REPORT OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH
July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014

DEPARTMENT MISSION

The Board of Health (BOH) provides leadership on Town health and human service matters. The mission of the 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.

BOARD AND STAFF

In FY14, 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; one full-time and one part-time Environmental Health Specialist; a full-time Administrator; a part-time Community Health Coordinator, a part-time Public Health Nursing Supervisor and a part-time Community Social Worker.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

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

Public Health Nursing Services

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

Communicable Diseases

In FY14, 706 children and adults received immunizations for influenza at clinics held at the Wellesley Hills Congregational Church, public housing sites and at the Health Department. 65 additional vaccinations (of various types) were administered to residents. Other services included 188 investigations of reportable diseases; this was done in conjunction with the MA Department of Public Health. The Health Department collaborated with the school health and nursing departments, as well as

long term care facilities to track and assist in the dissemination of information regarding outbreaks of illnesses.

Employee Health/Wellness Programs

In FY14, the Health Department continued to encourage Town employees to adopt healthier lifestyles. The Health Department nursing staff provided blood pressure checks, as well as nutritional and health related counseling. The Health Department, in conjunction with the Town's Human Resources Department, continued to offer a walking program for Town employees.

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 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. In FY 14 a *Question, Persuade and Refer* (QPR) suicide prevention training was offered to Wellesley College Health Services staff. 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 and a confidential, on-line mental health screening are available on the Health Department's website: www.wellesleyma.gov/health .

Social Services

In September 2013, WHD added a part-time Community Social Worker (CSW) to its staff, to provide social services to residents aged 59 and younger (the Wellesley Council on Aging provides services to residents aged 60 and older). Social services include, but are not limited to: mental health, housing, public benefits, health insurance, and financial assistance. In FY14, 65 home visits and 6 office visits were completed. Information and referrals were provided over the phone an estimated 30 times each month to clients, residents and professionals. CSW collaborated with various town departments, the Wellesley Housing Authority, the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association, the Wellesley Food Pantry, the Salvation Army, and the Bridge Fund. CSW also coordinated programs at the Community Room at WHA's Barton Road. Programs included: a wellness fair, a car seat checkpoint (19 car seats were given to those in need), school vacation week programming (average of 31 kids each day), career counseling and resume writing.

Senior Services

The Health Department Director and staff collaborated with the Council on Aging, Police, Fire and Animal Control, as well as 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 FY14, residents attended Healthy Wellesley events: *Everything you wanted to know about Nutrition and Healthy Eating during Perimenopause and Menopause, and weren't afraid to ask; CPR for Health Professionals* and a popular *Dog Contest for Pets and Their "People." In FY12,* the Health Department began a partnership with Newton-Wellesley Hospital and FiVi Health Networks to develop a health and active living web portal for the community. The website called HealthyWellesley.org offers residents and visitors the opportunity to set health goals, interact with others, learn about health topics, obtain resources, meet local residents who are involved in health, and hear about Wellesley events.

Tobacco Control

In FY14, tobacco permits were issued to twelve tobacco retailers. As of June 1, 2014, the minimum age to purchase tobacco products and nicotine delivery products was raised from 18 to 21 years of age.

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 FY14, 182 food establishment permits and 26 temporary food permits were issued. 326 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. Eight new licenses were issued. There were 19 plan reviews of new food establishments or renovations, including 26 inspections of construction sites.

Housing

WHD continued to address the housing sanitation concerns of residents. In FY14, the Health Department received 90 calls related to housing issues. A total of 143 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 FY14, 17 semi-public pool permits and one beach permit were issued. Eighty-two inspections (including re-inspections) were conducted. Weekly water samples from Morse's Pond were taken and analyzed to monitor E-coli levels.

Camps

In FY14, WHD licensed 35 camps that provided recreational activities for more than 8,100 children. A rigorous inspection process was conducted to ensure the safety of the children enrolled in camp activities. The Health Department focuses on educating camp staff on safe camp operations and compliance with state camp regulations.

Mosquito Control

The Health Department continued its contract 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, Department of Public Works 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 FY14, the Health Department issued17 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 FY14**,** 10-day quarantines were issued to 27 dogs that bit people and/or other dogs, one cat that bit another cat. 45-day quarantines were issued to nine dogs and eight cats. Six month quarantines were issued to two cats. Eighteen bats, one raccoon, two dogs and one cat were submitted for rabies testing.

Additional Services

In FY14, two inspections of a tanning facilities were conducted. The Health Department also monitored lead and asbestos abatement projects. In FY14, 42 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. Seven permits were issued for Title 5 related work, for repairs to existing systems. One set of plans were reviewed and approved for a future septic system. Nineteen inspections of septic systems were conducted. Four permits were issued for private wells for geothermal heating and cooling and one permit was issued for irrigation.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLANNING

The Health Department is involved in local, regional and state emergency preparedness and response planning including: all hazards, seasonal, emerging and pandemic flu, and natural and manmade disaster planning. The Health Department Director and the Assistant Fire Chief are the co-chairs of the Local Emergency Planning Committee, which provides emergency planning for the Town.

The Health Department, through its 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 FY14, 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 .