



# Strategies for Health

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

What gets measured gets done, as the saying goes. This year the divisions that make up our department—Health, Community Services, and Senior Services—began a journey to take a closer look at what we do and how well we do it. Data were collected and measured along the way to inform us of strengths and areas for improvement.

Continuous quality improvement has become the Health Department’s new “mantra” and putting it to work every day is one of the foundational underpinnings of being nationally accredited as a local health department. Over the last 18 months we have been preparing our application to the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). We submitted our application at the end of May and are now preparing for the PHAB team site visit! Guided by our five-year Strategic Plan, we updated procedures, synched local ordinances with revised state regulations and continued our work with local partners to improve health outcomes.

Stratford Partnership for Youth and Families, formally Stratford Youth and Family Advisory Board, in collaboration with Community Services was awarded a federal Drug Free Communities grant. Data were collected to get a better understanding of youth substance use. A public health planning model is being used to determine the root causes and local conditions of youth alcohol and marijuana use to plan and implement effective strategies.

This year Senior Services became part of the Stratford Health Department umbrella. We continue to look for ways to leverage resources and address health needs as our residents age. Seniors are a growing segment of the Stratford population and we are looking to promote “aging in place” as well as keeping seniors active as long as possible.

Our staff are still very involved in addressing obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes, mental health and substance abuse and access to health care with our partners in the Greater Bridgeport area. You may have even received a call to participate in the 2015 Community Well-being Survey—it’s similar to the one that was conducted back in 2012 and it’s YOUR chance to be heard. It’s all about collecting data and measuring progress!

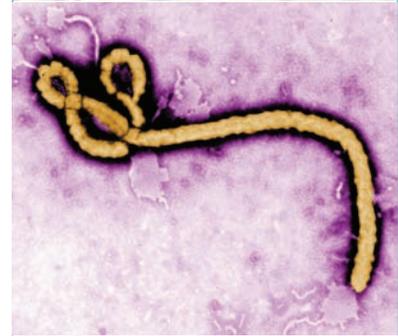
I hope you find our third Annual Report useful, providing a snapshot of local public health, highlighting programs, services, and behind-the-scenes work we do to keep Stratford healthy.

In Health,

**Andrea L. Boissevain, MPH**

## AT A GLANCE: PUBLIC HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>35</b> Putting on Airs asthma visits      | <b>1,362</b> Counseling sessions provided  |
| <b>2,079</b> Visits to Wooster School Clinic | <b>482</b> Influenza vaccines administered |
| <b>356</b> Visits to School Dental Clinics   | <b>79</b> Individuals immunized            |
| <b>40,562</b> Food Pantry meals provided     | <b>704</b> Disease reports reviewed        |
| <b>1,055</b> Pounds of medication deposited  | <b>658</b> Citizen complaints investigated |
| <b>11,064</b> Exercise program users         | <b>52</b> Screened through Know Your #'s   |



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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.”**

# ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

### ALL EYES ON EBOLA

The 2014 Ebola epidemic was the largest in history, affecting multiple countries in West Africa. Several cases also made their way to the U.S. The SHD had weekly contact with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) regarding local tracking and monitoring of potential patients who traveled to affected countries. Meetings with local Hospital personnel were organized to review roles, responsibilities and protocols for patient identification and transport. The SHD took the lead locally for Ebola planning with the input of Stratford emergency personnel.

### DRILLS & EXERCISES

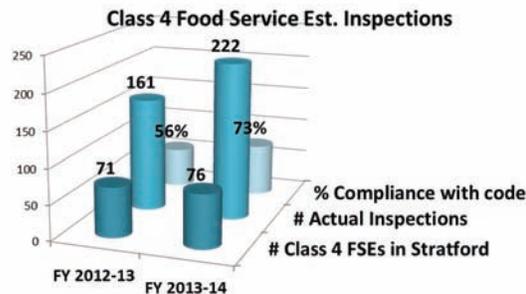
The SHD participated in a regional receiving and distribution site drill in Stamford to test delivery of strategic national stockpile (SNS) assets. Staff also spent a day at Jennings Beach in Fairfield participating in a drive-through Point of Dispensing (POD) drill to test antibiotic dispensing throughput. Quarterly, call-down drills were organized with CT DPH to practice communication with emergency personnel via the Town's emergency notification system. Stratford received a State asset of a portable generator and tent that could be used to set-up an outdoor POD.

### MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

Stratford-Trumbull-Monroe volunteers were kept at-the-ready during the Ebola crisis and several meetings were held to discuss situation status and recommended Ebola protocols. Volunteers participated in a Red Cross shelter training and were activated to assist with Know Your Numbers (blood pressure and cholesterol) and Hepatitis C screenings, volunteer recruitment at public events and flu clinics.

## A Focus on Trends

As part of the SHD's overall departmental Performance Management initiative, the Environmental team sharpened focus on trends in environmental data in an effort to improve processes and determine health impacts. Specifically, food service establishment (FSE) inspections and lead data trends were brought into focus.



Class 4 FSEs represent the highest risk for foodborne illness and 4 inspections per year are mandated by CT code. Percentage that comply with code refers to the FSEs that were inspected according to this algorithm.



All lead cases involving children under six with elevated blood lead levels are investigated by the nurse, but those above 20 ig/dl require an environmental review. No new cases required environmental action in FY 15.

### COMPLAINTS & INVESTIGATIONS

The SHD received 658 citizen complaints related to garbage, odors, noise, varmints and insects, and more. Fifty customer feedback surveys were disseminated to those calling the health department for a concern or complaint. Comments and suggestions from the survey were integrated into revising departmental Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

### FOOD SAFETY

Food inspectors reviewed and updated SOPs related to food inspections and developed a new system to track inspection due dates for class 1—4 establishments. 448 inspections and re-inspections were completed. Re-inspections occur when an establishment fails to get a score of 80 or above. The temporary food event form was revised and a new policy set in place for submitting applications and related fees. A free food safety training program was provided for all faith-based organizations as part of a quality improvement project.

### COSMETOLOGY

SHD conducted 87 inspections of beauty salons, barbershops, and nail salons. Salon and barbershop owners were surveyed regarding SHD's quality of services and whether they thought it would be fair to impose a penalty on salons or barbershops that employ unlicensed hairdressers or barbers. Input was sought as part of the process of revising a local ordinance to ultimately protect public health. A training was held in April with 13 nail salon employees to review blood-borne pathogen and cleaning protocols.

### LEAD

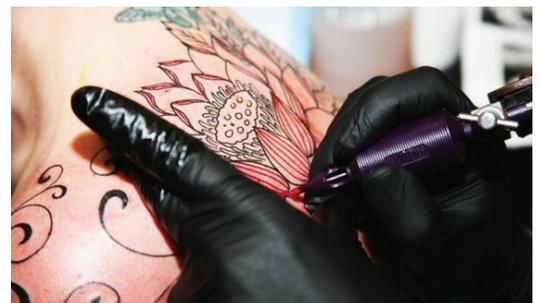
Reports of 36 residents with elevated blood lead levels were received, with 15 reports requiring follow-up. The SHD also held two Renovate, Repair, and Painting (RRP) courses for 36 contractors.

### CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

The SHD solicited customer feedback from the stakeholder groups it regulates: food service establishments, public pools; rooming houses and hotels; hair and nail salons and barbershops. Feedback was used to modify SOPs and local laws as a means to ensure quality in providing services that protect the health of residents.

### TATTOO

Changes to our local tattoo ordinance were approved by Town Council in early 2015. The SHD researched best practices related to ensuring the health and safety of tattoo patrons with input from a local tattoo studio and used state regulations as a basis for formulating revisions to the tattoo ordinance.



## STRATFORD PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Stratford Partnership for Youth and Families (SPYF) mobilizes youth and community partners to reduce youth substance abuse and create a safe, healthy and drug-free environment where youth and families thrive.

Formally known as the Youth and Family Advisory Board, SPYF received a federal Drug Free Communities grant from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy in October 2014. This five-year grant totaling in \$625,000 will increase community collaborations and reduce youth substance use.

SPYF members represent 12 sectors of the Drug-Free Communities prevention circle and meet throughout the year to develop and implement strategies. Everyone has a role to play in furthering the mission and achieving the vision for a safe, healthy and drug-free Stratford.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

In order to successfully achieve their goals and objectives, SPYF uses the Strategic Prevention Framework, a five-step public health planning model. The process begins with a clear understanding of community needs and capacity building, which has been a key focus of SPYF in year one of the federal Drug Free Communities funding. Numerous key informant interviews, focus groups and assessment activities, such as community mapping, were conducted to get a qualitative understanding of the root causes and local conditions of youth alcohol and marijuana use. The root causes identified include: favorable attitudes toward substance use and availability of alcohol and marijuana to youth through access in the home, community, through older siblings, and/or local merchants who sell illegally to minors.



## ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

In collaboration with the Stratford Police Department, two alcohol compliance checks and two tobacco compliance checks were conducted. The results of the alcohol compliance checks reported a 15% failure rate of off-premise alcohol merchants (stores) and a 28% failure rate of on-premise (bars) establishments. The results of the tobacco compliance check reported a 15% failure rate of tobacco merchants. When merchants fail they are fined and referred to the State for sanctions and penalties.

## DATA-DRIVEN STRATEGIES

In November 2014, Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP) presented the Search Institute's Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behavior Student survey results of Stratford Middle and High School youth. To view the results of the survey visit: [townofstratford.com/SPYF](http://townofstratford.com/SPYF). Youth, parents and community members also completed surveys about youth access to alcohol and marijuana.

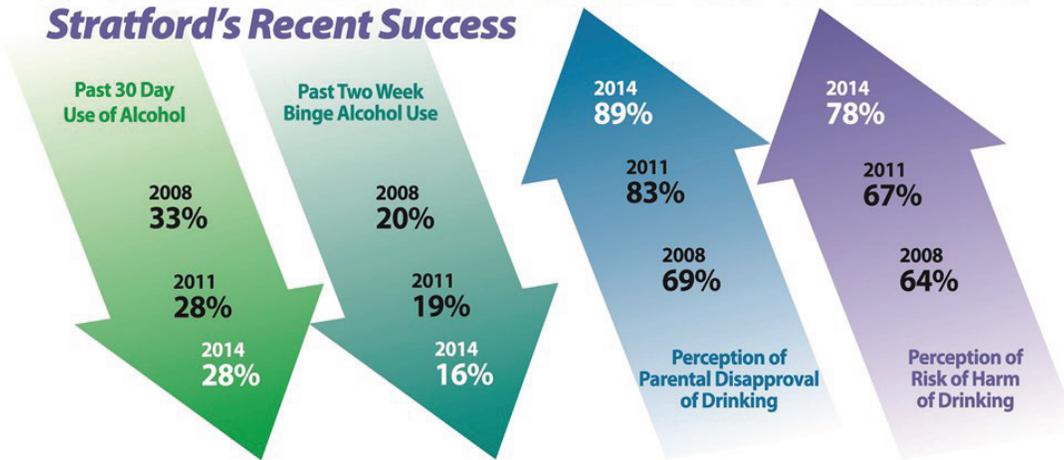
## SENIOR SERVICES

### KEEPING SENIORS HEALTHY

Keeping older adults physically and mentally healthy were central to programming at Stratford Senior Services—Baldwin Center, which serves about 400 people daily in a variety of capacities. Exercise, nutrition, and relaxation programs were offered, as well as events to support learning and social connections, such as card games, dances, and events like the Big E. There were 11,064 visits to exercise programs (aerobics, tai chi, Zumba, yoga), and 701 visits to health programs including alternative activities like Reiki, reflexology, and laugh yoga. Speakers provided presentations on heart health, healthy cooking, fall prevention, and more. Hearing, dental, and blood pressure screenings were provided. Seniors received assistance with applications for SNAP, Medicare, energy assistance, and more. Thirty residents enrolled in the CARES adult model day activity program, which offers a variety of social, physical, and mental health programs that not only engage seniors who wish to remain independent, it provides respite for caregivers. Learn more about Senior Services at [townofstratford.com/seniorservices](http://townofstratford.com/seniorservices).

# PREVENTION WORKS

## Stratford's Recent Success



### PREVENTION AT WORK

Stratford has been successful at lowering underage alcohol and drug use and increasing perception of harm through collaborative prevention work with partners. Strategies implemented this past year included:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> annual *Freshman Forum*, an underage drinking prevention event for all 9<sup>th</sup> graders and their families
- Trumbull Mall advertisement of the Stratford Medication Drop Box located at the Police Department
- *Movin' On Up* for rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders and families to learn about potential issues at the middle school
- *Sticker Shock* campaign, in collaboration with Police Explorers, which featured stickers being placed on packs of alcoholic beverages in 5 participating stores, reminding adults of the consequences of providing alcohol to minors

### FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

Stratford Community Services provided counseling and social services including adolescent and family counseling, groups, information and referrals to community resources, and energy assistance. Special programs took place throughout the year such as:

- Three *Mental Health* and *Youth Mental Health First Aid* workshops with 72 participants. *Mental Health First Aid* is an internationally recognized course that gives the skills needed to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Mental health wellness check-ups at public events during *National Depression Screening Month* in October
- *Spring into Wellness Health Fair* at the Stratford Library as part of May Mental Health Awareness month. The event included yoga, chair yoga and meditation.
  - *Yoga and Mindfulness* groups for youth
  - Parenting programs including *Raising Resilient Youth*, which focused on providing parents with practical skills for helping children develop resiliency to withstand life's challenges and social and environmental pressures
  - *Color of Justice Community Forum* to discuss race as a factor in the juvenile justice system
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> annual *Domestic Violence Vigil* at the Stratford Town Hall



## SOUTH END COMMUNITY CENTER

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

The South End Community Center (SECC) conducted a needs assessment with the University of New Haven Industrial/Organizational Psychology Graduate Program to: 1) collect and analyze existing data about user demographics (age, gender, race/ethnicity, economic status, household characteristics) and quality of life indicators (health, employment, transportation, and housing); 2) analyze existing programs and activities; and 3) through focus groups and surveys, gauge public and other service provider's understanding of the SECC and its role in the south end neighborhood. The input helped to identify unmet needs and develop recommendations for programming, ultimately resulting in a strategic plan.

### FOOD PANTRY

Food pantry services were offered three days a month for residents meeting income criteria, as well as emergency food support. This year 40,562 meals were provided. Donations are accepted year round.

### COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The SECC provided 559 residents with income tax preparation support for individuals and families earning less than \$52,000 annually. Financial education was included as part of this program. During Black History Month, the SECC partnered with the Stratford Library to sponsor an essay and poster contest. Youth enrichment programs for students in kindergarten through sixth grade were offered during the school year and summer vacation.



# COMMUNITY SERVICES

## GET HEALTHY CT

The SHD continued to partner with Get Healthy CT, a coalition dedicated to preventing and reducing obesity by removing barriers to healthy eating and physical activity through the inclusive collaboration of key stakeholders in the community. This year 54 individuals in Stratford were screened for blood pressure and cholesterol as part of the *Know Your Numbers* campaign. Screenings were held at local food pantries to capture some of our most vulnerable residents who may experience barriers to accessing health care. National Dance Day took place in July to get people active through dance. Monthly packets with tips about healthy eating and staying active were printed and put in public places around the community. To learn more visit [www.gethealthyct.org](http://www.gethealthyct.org).



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# COMMUNITY HEALTH

## PUTTING ON AIRS

The SHD worked to strengthen the network of referral sources (local medical providers) in Putting on AIRS Asthma Region 7 and develop a coalition to address local asthma related health issues. The SHD made 35 home visits to perform an environmental review for asthma triggers, education, and disease management information.

## DIABETES SELF-MANAGEMENT

Two sessions of the Stanford University evidence-based Diabetes Self-Management Program were held at the Baldwin Center with 27 people completing the six-week program. All participants reported an increase in knowledge and positive health behaviors as a result of the program.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The SHD received/reviewed 704 communicable disease reports that included food borne illnesses, sexually transmitted infections, water and vector borne diseases, tuberculosis, flu, and more with 43 reports requiring follow-up. Nurses screened 15 individuals for Hepatitis C at the Main Street Festival in June with the assistance of MRC volunteers. Staff worked with State and community partners to address the 2014 outbreak of enterovirus D68 among children.

## TUBERCULOSIS

Nursing staff screened 44 patients for tuberculosis (TB) and logged 50 field visits to ensure patients with active and latent TB were complying with medication management.

## SCHOOL HEALTH

### GOING MOBILE

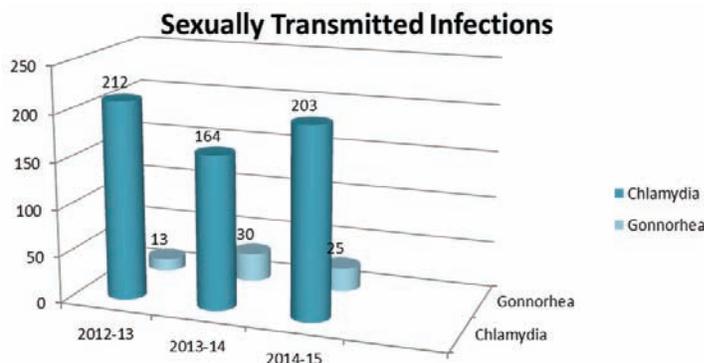
The SHD opened mobile dental clinics at four schools in Town — Wooster, Nichols, Franklin, and Lordship — and is researching opportunities to open mobile clinics at additional schools to reduce barriers to accessing preventative and restorative oral care. The SHD continued to operate a dental clinic at Stratford Academy/Johnson House School. The dental hygienist and dentist on staff completed 356 patient visits.

### HEALTH CENTER

The Wooster School-Based Health Center (SBHC) began collecting and analyzing additional data using a results-based accountability (RBA) framework to understand if students were “better off” as a result of health care received at the SBHC and related interventions. New data collected included body mass index and asthma action plan reports. Staff revised medical and mental health forms to better capture data. 398 students were enrolled in the SBHC, representing a 77% enrollment rate.

## A Focus on Trends

This fiscal year there were 203 cases of chlamydia and 25 cases of gonorrhea reported. Rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea remained elevated especially among young people, so the SHD implemented strategies to address the issue including working with the school nurses and the board of education to revise sexual health curriculum and educating high school students about sexual health.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATES

The SHD participated in CHIP workgroups that were formed around each health priority in the Greater Bridgeport Community Health Improvement Plan. Highlights of key accomplishments include:

### **ACCESS TO CARE**

- Brochures to promote primary care doctor utilization
- Improved access to specialty appointments
- Community Health Worker advocacy

### **OBESITY**

- National Dance Day
- Monthly informational packets
- Regional Step It Up Campaign

### **DIABETES/CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE**

- Know Your Numbers campaign and screening
- Diabetes Self-Management Workshops
- Local resource guide

### **MENTAL HEALTH/SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

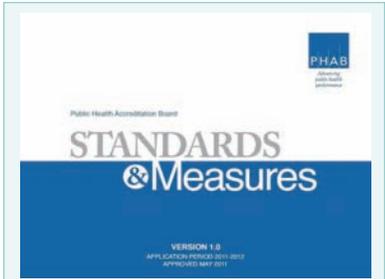
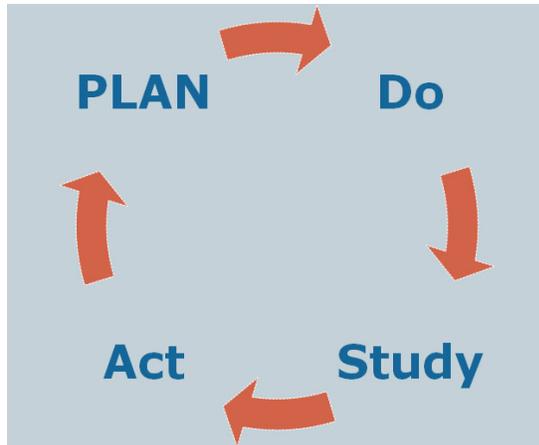
- Mental Health Awareness month events
- National Depression Month screenings
- Video campaign to reduce stigma

## 2015 COMMUNITY WELL-BEING SURVEY

Working with partners in the Greater Bridgeport Region, the SHD began the initial steps of creating a 2016 Community Health Assessment, which is required every three years by hospitals and five years by local health departments. A community survey and key informant interviews were completed in partnership with DataHaven and students from the Yale School of Public Health. The survey included questions about non-traditional factors that influence health such as food security, education, and employment. Stay tuned for the release of the data and the next health improvement planning initiative!

## *Continuous, Ongoing Improvement*

Quality improvement (QI) and performance management systems (PMS) were implemented at the SHD to improve the value of our work and support better population health outcomes. Two QI projects were initiated. To reduce the potential for foodborne illness, the SHD sought to properly license Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) according to the CT Public Health Code through a QI project. Baseline data were collected to understand the problem and measure success. The project resulted in positive outcomes: 1) clarification on the CT statute that exempts FBOs from certain food license requirements; 2) fixing a decades-old problem of incorrectly licensing FBOs; 3) 100% of FBOs are now licensed correctly; 4) 19 additional FBOs were alerted to temporary food license requirements and entered into an emergency notification system for future needs; 5) the number of temporary food licenses issued to FBOs increased between 2013 and 2014; 6) less administrative time on licensing; and 7) food safety education was offered to FBO staff to reduce the potential for foodborne illness. The second QI project focused on the process and accuracy of entering FSE information into three SHD databases. The project resulted in accuracy and timeliness of database updates across data platforms. There was an 11% reduction in inaccuracy/inconsistency entry rate as a result of the project, which included the creation of an SOP and routing form. PMS dashboards were created for each division to: monitor the quality of public health processes, programs, interventions and other activities; improve public health practice; and to ultimately improve the health of Stratford residents. Dashboards were reviewed quarterly by the Management Team.



## ACCREDITATION

### **PHAB**

The SHD met monthly to review and finalize documentation for accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). In May, all documents and accompanying narratives were uploaded and submitted in the e-PHAB system for an initial review by the Accreditation Specialist assigned to work with and support the SHD through the process. The May Submission was the culmination of a three-year journey toward accreditation by the SHD. The next steps are for a site visit team of experts from around the country to review the SHD's documentation, visit the SHD to ask questions and observe the health department environment and ultimately write a report leading up to an accreditation decision by members of the PHAB executive board.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATES

The Management Team continued to meet to monitor the implementation of the FY 13—18 Strategic Plan. Key accomplishments were the submission of PHAB documents, revision and approval of tattoo ordinance, implementation of QI projects, and new SOPs in each division.

# *Strategies for Health*

ANNUAL REPORT FY 15



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