

Board of Health Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2024

Board Members & Liaisons Present:

Joan Cagginello, MS, RN, Chairperson
Constance Young, EdD, RN, Vice-Chairperson
Atty. Christine M. Gonillo, Secretary
Jennifer Denes
Ellen Monforte, APRN, MS, CRNA
Penny Vasilas, MS, RN
Holly Mulrenan, Board of Alderman Liaison
Ray Vitali, Board of Alderman Liaison

Board Members & Liaisons not present:

Mitchell Quintner, DMD
Tom Koba, Board of Education Liaison

Others Present: None

Health Department Staff Present:

Deepa Joseph, MPH, Director of Health
Carol Soulier, Recording Secretary

J. Cagginello called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes – October 17, 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on October 17, 2023 were approved unanimously on a motion by C. Gonillo and seconded by P. Vasilas.

Approval of Board of Health 2023 Meeting Dates

The 2024 meeting dates were approved as attached on a motion by C. Gonillo and seconded by P. Vasilas.

Election of Officers for 2024

The election of officers was tabled until next month on a motion by J. Cagginello and seconded by C. Gonillo

Public Session: None

J. Cagginello welcomed new Board of Health member Ellen Monforte. E. Monforte shared that she is a Nurse Anesthetist and has been an RN since 1984. With an interest in Community Health, she is happy to serve on the Board.

Environmental Health Report – Laura M. Miller, REHS/RS

CRIDE (Collaborative for Residential Integrity for the Disabled and Elderly): During the January CRIDE meeting the MHD presented two new cases of troubled housing investigated by this office to the group. The initial case was referred to us by Elderly Protective Services, while the second came from the Department of Children and Families. Our Environmental Health Sanitarian and MHD Case Worker were given permission to access the interior of both properties. Currently, efforts are underway to clean out the dwellings, and we are actively facilitating connections to community social services.

Radon: The Milford Health Department has once again partnered with the CT Department of Public Health to promote radon awareness in Milford. During the month of January, National Radon Action Month, we are focusing on education and outreach in the community and have free test kits available to Milford residents. We encourage all residents to test their home during the winter months as testing is the only effective way to determine if high levels of radon exist.

Food Recall: On October 30, 2023, the MHD received notification of a food recall concerning WanaBana apple cinnamon fruit puree pouches due to confirmed reports of elevated lead levels detected in specific units of the product. As lead poses a significant health risk to consumers, a nationwide recall was promptly initiated. The affected product was distributed through Dollar Tree stores as well as various online retailers including Amazon. MHD Sanitarians conducted thorough inspections at three Dollar Tree locations in Milford, confirming that the product had been removed from shelves, isolated from public access, and properly disposed of to prevent any further exposure. The Food & Drug Administration is actively investigating the issue, with initial suspicions pointing towards cinnamon as the potential source of contamination. On December 5th, the FDA commenced an onsite inspection at the Austrofoods facility in Ecuador, where sample collection efforts are currently underway to ascertain the root cause of the contamination. Consumers who have purchased this product are strongly advised to discontinue its use and return it to the original place of purchase for a refund.

Comments:

- *J. Cagginello added that she is glad that the Department of Children and Families attends the CRIDE meetings.*
- *A discussion ensued regarding the shortage of registered sanitarians, leaving some local health departments unable to fill positions. D. Joseph reported that there is an increase in the number of training options with new programs available in the near future at additional CT State universities and/or community colleges. The MHD's sanitarian positions are fully staffed.*

Nursing Division Report – Joan Campbell, MSN, RN

Seasonal Flu and Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Campaign: For the week ending January 6th, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report seasonal flu activity remains elevated in most of the country. The CDC estimates that so far this season, there have been at least 14 million illnesses, 150,000 hospitalizations, and 9,400 deaths from the flu including 40 pediatric deaths. Connecticut has been experiencing high influenza activity as well. For the week ending

January 6th, the Connecticut Department of Public Health reported a total of 9,210 positive influenza cases. The predominant circulating influenza virus is Type A. There have been 18 influenza associated deaths in Connecticut to date.

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get an annual flu vaccine as long as influenza viruses are spreading. Per the CDC, vaccination prevents infection and can also prevent serious outcomes in people who get vaccinated but still get sick with the flu. They also remind us that prescription flu antiviral medication is available to treat flu illness – especially for higher risk individuals - and should be started as early as possible.

The Milford Health Department has administered close to 400 influenza vaccinations to date at various influenza clinics that have been held both at the Milford Health Department and throughout the community.

The MHD will continue to provide the influenza vaccine through April 2024 at the monthly immunization clinics. Both the regular flu vaccine and the high dose vaccine for individuals over sixty-five years of age will be offered. The school nurses and Health Department continue to monitor the Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) and COVID-19-Like Illness (CLI) activity in the schools. Some uptick in illness has been noted at specific schools which is similar to what is being seen in the community and state.

COVID-19: The MHD continues to vaccinate the pediatric population with the COVID-19 vaccine. 125 doses of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine were administered during the month of November, and 48 doses were administered in December.

Clinics were held on Saturday, December 9th and Wednesday, December 27th at the MHD. Additional clinics have been scheduled for February and March.

According to the CT DPH, there were 331 positive COVID-19 cases reported in Milford for the month of December.

School Health Services: The school nurses have completed the Annual Connecticut Department of Public Health Immunization Survey. This is an annual survey that assesses the compliance of school age children with recommended and mandated childhood immunizations. Compliance with mandated immunizations among school-aged children in Milford continues to be excellent. The school nurses were joined by Betty Murphy from the *Putting on Airs* asthma program at their November staff meeting. Betty presented an overview of the program along with the referral process so that all of the school nurses are now knowledgeable in promoting the program to their students/families if applicable.

At our January staff meeting, the school nurses learned about the *Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence Services* with a presentation by Rachael Schippiani, the Coordinator for Community Education and Volunteer Programs at BH*care*. Information and education on domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and teen dating violence was provided along with best practices for supporting individuals and the available resources to provide.

Two of our recently hired Milford school nurses attended the new school nurse orientation program offered by the CT State Department of Education on November 13th. The program is very beneficial to a new school nurse as it provides new school nurses with information and materials to assist in the transition into school nursing.

One of our long-time Public Health/School Nurses, Kathryn Malski, retired earlier this month. The vacancy was quickly filled, and the MHD was pleased to welcome Stacey Lane, RN, to our nursing team on January 2nd. Stacey will be assigned to Jonathan Law High School for the remainder of this school year.

Comments:

- *D. Joseph added that, when ILI and CLI reports show upticks, the Department works with MPS facilities management to ensure that all surfaces are being sanitized and disinfected as needed to avoid further spread of illness.*

Emergency Preparedness Report - Tara Mustakos Wassmer, REHS/RS, CHES

Milford Health Department is participating in the planning for and will be presenting at the CT Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) Region 2 Public Health volunteer training day. Volunteers will be invited to participate on February 6, 2024, at Southern CT State University. The Region 2 Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) applied for a grant from the CT Healthcare Coalition (CT HCC) to fund this project. Training topics include:

- Points of Dispensing (POD) and volunteer clinic roles
- Psychological First Aid
- Personal preparedness
- Opioid response and Narcan administration training
- Family Assistance Centers- agency & volunteer roles

MHD will be onboarding a new MRC/CERT Volunteer Coordinator. The training plan includes division roles and responsibilities, meeting and reporting responsibilities, and day-to-day and emergency response responsibilities. A comprehensive employee training plan will be developed based on the employee's current knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Milford's PHEPC is part of the accreditation team and continues to work on Domain 2, Emergency Operations planning and documentation. Milford maintains an All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan which includes several supporting plans and operational annexes. Documentation includes sections of the actual plans, supporting annexes, and/or documentation from real-event responses.

Comments:

- *D. Joseph added that the new MRC/CERT Volunteer Coordinator is Chris Doyle, who recently retired from the Milford Police Department.*
- *D. Joseph shared that each Region 2 local health department will have a representative present on a particular topic at the volunteer training day.*

Community Health Division Report - Jennifer Clarke-Lofters, MPA

Communicable Disease: For the month of December, there were 304 communicable diseases reported. Flu is the lead disease reported this month, making up 40% of reported cases this month.

Programming/Funding:

Food Insecurity - The food insecurity group has been discussing disseminating two surveys into the community. One survey will gain information from providers and the services they offer, and the other will be from consumers to see if the community needs are being met. The ultimate goal is to develop a big picture of what the landscape of food looks like in the city of Milford.

Lead Cases- We have submitted paperwork for reimbursement of eligible cases that not only involved lead but also included those who may have consumed applesauce from the recent recall. Cases are eligible for reimbursement from DPH if they have a venous blood draw of 5 µg/dL or more.

Funding Contracts- We have fully executed our immunization contract and our workforce development contract. We are working with the New Haven Health Department in developing a contract with OD2A (Overdose Data 2 Action) to gain a community navigator for Milford.

Health Improvement Alliance (HIA) - We have been working closely with HIA to begin planning our next round of Community Health Assessment (CHA) efforts. This time around 2025-2028 there will be more input from health departments along with ways to increase partnership.

Accreditation/Pathways: Milford Health Department has been intensely working to complete the Pathways Recognition program documentation. We have submitted our application, and the due date for the documentation upload is in April. However, we have a goal to submit documentation before March to continue the momentum towards accreditation. We have been meeting frequently in order to maintain a pulse on the completion of required documents for each of the 34 measures in the 10 domains. Currently, we have 4 out of 10 domains completed.

Comments:

- *D. Joseph added that a student intern from the University of Vermont is helping to develop, distribute, and analyze the food insecurity surveys.*
- *D. Joseph shared that, via Workforce Development Funding, Department staff will be engaging in activities to improve their physical and mental health as well as attending public health conferences. D. Joseph added that the Immunization Funding will be utilized to complete a Rapid Community Assessment (RCA) focused on flu immunization efforts.*

Old Business: None

Director's Report: Deepa Joseph, MPH

- *D. Joseph shared that Silver Petrucelli's space needs assessment for the Health and Human Services Departments is complete. The Department was awarded ARPA funding*

for a portion of this building project. D. Joseph submitted a capital request to the City for additional funds toward the project cost.

- *J. Cagginello asked if the MHD had any additional COVID-19 reporting requirements related to the upcoming COVID-19 official report to be released by the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Public Health. D. Joseph confirmed that there are no such additional reporting requirements at this time.*
- *J. Cagginello asked if the Department is utilizing Opioid antagonist services being provided by the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). D. Joseph said that the services about which J. Cagginello read recently are directed at community-based providers. D. Joseph added that the MHD has a system in place to provide Narcan to the Milford Public Schools based on current policy.*

New Business: *None*

Adjournment:

C. Gonillo motioned to adjourn the meeting seconded by P. Vasilas and was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carol Soulier
Recorder

Board of Health 2024 Meeting Dates

82 New Haven Avenue, 6:30 p.m.

The following meeting dates have been established:

January 16, 2024
February 20, 2024
March 19, 2024
April 16, 2024
May 21, 2024
June 18, 2024
July 2024 - No Meeting
August 2024 - No Meeting
September 17, 2024
October 15, 2024
November 19, 2024
December 17, 2024