

# Wallingford Health Department



Protect. Promote. Improve.



45 South Main Street Room 215 (203) 294-2065 health@wallingfordct.gov

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

### **Board of Health**

Isaac Cardona Kathy Neelon Leonard Guercia Jeffrey Necio Adriana Rodriguez

### **Health Department Team**

Vanessa Bautista, RS, MPH Director of Health <u>health@wallingfordct.gov</u>

Anne Bernick, MA, BSN, RN Public Health Nurse Anne.Bernick@wallingfordct.gov

Mike Hughes, R.S., BSc. Chief Sanitarian Sanitarian@wallingfordct.gov

Chris Negrini, BA Senior Clerk <u>healthclerk@wallingfordct.gov</u> Grace Jaworowski, BSc Sanitarian G.jaworowski@wallingfordct.gov

Nina Robertson, CHES, BSc healthed@wallingfordct.gov

Giana Pedevillano, BSc Sanitarian

Kristin Olsson, R.S., BSc Sanitarian

Dr. Delbert Smith Medical Advisor

### **ORGANIZATIONAL CHART** William W. Dickinson, Jr. Mayor Dr. Manisha Juthani CT DPH, Commissioner (7) Wlfd Advisory BOH Vanessa Bautista, RS, MPH Medical Advisor Director of Health Dr. Smith Chris Negrini, BA Mike Hughes, BSc. R.S. Grant Funded Staff Anne Bernick, MA, BSN, RN Senior Clerk Senior Sanitarian PH Nurse (P/T) Nina Robertson, CHES, BS Public Health Educator (F/T) Grace Jaworowski, BS Health Promotion Interns Sanitarian Vacant Health Educator (P/T) Kristin Olsson, RS, BS Sanitarian (P/T) Environmental Contract Staff **Environmental Interns** Town of Wallingford Health Department Organizational Chart (Revised 11/20/23)

# 2023

### Mission

The mission of the Wallingford Health Department is to work in partnership with the community to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Wallingford while utilizing a dynamic and responsive systematic process respecting the diversity of the community and challenging us to provide for present and future generations.

### Vision

We strive for equality throughout the community, regardless of financial status, race, sexual orientation, gender, or age. Wallingford actively advocates for public health through promotion and prevention to help lead a healthy, fulfilling, and productive lifestyle. We are here for support, education, and community.

### Values

Willingness and Well-being Health and Humility Diversity and Determination





### **2023 IN REVIEW**

The Wallingford Health Department (WHD) is pleased to present the Annual Report for the year 2023, offering a concise overview of the pivotal services rendered. The department remains steadfast in delivering the ten essential public health services to the Wallingford community, while serving as a guiding force in fostering healthy lifestyles and adeptly addressing emergent public health concerns. Our commitment to delivering services with renewed integrity underscores our dedication to showcasing the essence of public health to our residents.

The Health Department is responsible for the overall protection of the public health of all residents. The CT General Statutes, Title 19, Chapter 368a Section 19a-2a, provide the scope and authority for enforcing public health statutes and the regulations of the CT Public Health Code (CT PHC). Departmental data is reported quarterly to the Board of Health, and minutes for public access are posted on the Town website, as required. Required services are detailed in CGS§ 19a-207 and reflect the "10 Essential Public Health Services", with a strong emphasis on community education and active engagement in policy development.

Throughout the year 2023, the Wallingford Health Department (WHD) effectively leveraged its resources to transition into the recovery phase of the COVID-19 response. This strategic shift became possible as the exponential growth of infections decreased, and healthcare systems ceased to be overwhelmed. The federal declaration for the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency concluded on May 11, 2023. While prioritizing the ongoing recovery efforts related to COVID-19, the WHD concurrently sustained its commitment to delivering essential public health services to residents.

As we transition beyond the recovery phase of the pandemic, this unprecedented global health crisis has fortified our resilience and equipped us with the necessary readiness to confront unforeseen public health challenges that may emerge in the foreseeable future. Our community has demonstrated a collective commitment to concerted efforts, emerging from unexpected events with success, underscoring our ability to collaborate effectively in the face of adversity.

The Wallingford Health Department has a foundation of core environmental health components that impact all residents in one or more aspects. For example, Food Safety and Food Establishment Inspections, Subsurface Sewage Inspections, Private Drinking Water Wells, Public Health Nuisance Complaints, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention, sanitary aspects of Nail Salons, Beauty/Barber Salons and Tattoo Establishments, Public Swimming Pool Inspections and Daycare Center Inspections. The nature of nuisance complaint code violations and the process to achieve compliance continues to grow more complex. The Director of Health has the ministerial responsibility to investigate and enforce all such violations. We routinely work with Town leadership, the State's Attorney Office, Housing Prosecutor and are actively engaged in dialogue focused on an integrated response to issues that overlap the spectrum of public health and into areas of social services, rental housing, fire marshal, emergency services, and population health with the intent to prevent the escalation of violations and reduce the need for criminal prosecution. Code enforcement is a valuable component for maintaining a healthy community and provides a mechanism to distribute our residents' educational resources.

We want to thank our incredible Health Department staff, our valued community partners, the elected and appointed officials, and the residents of Wallingford for their ongoing support and commitment to public health.

The following are the CGS stipulated "10 Essential Public Health Services" and examples of the associated services we provide:



### **Putting the 10 Essential Services in Daily Context**



#### 1. Monitor health status to identify and understand community health issues

Example: Regularly review health data for Wallingford using the CT DPH electronic disease system known as MAVEN. Engage in outreach and education to both medical providers and residents on topics related to communicable diseases, chronic diseases, and vaccine-preventable diseases.

-Staff members actively participated in various areas, including Direct Observation Therapy (DOT), lead case response, surveillance of children's blood lead levels, monitoring infectious diseases, investigating reportable diseases, and maintaining close collaboration with the CT Emerging Infections Program.

- Epidemiologist generated monthly infectious disease reports for the Town of Wallingford.

#### 2. Identify (diagnose) and investigate health problems and health hazards

"Example: Public health nuisance complaint investigation program (detailed in the Health Protection section): 143 complaints investigated in CY 2023 as per CT PHC definition of "nuisance complaint" including corrective and the issuance of Legal Order to Comply, enforcement through arrest process and Housing Court or contract abatement action and priority lien assessed.



- Utilized the CT DPH laboratory services for analysis of environmental samples (lead, soil, water) and CT Agricultural Experiment Station for insect/pest/plant samples (ticks, bedbugs, spiders, and poison oak/ivy/sumac) and educate/assist the resident based on results. The mosquito trapping station in town was monitored and provided updates to town leadership/residents regarding EEE and WNV.
- The Local Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) plan underwent its annual review, with modifications to Emergency Support Functions (ESF's) six and eight in line with Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security (DEMHS) edits.
- Collaboration with the CT DPH Radon Program involved promoting radon testing and mitigation by distributing free test kits to the local community.
- Guidance and support were extended to the Board of Education (BOE) concerning communicable illnesses throughout the school year, covering aspects such as COVID-19, emergency response planning, Air Quality, and School Security Committee.
- Support and guidance were provided to partnering organizations such as SCOW, YMCA, YSS, Parks and Recreation, addressing concerns related to COVID-19, air quality, and overall health and wellness.

#### 3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues in order to make healthy choices

**Example:** Childhood Lead Poisoning Protection Education, 18 cases of childhood lead exposure in 2023 resulting in in-home risk assessments and parental education; conducted community outreach on various health topics and provided printed material and consultation

- Several CPR/AED/First Aid certification courses were offered to the community.

- Various health educational sessions were implemented throughout, as detailed in the Community Health Outreach and Health Education section. Examples of these sessions include informative discussions on radon, Narcan training, and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer).

#### 4. Mobilize/Engage the community partnerships to identify and solve health problems

**Examples:** : Actively engaged in leadership roles, collaborating with various community partners and stakeholders to evaluate needs and formulate policy changes aimed at enhancing overall health.

-Established meaningful partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including YMCA, BOE, Parks and Recreation, Wallingford Public Library, SCOW, and Wallingford Senior Center, to organize and execute a range of community events, vaccine clinics and training programs.

-Served as a site host for both undergraduate and graduate students participating in the Public Health Fellowship Program, facilitating fellowship placements.

#### 5. <u>Develop public health policies and plans that support community health efforts</u>

**Examples:** The local ordinance (Chapter 592) was adjusted to align with Public Act 19-117. This change aimed to license businesses providing aesthetic services.

- Internal departmental policy was updated in line with Public Act 22-49. Starting January 1, 2023, the lead threshold standard for children was lowered.
- The Wallingford Health Department adopted the FDA Model Food Code.



#### 6. Enforce public health laws and regulations that protect health and safety

**Examples:** Evaluated the overall enforcement actions across Environmental Health and Health Protection activities, as detailed in the attached document.

- Collaborated with Planning and Zoning, Building, Fire Marshal, and Water/Sewer Division to assess proposed land use developments.

- Facilitated meetings with the Board of Health, Wallingford Fire Department, Emergency Management, and the Board of Education to review COVID-19 and emergency preparedness guidelines.

- Conducted routine inspections of licensed facilities, subsurface sewage treatment and disposal systems, and investigated complaints related to public health nuisances.

#### 7. Link people to needed health services

**Examples:** Promote community-based health services on a departmental developed centralized document for uninsured/low-income residents; provided nursing services at Senior Center.

- Conducted flu clinics in October.

- Conducted vaccination clinics at different locations (Wallingford Public Library, the Spanish Community of Wallingford, and Wallingford Senior Center).

- Provided the community with Tick testing services for Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and babesiosis.

-Distributed COVID-19 test kits, and guided residents to different resources based on their specific needs.

#### 8. Maintain a competent public health workforce

**Examples:** Ensured all professional staff maintains current certifications and required continuing education, training, and professional development; participate in DEMHS Region 2 exercises/drills. Current staff members continue online training for code enforcement offered through FDA, NEHA, DEEP, and DPH.

- Three staff members were certified to teach CPR/AED.

- One staff member completed the Lead Risk Assessor & Lead Inspector Training.

-One staff member was certified to teach the ServSafe Food Protection Manager course (refer to staff trainings for more details).

#### 9. Evaluate the effectiveness and quality of programs and interventions

**Examples:** Conducted monthly quality assurance inspections and standardization with staff; reviewed written reports for compliance with policy and enforcement of regulations; evaluated protocols integrated with grant-funded programs/initiatives. Internal quality assurance program for environmental department functions promotes efficiency and thoroughness of work. Standard 4 of FDA Food Code Program Standards are the foundation for this quality assurance program.

#### 10. <u>Research and apply new and innovative solutions to address public health problems</u>

**Examples:** Support Public Health Research and development of evidence-based best practices as site preceptor for undergraduate/graduate students; Report/Present on experiences and practices at professional forums/events.

- Conducted health education programs focused on improving outcomes, including community health and safety presentations.

- Collaborated with the State's Attorney Office and Housing Prosecutor to establish an integrated response to hoarding.
- Completed the Wallingford Community Health Assessment to better respond to the needs of the community.



#### **VACCINATION CLINICS** Location Date Griffin Health partnering with Wallingford Public Wallingford Health Department 3/6/23 Library FREE COVID-19 **INFLUENZA** VACCINE CLINIC Wallingford Senior 10/17/23 Center No Appointment Needed - Ages 6 months and older FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS OFFERED ON-SITE Wallingford Public 10/21/23 Where: Wallingford Public Library, Community Room Library 200 North Main Street Wallingford, CT When: March 6th, 2023 | 1pm- 4pm Wallingford Town 10/26/23 Hall Wallingford Public COVID 3/6/23 Library 4/4/23

### **Staff Trainings**

- Stop the Bleed Instructor Training
- Anthrax Tabletop Exercise
- Academic Detailer Training
- EpiCenter Training
- Mental Health First Aid for the Elderly
- Lead Seminar
- Postvention Training

- Hurricane Awareness
   Training
- Xylazine Training
- PHEP Training
- Flu Tabletop Exercise
- Yankee Conference
- ServSafe Instructor Training
- CPR/BLS/First Aid Instructor Training



### Community Outreach $\sim$ Health Education

Event	Date	Activity	Event	Date	Activity	
Radon Info. Session Hands-Only CPR	1/10/23	Discussion on Radon at the Wlfd. Public Library High school students	Red Ribbon Week	10/12/23 10/13/23 10/17/23	Educators presented information on substance abuse prevention in both	
	4/25/23 6/1/23 11/21/23	learned effective and conventional Hands- Only CPR at the Wlfd. Parks and Recs.		10/18/23 10/26/23	middle schools. Table was held at Red Ribbon Event. Hosted a fair with	
CPR/AED/First Aid	4/12/23 4/19/23	CPR/AED/First Aid training was offered to the community.	Community Day	1/31/23	Coalition for a Better Wallingford including music, games, and vendors.	
	5/31/23 6/6/23 6/26/23 6/28/23 7/26/23 8/30/23 9/5/23 9/12/23 9/27/23 11/16/23 11/29/23	The training was provided to the public, Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW), Parks and Recs, Youth and Social Services (YSS), Wlfd Senior Center, Board of Ed., parents, churches, etc.	Health Fairs	1/31/23 2/4/23 3/23/23 6/10/23 10/28/23 11/7/23	Distributed COVID- 19 information and first aid kits. Increased awareness about healthy lifestyles at SCOW, public library, Lyman Hall, Masonicare, and YMCA.	
Celebrate Wallingford 10/7/23 10/8/23		Sanitarians inspected food booths. WHD distributed information on healthy eating, conducted crafts for children and recruited MRC	Wallingford Wellness Series	8/28/23 8/30/23 9/18/23 9/20/23 10/23/23 10/25/23	Educated the public about nutrition, stress management, and sleep health in collaboration with Masonicare and the public library.	
SCOW Presentations	7/6/23 8/9/23 9/11/23 10/3/23	members. Educators presented on various health topics at the Spanish Community of Wallingford.	Garden Market Tabling	5/20/23 6/3/23 7/15/23 10/14/23	Educators distributed health promotional items and information regarding upcoming events.	
Wallingford Coalition - Tree Festival	12/1/23	WHD donated a Christmas tree representing the dept.	Breast Cancer Awareness Event	10/15/23	WHD hosted a concert with Hot Guava to raise money in support of	
Calling Santa with Amateur Radio	12/9/23	Assisted with participant roster and set up.			the Breast Cancer Initiative of Connecticut.	
		3 <sup>−</sup> − −	Narcan Trainings	6/14/23 9/13/23 12/14/23	Public education class on the usage of Narcan in overdose emergencies.	



### **Health Promotion**







#### WELLNESS 365 Wallingford Health Department DRUGFREE IF. You's RED RIBBON 2000 RECAP BOAT THE YouwHIDE 1.2 1 20 REAR 2 Red 1 Med Give Hope 1 Se 8 to pages \* 🛞 THE THE FLAPPY R ME 0000 Reit. 漲 SAT ING 2 8 DRUGS AREA MILLI 2 20. -0 A 144 - 1 1992 Destrict a 1.4 ing it 0 **Wallingford Health Department** Wallingford Health De () festive treats! Healthy Into RED & RIBBO 0 Fall NA Pry Habi ts YOUR 1 wird KEY SOSTAY 0 8 P 赤 0 **Wallingford Health Department** Wallingford Health Department SCAN & TAK 10 Ways To Beat **?**=) the Winter Blues 000 SURV OUR Comunity\_ Health G

### **Community Outreach**



# **Community Outreach**









# **Community Outreach**









# **Community Health**



# **Emergency Preparedness**

Event	Frequency	Discussion					
MRC Meetings State Region 2 Webinar	Monthly	<ul> <li>Activation and deployment of MRC volunteers throughout the region.</li> <li>The implementation of the recruitment process for new MRC members.</li> <li>Federal updates</li> <li>HCC proposals</li> </ul>					
CERT Meetings	Monthly	<ul> <li>Provided training to CERT Team on POD dispensing, sheltering, and emergency health training.</li> <li>Included guest speakers to present on various topics.</li> <li>Created and facilitated emergency plans</li> </ul>					
ESF-8 Meetings	Monthly	<ul> <li>Region Two: Public Health Emergency Response – Emergency Support Function 8 Plan.</li> <li>COVID-19 Response</li> <li>CT DEMHS Updates</li> </ul>					
ERC/CRI Meetings	Monthly	<ul> <li>The development of tabletop exercises and training in the region</li> <li>Community Recovery (capability 2)</li> <li>Influenza Preparedness Plans</li> </ul>					





### **Emergency Response**



Shelter Activation: December 20th, 2023, 2:39 p.m. Public health officials collaborated with the Red Cross, CERT Team, and Amateur Radio to open sheltering operations



### **Environmental Health**

#### **Food Service Sanitation Program**

Licenses and inspects food establishments, including temporary food vendors. Educates the public about safe food handling, preparation and storage.

### Potable Water & Sewage Disposal

Ensures proper installation and repair of privately owned wells and sewage disposal systems. Prevents the transmission of disease caused by exposure to sewage and contaminated drinking water.

Environmental Inspections	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Food (312 Establishments, 42 Temp Event Inspections)	528	900	882	686	1012
Cosmetology (112 Establishments)	90	90	78	99	120
Day Care (30 Establishments)	13	14	15	16	23
Pool (20 Public Pools)	10	27	38	20	44
Soil Testing	11	10	21	15	13
Septic	23	23	16	37	34
Well	3	1	6	9	3
B-100A	30	35	12	26	16
Total Inspections	656	1100	1068	908	1265



### **Health Protection**

### **Environmental Health Complaints**

Public health nuisances are environmental situations that have the potential to cause the spread of disease. To prevent this, the health department investigates and can issue orders when nuisance conditions are found. Public health nuisance abatement aims to eliminate unsanitary conditions in the community that pose potential hazards to the public's health. Public health nuisance conditions often result from the improper storage or disposal of solid waste or accumulation of solid waste on a property. These conditions can attract unwanted animals and insects and provide an unwanted breeding ground for mosquitoes and other pests. Unsanitary properties pose a threat to public health, cause blight, and in the most severe cases, can negatively affect neighboring properties.

Nuisance Complaints	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Air Quality / Odor	17	13	6	11	15
Animal / Animal Feces	5	2	2	1	3
Cosmetology	0	2	3	3	2
COVID-19	0	0	30	169	N/A
Food Service	30	44	17	23	47
Garbage / Bulky Waste	16	34	29	42	54
Hoarding	7	N/T	N/T	N/T	N/T
Lead	0	1	1	1	19
Mold / Leaks / Flooding	7	6	4	9	13
Overgrown Grass / Tick Concerns	1	N/T	N/T	N/T	N/T
Pools	2	1	0	0	1
Roaches / Rodents / Pests	21	21	12	12	16
Sewage	8	3	4	7	11
Unsanitary Living Conditions*	19	30	35	15	27
Welfare Check on Resident	5	N/T	N/T	N/T	N/T
Other	5	25	25	32	49
Total	143	182	168	325	257
Health Orders Issued	5	4	7	12	27
Tick Submissions	39	28	35	15	27

N/A = Not Applicable

N/T = Not Tracked at the time

\* Encompasses multiple nuisance complaint categories



# Revenue

	2023	2022	2021	2020		2020 2019	
Food Service	\$ 15,515.00	\$ 20,320.00	\$ 20,115.00	\$	18,995.00	\$	22,363.50
Cosmetology	\$ 5,450.00	\$ 6,450.00	\$ 6,700.00	\$	7,125.00	\$	7,050.00
Septic	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 1,850.00	\$	1,650.00	\$	1,650.00
Well	\$ 100.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 550.00	\$	350.00	\$	1,650.00
Perc Test	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50.00	\$	200.00	\$	150.00
Misc.	\$ 74.50	\$ 339.50	\$ 51.50	\$	123.00	\$	131.50
Total	\$ 22,139.50	\$ 28,359.50	\$ 29,316.50	\$	28,443.00	\$	32,995.00





### **Accomplishments of 2023**



#### Accomplished Goals:

- Conducted a Community Health Assessment.
- Initiated conversations to pinpoint potential solutions for addressing unmet needs in collaboration with local organizations and stakeholders.
- Revitalized community health education programs to cater to current community needs.
- Expanded the MRC (Medical Reserve Corps) by recruiting additional members.







### Looking Forward to 2024

Our overarching objective is to uphold the excellence and efficient provision of essential public health services. Specifically, our commitment involves ongoing collaboration with community partners to safeguard the Wallingford Community. We aim to establish an innovative system that empowers the community to lead healthy, fulfilling, and productive lives while prioritizing their well-being. To achieve this objective, we have outlined the following initiatives:

- Sustain efforts to enlist volunteers for the local Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) dedicated to public health emergency response.
- Expand the range of community health education programs, with a focus on mental health, physical wellbeing, emotional resilience, and environmental wellness.
- Formulate a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) based on our comprehensive Community Health Assessment and aligned with Healthy People 2030 objectives.
- ~ Advance in the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to enhance overall work efficiency.

# Local Public Health System

