centers, other agencies, and the 6 local health departments of Greater Bridgeport.

PCAG, together with DataHaven, developed the second Community Health Assessment. Not surprisingly, obesity, cardiac disease and diabetes, mental health and substance abuse and access to health care remain top health priorities for the Community Health Improvement Plan. Our area participated in the statewide 2015 Community Well Being Survey providing an added dimension of viewing health in a context of what are termed “upstream” influences on a person’s health such as food security, jobs, access to health care, and education.

We are also excited about being part of the community gardening movement! How often does a gardener say “What am I going to do with all these tomatoes and zucchinis?” We’ve formalized our work connecting fresh, local produce with food pantries.

Community Services and Stratford Partnership for Youth and Families continue to foster preventative messaging and strategies. Resilient youth are the future of our community—developing assets and instilling healthy behaviors are building blocks Community Services and the Partnership strives to provide in a safe and drug-free Stratford.

Public Health has far reaching impacts—it’s not just about inspecting restaurants or sampling bathing waters! The intent of our 4th annual report is to highlight the many ways we protect and promote the health of Stratford residents. We hope you find it informative.

In Health,
Andrea L. Boissevain, MPH

AT A GLANCE: PUBLIC HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS

62 Putting on Airs asthma visits	1,669 Counseling sessions provided
2,144 Visits to Wooster School Clinic	591 Flu vaccines administered
373 Visits to School Dental Clinics	113 Individuals immunized
43,213 Food Pantry meals provided	676 Disease reports reviewed
1,107 Pounds of medication deposited	734 Citizen complaints investigated
62 Putting on AIRS home visits	72 Screened through Know Your #’s

HEALTHY PEOPLE THRIVING IN A HEALTHY STRATFORD

ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

ZIKA EMERGES

Zika virus emerged as a public health emergency in early 2016 based on the rise of virus reports in Brazil accompanied by an increase in the number of infants born with microcephaly, a serious birth defect. In CT, leaders initiated early emergency plans to prepare for the potential of a local threat. The State received a grant to enhance efforts to protect the public and monitor serious birth defects and other adverse health outcomes caused by the virus. Locally, the SHD worked with Town and State partners to develop a mosquito control plan that included trapping, testing, and monitoring mosquitoes. The SHD also worked with local physicians to monitor and report residents presenting with Zika symptoms. Through social media and direct outreach, staff provided education to those traveling abroad to locations with active Zika, as well as on general best practices for mosquito control. Free mosquito dunks were distributed to the public.

DRILLS & EXERCISES

The SHD participated in a Statewide drill to test receiving and distributing medical counter measures. MDA 12 partners practiced response to a fictional MERS-CoV outbreak through a table top exercise. Regional response to a fictional Ebola outbreak was also exercised with ESF-8 partners.

MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

The Stratford-Trumbull-Monroe MRC volunteers practiced setting up a tent that could be used as a point of dispensing (POD) for medical countermeasures should a traditional POD location become unusable. The MRC shared preparedness information at the Pumpkin and Main Street festivals. The group received a competitive grant through NACCHO to implement a Know Your Numbers screening campaign in all 3 towns.

FOOD SAFETY

The number of Food Service Establishment inspections and re-inspections increased this year with 536 completed. Re-inspections occur when an establishment fails to get a score of 80 or above. Two years of food inspection data were analyzed to identify the top two violations at class 3 and 4 food establishments in Stratford and develop strategies to reduce risks. These violations were: food contact surfaces improperly designed, constructed, maintained, installed, and/or located, and unclean food contact surfaces. The SHD continued a project to offer free food safety training to all faith-based organizations in Stratford. Staff worked with intra-agency partners to customize permitting software for certain licenses which will provide the option of completing and paying for applications online.

COSMETOLOGY

SHD conducted 87 inspections of beauty salons, barbershops, and nail salons. Inspection forms were translated into Mandarin and Cantonese languages and an informational training session was offered in these languages to nail salons owners.



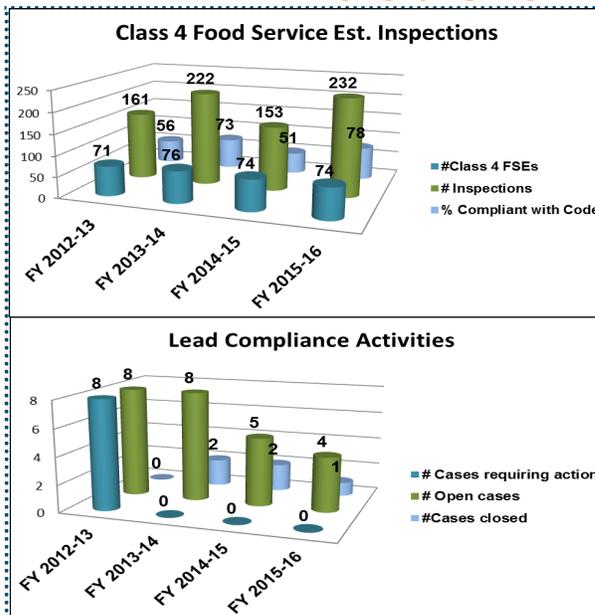
RAYMARK

In June 2016, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a Proposed Plan for a portion of the Raymark Industries, Inc. Superfund Site. Throughout the year, the SHD worked in conjunction with the EPA, the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and the CT Department of Public Health on community involvement activities surrounding the release of EPA's Proposed Plan. This work consisted of door-to-door outreach, public information sessions, and meetings with community groups to discuss concerns and answer questions regarding Superfund actions in the community. The SHD also received and responded to several public inquiries about the Raymark Site, including inquiries about specific property contamination and the history and components of Raymark waste.

LEAD

Reports of 36 adults and children with elevated blood lead levels were received, with 15 reports requiring follow-up. The SHD also held two Renovate, Repair, and Painting (RRP) courses for 22 contractors.

A Focus on Trends



Class 4 FSEs present the highest risk for food-borne illness and 4 inspections per year are mandated by CT code. Percentage that comply with code refers to FSEs that were inspected according to this algorithm. The SHD tracks this data in performance management dashboards to understand inspection rate trends and develop solutions to barriers to achieving full compliance. For example, based on lower than expected rates last fiscal year due to loss of staff and accreditation work, a part-time food inspector position was added.

All lead cases involving children under 6 with elevated blood lead levels are investigated by the nurse, but those above 15 µg/dL require an environmental review. No new cases required environmental action in FY 16. The SHD staff has worked to close long-standing lead cases that require remediation to a dwelling on the part of the landlord or homeowner. The more difficult cases to reconcile often end in the legal system. Data are tracked by the SHD to ensure the number of open cases is being reduced each year.



STRATFORD PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Stratford Partnership for Youth and Families mobilizes youth and community partners to reduce youth substance abuse and create a safe, healthy and drug-free environment where youth and families thrive. Goals are to increase community collaboration and reduce youth substance use, focusing on underage drinking and marijuana. The Partnership received the 2015 Lighthouse Award for “Outstanding Dedication and Volunteer Service to the Town of Stratford” from the Stratford Community Fund. A new web site was launched at www.stratfordpartnership.org.

ASSET BUILDING

Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets is a research-based framework that identifies positive building blocks that all young people need to be healthy and successful. Research shows that the more assets, such as integrity, family support and responsibility, in a young person’s life, the more likely they are to avoid drugs and alcohol. The Partnership launched Asset Building Classrooms (ABC). In June, 120 students in grades 5, 7, 9 and 10 from all 16 schools, including St. Marks and St. James, along with 25 teachers completed ABC training at Flood Middle School. During training, the student Asset Ambassadors and school Asset Representatives learned about the 40 Developmental Asset approach and planned school-wide ABC activities for the next school year. The 5 priority assets for 2016-17 are: Caring School Climate, Positive Family Communication, Adult as Role Models, Community Valuing Youth and Youth as Resources.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SAFE HOME, SAFE PARTIES

In the spring, the Partnership piloted a “Safe Homes, Smart Parties” initiative, where parents can take an online pledge that their home is a safe, drug and alcohol-free environment where teens can socialize. Once parents take the pledge, they have access to a password protected page listing all the other “safe homes” in Stratford. In addition, SPYF continuously reminds the public of the legal consequences of hosting a house party under Connecticut’s Social Host Law.

#RX EFFECT

The Partnership’s Youth Committee created a social media campaign called #RxEffect to raise awareness about the dangers and consequences of prescription drug misuse and abuse. They produced a website, social media memes and messages, as well as event handouts to increase awareness. #RxEffect reached an estimated 8,000 individuals, including legislators, community leaders, parents and adults. To view the #RxEffect campaign, go to: www.rx-effect.org.

PREVENTION WORKS

The Partnership implemented an array of prevention strategies to reduce substance use among youth. In March, the 3rd annual *Freshman Forum*, an underage drinking and marijuana use prevention forum for all 9th graders and their families was held. Youth produced a video PSA to inform other youth about the consequences of driving under the influence of marijuana. In partnership with the police explorers, a *Sticker Shock Campaign* was conducted where stickers were placed on alcoholic beverages in 4 participating liquor stores reminding adults of the consequences of providing/buying alcohol for minors. A regional “Community Discussion on CT’s Opioid Addiction Crisis” led by legislative leaders was promoted.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

In collaboration with the Stratford Police Department, 2 tobacco compliance checks and 1 alcohol compliance check were conducted. The results of the tobacco compliance check reported a 14% failure rate of tobacco merchants. When merchants are found in violation, they are fined and referred to the State for sanctions and penalties. All of the 25 off-premise alcohol merchants (liquor stores) checked were found in compliance this year. In addition, Stratford Police increased surveillance to keep our parks and beaches safe and family friendly. Since the grand opening in October 2013, the Medication Drop Box located at the Stratford Police Department has collected and properly disposed of over 3,000 pounds of medication.



Special thanks to PowertotheParent.org for developing and sharing these materials



SOUTH END COMMUNITY CENTER (SECC)

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The SECC received \$20,000 for the K-6 After School Enrichment Program and \$15,000 for scholarship support for the Summer Soiree Program from Fairfield County Community Fund. The After-School Program had approximately 15 children enrolled during the school-year. Summer Soiree had an average of 37 enrollees in the 6-week program. Black History Month was celebrated with an essay contest held in partnership with the Stratford Library. Over 160 participants students submitted entries. Through the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program, the SECC helped 530 individuals/families complete income tax forms—364 at the SECC location and 166 at the Franklin Elementary School site.

FOOD PANTRY

Food pantry services were offered 3 days a month for residents meeting income criteria, as well as emergency food support. This year 43,213 meals were provided with an emphasis on offering healthy food choices for families. Food donations are accepted year round.

RIBBON CUTTING

Renovations to the SECC building were completed and celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Staff offices, reception and waiting areas were remodeled and included the updating of a public bathroom to make it handicap accessible.



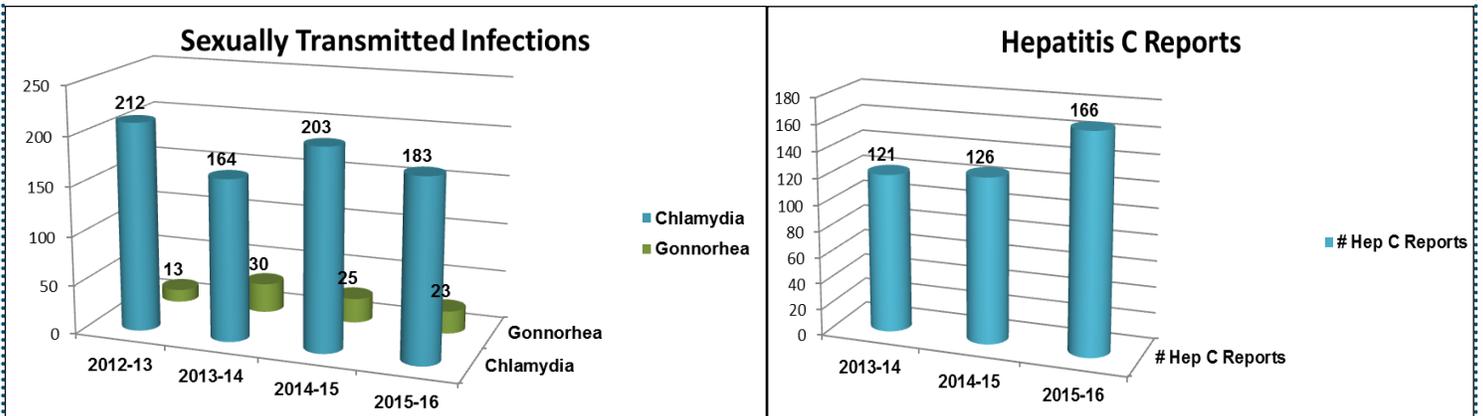
FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

Stratford Community Services (SCS) provided counseling services to youth and families, information and referrals resources, and energy assistance. Special programs included:

- Three Mental Health First Aid classes, 2 Adult and 1 Youth with a total of 45 new Mental Health First Aiders trained. Courses continued the initiative to educate and provide tools to residents for assisting someone who is developing a mental health crisis.
- October is National Depression Screening month and screenings were held at the Pumpkin Festival, Farmers Market and Health Department. Information and resources were made available at the Stratford Library.
- The Juvenile Review Board provided services to youth and families in collaboration with the Public Schools and the Police Department. Youth were provided an intense level of support and mentoring in addition to family counseling.
- *Raising Resilient Youth*, an evidenced-based parenting program that teaches parents communication skills and strategies to assist children in developing resiliency in the face of life's social and emotional challenges, was offered both at SCS and Lordship Elementary School.
- SCS served as a satellite office for The Center for Family Justice, which provides caring support, information and referral, crisis services and shelter for victims of domestic and sexual violence including child abuse.
- Yoga and Mindfulness demonstrations were offered throughout the community. SCS implemented *Kripalu in Schools Yoga* curriculum, an evidenced based Yoga and Mindfulness for adolescents at Bunnell High and Flood Middle Schools.
- In partnership with Stratford Public Schools, SCS conducted afterschool programming to support academic enrichment and youth development at Flood and Wooster Middle Schools.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

A Focus on Trends



Data showed declining chlamydia infections reported to the SHD (n=183) as well as gonorrhea (n=23) in this fiscal year. The SHD continued partnering with the board of education to implement sexual health curriculum in public schools.

The SHD received 94 Hepatitis C reports. Nursing staff partnered with the State to implement a data improvement project to ensure State data corresponded with local reports for the disease.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Staff and volunteers increased the number of residents screened through the Know Your Numbers campaign by 20 residents (52 to 72). Cholesterol, blood pressure, waist circumference, and BMI screenings were provided at locations throughout the community and at public events.

FOOD ACCESS

The SHD established several strategies to increase access to healthy foods in town. The first was connecting excess produce grown at The Farm at Stratford Community Garden to food pantries and soup kitchens. Signage and a donation bin were posted at the farm and staff transported fresh produce to pantries weekly. A web page was created to provide backyard gardeners with locations to donate excess produce: www.townofstratford.com/DonateProduce. A list of healthy items to donate instead of traditional high-fat/sodium items was also promoted to the public. Environmental staff worked with the Police Activities League to conduct soil testing to find a suitable location for an additional Community Garden, which opened next to Honeyspot School in June.

SCHOOL HEALTH

DENTAL

The SHD opened 3 new mobile dental clinics at Flood Middle School, Stratford High School, and the Birdseye Municipal Complex. Additional mobile sites include clinics at Wooster, Nichols, Franklin, and Lordship. The SHD continued to operate a dental clinic at Stratford Academy/Johnson House School. Staff completed 373 patient visits, an increase over last year.

HEALTH CENTER

The Wooster School-Based Health Center (SBHC) partnered with school administration to implement "Rachel's Challenge" based on the writings of the first student killed at Columbine High School. The program provides a sustainable, evidence-based framework for positive climate and culture in schools with the goal to reduce harassment, bullying and violence. Over 430 students were enrolled in the SBHC, an increase over last year's enrollment. Patient visits also increased.

EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH

The SHD partnered with the Stratford School Readiness and Child Care Advisory Committee to survey home and center-based childcare providers on current nutrition and physical activity policies and procedures in an effort to modify behaviors that may be leading to poor health outcomes among children birth to age 5.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The SHD reviewed 676 communicable disease reports (food borne illnesses, sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis, flu, etc.) with 78 reports requiring follow-up including a large outbreak at a facility in Town. A quality improvement project was completed to streamline the process of disease report intake, strengthen confidentiality practices and improve the efficiency of data entry.

CONNECTING
Gardeners and Food Pantries

Do you have excess produce from your garden that you want to share?

Donate your excess garden-fresh fruits and vegetables to restock the shelves of our local food pantries and soup kitchens with healthy, seasonal offerings.

Questions? Contact:
 Stratford Health Department
 203-385-4090

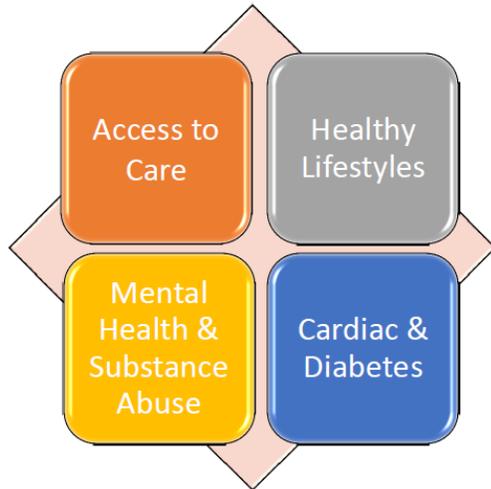
Find produce drop-off locations at:
www.townofstratford.com/DonateProduce



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2016 COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

The SHD, along with partners in the Greater Bridgeport Region, finalized a 2016 Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Improvement Plan (CHIP). Primary and secondary data collected by DataHaven as part of the Connecticut Well-Being Survey was used as the basis of the CHA. A consultant facilitated focus groups and interviews to collect qualitative data that were also used to inform the CHA and CHIP. A public meeting was held in May at the Discovery Magnet School in Bridgeport to share data and gather feedback from the community. Based on the 2016 data, the collaborative under Greater Bridgeport Area Primary Care Action Group (PCAG) chose to continue to prioritize and address four health priority areas identified in the 2013 CHA: Access to Care, Healthy Lifestyles, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, and Cardiac and Diabetes. The full CHA can be accessed at: www.townofstratford.com/healthdata.



HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The SHD staff each of the 4 committees working on CHIP priorities. Each group met monthly to implement strategies. Progress and achievements were many.

ACCESS TO CARE

Access to Care members actively participate in the CT Asthma Coalition with the goal to increase access to services, decrease emergency department (ED) visits and hospital admissions, and promote consistency with asthma action plans use. The group also worked with dental providers to identify barriers to access to dental care for adults.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

The Get Healthy CT coalition implements strategies to promote healthy lifestyles with the ultimate goal of reducing obesity. Several initiatives were continued such as monthly information packets and National Dance Day. The GetHealthyCT.org web site was updated with new resources and a new "Walk and Talk" series was implemented in which community members participate in physical activity while discussing important health issues with area physicians.

MENTAL HEALTH/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse committee launched a care coordination team to support high emergency department mental health utilizers. A new initiative is underway to implement routine mental health screening in doctors' offices and urgent care centers.

CARDIAC/DIABETES

The Cardiac and Diabetes group increased the number of Know Your Numbers screenings and worked with food pantries to promote healthier choices for patrons. The group also launched a pilot program for blood pressure self-monitoring at a local food pantry.



ACCREDITATION

PHAB

The SHD achieved national accreditation in March 2016 through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) following 3 years of working toward this monumental achievement. The SHD became the third health department in Connecticut to receive this recognition. The public health accreditation program sets standards towards which the nation's nearly 3,000 governmental public health departments can continuously work to improve the quality of their services and performance. To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment to ensure it meets or exceeds a specific set of quality standards and measures. The SHD celebrated in June at the Perry House. The celebration was attended by the State Health Commissioner.

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

The SHD continues to track performance measures to drive projects that improve the quality and efficiency of services offered. This ongoing process was first launched to prepare for accreditation. A staff retreat was held in May to align the current strategic, quality improvement and performance management plans. Edits and improvements were made to all 3 plans to streamline current efforts.

Strategies for Health

ANNUAL REPORT FY 16



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