

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH
July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011

DEPARTMENT MISSION

The mission of the Wellesley Board of Health (BOH) is to protect and improve the health and quality of life of the Town's residents and workforce. Under the supervision and guidance of the elected Board of Health, the Health Department's professional staff assesses the public health needs of the community, and addresses those needs by providing environmental and community health services, communicable disease prevention and surveillance, public health nursing services, as well as health promotion initiatives. Other important functions include enforcing local and state sanitary regulations, providing emergency preparedness and response planning, reducing environmental health hazards, and providing community health education. The Board of Health provides leadership on Town health and human service matters.

BOARD AND STAFF

In FY11, the three-member elected Board of Health was composed of Shepard Cohen, Chairman; Marcia Testa Simonson, MPH, PhD, Vice Chair; and Lloyd Tarlin, MD, Secretary. The Health Department staff consisted of one full time Director; two full-time Environmental Health Specialists; a full-time Administrator; a part-time Community Health Coordinator, and a part-time Public Health Nursing Supervisor.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

This core public health service area encompasses the assessment, development, and implementation of policies, programs and services that address the town's public health needs. Priority areas include:

Public Health Nursing Services

WHD public health nurses operated Keep Well clinics at six rotating sites in Wellesley. The clinics open to all residents, featured blood pressure and glucose monitoring, select vaccinations, health counseling and referrals. Nurses also made well-being home visits that provided safety-net services to homebound residents, who were either ineligible for, or unable to access services from other health care providers. WHD collaborated with town departments, area agencies and families, to ensure that residents had appropriate services with ongoing follow-up. Home visits also included monitoring of residents with complex hoarding issues.

Communicable Disease

In FY11, 1,410 children and adults received immunizations for influenza at clinics held at the Wellesley Hills Congregational Church, area health clubs, public housing sites and at the Health Department. 220 vaccinations for shingles were administered, and 86 additional vaccinations (of various types) were administered to residents.

Employee Health/Wellness Programs

In FY11, the Health Department continued to encourage Town employees to adopt healthier lifestyles. The Health Department nursing staff provided cardiac and diabetes screenings, blood pressure checks, as well as nutritional and other health-related counseling. The Health Department, in conjunction with the Town's Human Resources Department, continued to offer a walking program for Town employees.

The Health Department participated in the Town's annual Right to Know trainings for DPW personnel and all new employees. The Health Department presented information on communicable diseases, seasonal illnesses and disease prevention at the trainings.

Mental Health

Two local mental health service agencies, The Human Relations Service (HRS) and Charles River Association for Retarded Citizens, received funding subsidization from the Town through the Board of Health, to provide affordable, accessible, quality, mental health and counseling services, and a sheltered workshop for Town residents.

The Health Department received a grant from the Fund for Wellesley in 2010 to develop community based mental health resources addressing depression, substance abuse and suicide. With the help of the Youth Director, WHD developed a suicide prevention website called www.wellesleyacts.org, designed to offer visitors resources to help themselves or another in an emotional crisis. *Question, Persuade and Refer* (QPR) suicide prevention trainings were conducted several times in FY11. A Parent Resource Guide, aimed at helping parents address their child's mental health needs, and a general Mental Health Resource Guide, highlighting information and resources for residents of all ages were distributed to the schools and the community. These brochures are available on the Health Department's website: www.wellesleyma.gov/health .

Senior Services

The Health Department Director and staff collaborated with the Council on Aging and other senior service agencies to identify elders at risk, and to address seniors' concerns.

Community Health Programming

Healthy Wellesley is a community wellness initiative. Its mission is to promote a healthy lifestyle, identify the bounty of health and fitness resources in Wellesley, and present programming to positively affect the health of residents across the age spectrum. In FY11, residents attended Healthy Wellesley events: *Staying Sane - Maintaining a Healthy Brain; Emergency Preparedness Begins at Home*; a very popular *Dog Contest for Pets and Their 'People'*, and *Mindful Movement for Balance, Posture and Fall Prevention*. Additionally, healthy cooking classes were held in the spring of 2011.

Tobacco Control

In FY11, tobacco permits were issued to nine tobacco retailers. One compliance inspection was conducted at each of the tobacco retail locations. No sales to a minor were made.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

This core public health service area encompasses risk assessment, protection from potential and actual hazards, prevention of disease and injury, and the promulgation and enforcement of regulations. Priority areas include:

Food Sanitation and Food Establishments

WHD Environmental Health Specialists inspected all food establishments in Wellesley, with emphasis on those that presented the highest risk to the public's health. In FY11, 163 food establishments permits, and 23 temporary food permits were issued. 285 inspections (including re-inspections) were conducted at these facilities. 28 complaints were promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective measures taken. Three restaurants had their food establishment permits suspended, due to critical violations of the food code. Five new licenses were issued. There were 12 plan reviews of new food establishments or renovations, including 24 inspections of construction sites.

Housing

WHD continued to address the housing sanitation concerns of residents. In FY11, the Health Department received 91 calls related to housing issues. A total of 146 actions (including inspections and re-inspections) were taken to address sanitary code violations.

Swimming Pools and Beaches

The Health Department's environmental health staff monitored the town's swimming water quality at pools and beaches to ensure compliance with state sanitary codes. In FY11, 16 semi-public pool permits and one beach permit were issued. Seventy-four inspections (including re-inspections) were conducted, with one temporary closure. Weekly water samples from Morse's Pond were taken and analyzed to monitor E-coli levels. There were no closings of the Pond in FY11.

Camps

WHD licensed 42 camps in 2010 that provided recreational activities for 6,238 children. In 2011, the Health Department licensed 35 camps that provided recreational activities for 6,704 children. A rigorous inspection process was conducted to ensure the safety of the children enrolled in camp activities. The Health Department held a seminar to educate camp staff on safe camp operations, and compliance with state camp regulations.

Mosquito Control and West Nile Virus

The Health Department and the Department of Public Works (DPW) collaborated with the East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project to monitor and control the mosquito population, in an effort to reduce the spread of mosquito borne illnesses. In a seasonal plan to reduce mosquito breeding, DPW placed larvicide packets inside street catch basins throughout town. Education on personal protection measures and elimination of mosquito breeding areas remained a primary focus of prevention efforts.

Rabies Control

In FY11, the Health Department issued nine livestock permits. Health Department staff collaborated with the Wellesley Animal Control Officer on rabies control measures. By statute, any pet or farm animal that may have had contact with an animal suspected of carrying the rabies virus must be ordered confined by the animal inspector. In FY11, 10-day quarantines were issued to 26 dogs that bit people and/or other dogs, and one cat that bit people. Longer (45-day) quarantines were issued to one dog and seven cats. Six-month quarantines were issued to three cats. Six bats, one skunk, one dog, two cats and one opossum were submitted for rabies testing; all were negative.

Additional Services

In FY11, two inspections were conducted at facilities offering tanning services. The Health Department also monitored lead and asbestos abatement projects.

In FY11, 19 rodent inspections were performed as part of the Building Department's requirements for the demolition of an existing structure. Several of these inspections involved the abandonment of existing subsurface sewage disposal systems. One permit was issued for Title 5 related work, for repairs to existing systems. One set of plans was reviewed and approved for a future septic system. Six permits were issued for private wells for geothermal heating and cooling.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLANNING

The Health Department was involved in local, regional and state emergency preparedness and response planning including responses to: all hazards, seasonal, emerging and pandemic flu, and natural and manmade disaster planning. The Health Department Director remained as co-chair of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), which provides emergency preparedness planning for the Town.

The Health Department, through its active participation in Massachusetts Department of Public Health Emergency Preparedness Region 4B (a coalition of 27 communities), focused on regional aspects of emergency preparedness, including collaboration with member communities to pool resources, provide mutual aid, conduct surveillance, and address hospital linkages. Wellesley is also part of a seven-community emergency preparedness sub-region called Norfolk County Seven (NC-7). These communities provide trainings, drills and collaborate on grants.

In FY11, the Health Department continued to provide trainings and exercises for the Wellesley Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). The MRC is a group of approximately 100 residents with clinical and non-clinical skills, who assist the Health Department at local and regional public health events, such as flu clinics.

Presentations on family emergency preparedness, as well as seasonal flu are ongoing initiatives offered by the Health Department. General information on preparing for emergencies, as well as Wellesley specific information is regularly updated on the Health Department website: www.wellesleyma.gov/health .