



Activities Report

Calendar Year

2015

&

Budget Information

FY 2016 - 2017

Table of Contents

Message from the Director of Health	1
Board & Staff	2
District Governance	3
In The Beginning	4
Services Overview	5
Environmental Health	6
Community Health	8
Community Health Statistics	9
Emergency Preparedness & Management	10
Budget Discussion	12
District Funding	13



Message From the Director



The responsibility for overall protection of the public's health in Connecticut rests with the State Commissioner of Public Health. In accordance with State Statutes, local Directors of Health are considered assigned agents of the Commissioner. The Health District's primary mission is the prevention of disease, injury, and disability, and to protect and improve the physical and mental health and safety of all the citizens of the District.

State and local public health agencies have a broad scope of responsibilities. Connecticut General Statutes govern the scope of mandated services that must be delivered in each community. State mandated public health services include: Public Health Statistics, Health Education, Nutritional Services, Maternal and Child Health, Disease Control, Environmental Services, Community Nursing Services, and Emergency Medical Services.

2015 saw the District's financial health stressed with the unplanned medical leave of a key staff member and our efforts to expand into the broader public health market place resulting in a slight decrease in revenue with the acceptance of insurance payments. It is our expectation that this reduction of revenue will be off set by broadening the base of potential customers.

The Zika virus has quickly become a "hot" news topic. This outbreak continues to grow in size and reach around the world, as well as in the United States. In response to this emerging public health threat, the Center for Disease and Control (CDC) activated its Emergency Operations Center on January 22, 2016, to help coordinate the public health response. In addition, On February 1, 2016, the World Health Organization Director-General declared that "the recent clusters of microcephaly and neurologic disorders and their possible association with Zika virus constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern."

CDC is concerned about both imported and potential locally-acquired cases of Zika virus infection in the United States. With the recent outbreaks, the number of Zika virus disease cases among travelers visiting or returning to the United States will likely increase. While CDC cannot predict the spread of the Zika virus in the United States, federal, state and local health officials are actively monitoring the current outbreak to be prepared to address cases. What this will require of the Westport Weston Health District can not be determined at this time.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns regarding Public Health matters in the District, please feel free to contact me directly at 203.227.9571 ext. 244.



Board & Staff

Board

Nancy McCormick, Weston, *Chair*

Howard Maynard, Westport

Otis Crawford, Westport, *Vice-chair*

Keith Stein, Westport

Neil Coleman, Weston

Director of Health

Mark A.R. Cooper, M.P.H., R.S.

Medical Advisor

Stuart Steinman, MD

Staff

Jeffrey Andrews, RS; Chief Sanitarian

Sandy Arcudi, Senior Staff Assistant (Administrative Secretary)

John Cimarosa, Director of Finance and Special Projects

Lora Hayes, RS, Sanitarian

Norma Jarrett, Sanitarian

Loren Pace, RN, Public Health Nurse

Melissa Romano, Clerical Assistant

Loretta Tremonte, Assistant to Director of Health/Office Manager

Michael J. Vincelli, Director of Emergency Preparedness and Support Services

Monica Wheeler, MSN, RN, Director of Community Health



District Governance

The Westport Weston Health District was created in 1965 under Chapter 368f of the Connecticut General Statutes, Section 19a-241, by the vote of the legislative bodies of Westport and Weston. Creation of the District transferred upon the Board of Directors all the public health authority that had been previously conferred upon each municipality.

The mission of the Health District is:

- To prevent disease, disability and premature death;
- To promote healthy lifestyles, and
- To protect and promote the health and quality of our environment.

To accomplish this mission, the Health District provides clinics, health education, consultative services, referrals for special medical care, environmental health protection, and conducts epidemiological investigations in conformance with Connecticut General Statutes. These services are available to every resident of our constituent towns.

While the Westport Weston Health District works very closely with the Towns of Westport and Weston, it is not an agency of either town. The District operates autonomously under Connecticut's General Statutes and works independently from either municipality. The District receives direction from and works closely with the State of Connecticut and federal public health agencies. Directors of Local Health are assigned agents of the State Commissioner of Health.

However, through contractual agreements and memorandums of understanding, Health Districts are connected to the State Department of Public Health and serve as the "action arm" of Connecticut's public health system. The Commissioner of the Department of Public Health has authority over the directors of local public health agencies and responsibility for administering public health laws and codes in the state. Local regulations and ordinances may be more, but not less, stringent than state and federal regulations.

The District is governed locally by a five (5) member Board of Directors; members being appointed by the municipality they represent. Each participating municipality is entitled to appoint one person to be a member of the Health District's Board of Directors for each ten thousand residents, provided no such municipality shall have more than five representatives on a District Board of Health. Board members are appointed by the legislative bodies of the town they represent to a three-year term.

The Board of Directors is an advisory and policy making board which meets regularly to review and approve the District's budget, programs, and services. Boards of health are accountable for meeting the state's standards for services as authorized and directed by Connecticut's Public Health Code and General Statutes 19a-240 through 19a-246.



In The Beginning

With a strong tradition of working together, the towns of Westport and Weston formed the first Health District recognized by the State in 1965 and remains an outstanding example of regional cooperation. Endeavoring to meet local public health needs, the District has been a leader of innovative public health policy and programs ever since.

The District has a long history of providing community health programs to the residents of Westport and Weston. The District's genesis originates with the Westport Woman's Club's early public health initiatives such as the 1908 drive to sanitize conditions at Compo Beach; the first school lunch program in 1918; sponsoring smallpox vaccinations during the 1922 epidemic, and establishing a public health nurse service in 1925. The public health department of the Westport Woman's Club was directed by a committee of eleven, ten women and one man. There was a health officer for consultation regarding medical policy. Nursing services of the department were offered to the people of Westport and Saugatuck. Patients in Weston who were able to pay for their service were also accepted for care.

The Aspetuck Valley Health District, serving the communities of Westport and Weston, was the first health district to be officially organized in the State of Connecticut on November 2, 1965. In 1983, the District changed its name to the Westport Weston Health District for the purpose of easier identification.

District Mission:

To protect and improve the health and well being of the residents of the District.

District Objectives:

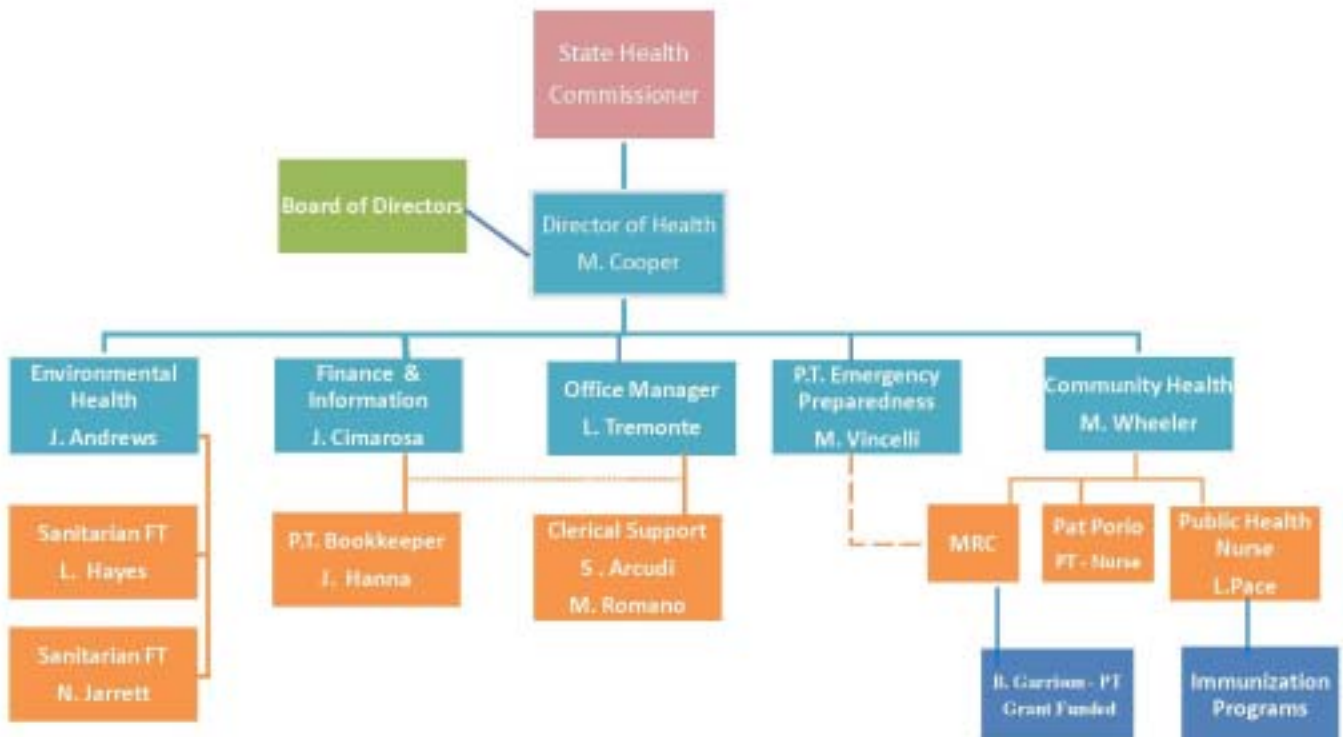
- To uphold and enforce the Public Health Code of the State of Connecticut and such ordinances and regulations as may be adopted by the Board of Directors of the Health District, and
- To work with other providers of health services in Westport and Weston to coordinate existing programs and to develop and implement needed public health programs, and
- To promote healthful living and sound health practices; to prevent the spread of communicable disease; monitor the health status and public health statistics of the community; provide the community with appropriate health education, and health clinic services.



Services Overview



WWHD Organizational Chart





Environmental Health

Food Service Inspections



Food service establishments, including restaurants, convenience stores, grocery stores, bars, schools, private clubs, itinerant vendors, seasonal and temporary operations are routinely inspected to ensure compliance with the requirements of the CT Public Health Code, the WWHD Sanitary Code, and to prevent foodborne illness. During 2015, 41 (33 last year) plan reviews for new food service establishments were completed. Inspections focus on food protection, food handling, cleanliness, upkeep and personal hygiene practices. There are 234 permitted and inspected food service establishments in Westport in 2015, up from 228 in 2014.

Food service establishments, including temporary events, must obtain a permit from the District to operate and must be inspected and approved prior to opening. There were 4 multi-vendor Farmer's Markets and 207 (197 last year) temporary event application reviews. The District is also now enforcing the new CT DEP regulations regarding the proper removal of fats, oils and grease.

Septic System Inspections

New septic system installations and repairs to existing septic systems are reviewed, overseen, and approved by the District. Soil testing is performed; plans are reviewed; installations are inspected, and final approval is issued by the District in accordance with the CT Public Health Code for flows under 5,000 gallons per day. In 2015, there were 82 (93 last year) new and 71 (64 last year) repair septic systems installed; 190 (239 last year) soil test applications, 107 (111 last year) existing system inspections.



Water Supply Wells



Private wells are regulated by the District to ensure proper location and installation for a safe water supply. The District endeavors to raise public awareness about well water issues and ensures compliance with the CT Department of Consumer Protection, Well Drilling Regulations and the CT Public Health Code. Permits and water tests are required for all new wells. This year there were 26 (21 last year) new potable wells, there were no new irrigation well in 2015 (4 last year), 43 (25 last year) Geothermal wells drilled and 3 (6 Last year) wells were abandoned.

Lead

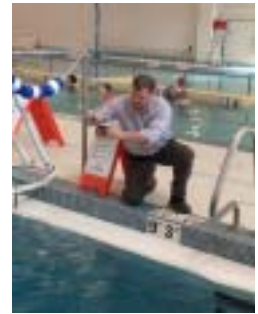
The District reviews lead sampling reports, remediation, abatement and management plans. The WWHD has two certified inspectors that can conduct limited lead inspections, follow-up inspections, investigate complaints, and inspect renovation and remediation for schools, daycares, and group homes. Lead certified staff must be recertified annually to be qualified to do this work.

Construction Activity

District staff review proposed building construction plans for compliance to public health code requirements. In 2014, District staff reviewed proposed plans for 54 (79 last year) new homes. Additionally, staff reviewed proposed building addition plans to determine what, if any, impact there might be on the septic system. The level of review is contingent upon the complexity of the proposal and kind of usage. In 2015, 172 (143 last year) plan reviews were conducted for habitable additions, 85 (90 last year) for non-habitable additions.

Complaint Investigations

The District investigates nuisance complaints in accordance with Section 19-13-B1 of the Connecticut Public Health Code. In 2015, there were 35 (48 last year) complaints dealing with housing, sewage, garbage, rodents, mold and other concerns. Appropriate enforcement action is taken to eliminate violations and hazardous conditions.



Public Pool Inspections

Public swimming pools are required to be inspected by the Connecticut Public Health Code each year. There are 29 public pools requiring annual inspections.

Beach Water Monitoring

In accordance with the Connecticut Public Health Code, each summer, the District tests the waters at Westport beaches and other fixed locations on Long Island Sound. The samples are tested for bacteria to ensure that the water is safe for swimming. The WWHD collected 99 beach monitoring samples during 2015.

Daycare and Group Home Licensing Inspections

There are 19 licensed daycares within the District that are inspected routinely every two years and with any facility change or renovation, and playground revisions. In 2015, there were 7 licensed group homes in Westport.

Shellfish



WWHD staff oversees the local recreational shellfishing program. Staff monitors rainfalls and closure notices as received from the State and surrounding towns. Staff routinely review water quality data and sampling results with regards to the US FDA shellfish program requirements for the operation of the conditional shellfishing areas. Staff assists with the survey and follow-up of elevated fecal coliform results impacting the shellfishing areas. The WWHD attends and participates in the annual CT Sea Grant Shellfish Commission meetings.

Cosmetology

There are 92 (75 last year) permitted salons that are inspected annually. Salons offering pedicures are inspected twice a year. WWHD also reviewed 14 (13 last year) plans for renovations of salons and for permitting of new establishments.

Water Quality

The WWHD has broadened its role in monitoring and surveying local water quality and is working with a number of active environmental groups interested in preserving and improving water quality. Staff aided in the selection of sampling locations, the collection of samples for analysis, and interpretation of results. District staff collected 25 (19 last year) residential water samples for potability analysis.



Community Health

The focus of WWHD's community health department is to provide health promotion and disease prevention through education, screenings, immunizations, and surveillance. These efforts are to help prevent chronic disease and improve the health of the community. A number of services are provided at the District's offices at 180 Bayberry Lane in Westport. To ensure availability of the desired service at the time of your visit, it is recommended you call the District office at 203-227-9571, ext. 231, to schedule an appointment.

Wellness Clinics

Regularly offered blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar screenings, and individualized risk reduction counseling were provided. In 2015, 340 clients (348 last year) were seen in the Wellness Clinics.



Travelers and Routine Immunizations Clinics

Recommended and required immunizations and preventive medications are provided to reduce the risk from infectious diseases that can be acquired when traveling. Routine immunizations and boosters are available for adults and children, including school or college-bound immunizations. Flu vaccine clinics are offered annually in the fall. During 2015, 753 clients (1008 last year) were seen in 50 Travelers Clinic held (58 last year). There were 1642 seasonal flu vaccinations administered during 2015, (1208 last year).

Specialty Screenings

WWHD partners with local health professionals and agencies to provide annually: Screenings for skin cancer (by local dermatologists) and mammography (by Mobile Medical of Stamford).



Homebound Health Check



In-home (non-skilled) visits by a registered nurse are provided to homebound residents so as to ensure that their health needs are met and that they maintain or improve their health status through assessment and early intervention. Home safety assessments for fall prevention are conducted and balance exercises are taught.

During FY 2015 254 visits (322 last year) were made to 18 homebound residents (17 last year) at no cost to the clients – most referrals to the program come from Westport's and Weston's social service departments.

HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Confidential testing and counseling is provided for Hepatitis C, HIV and STDs, including Chlamydia, Gonorrhea and Syphilis. In addition, the WWHD conducts outreach to at-risk individuals to provide immunizations against Hepatitis A and B viruses.

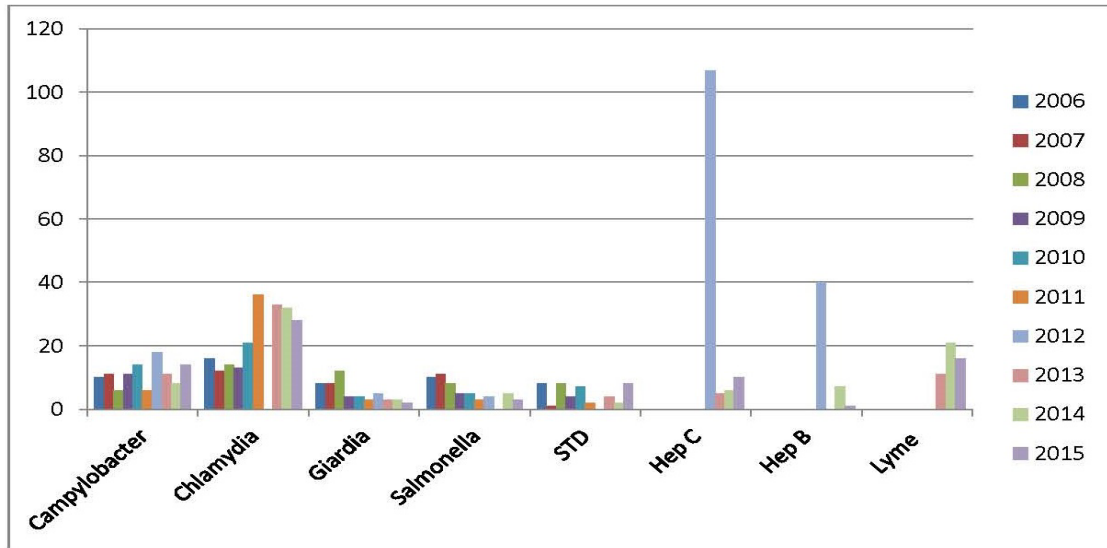


Community Health Statistics

2006 - 2015

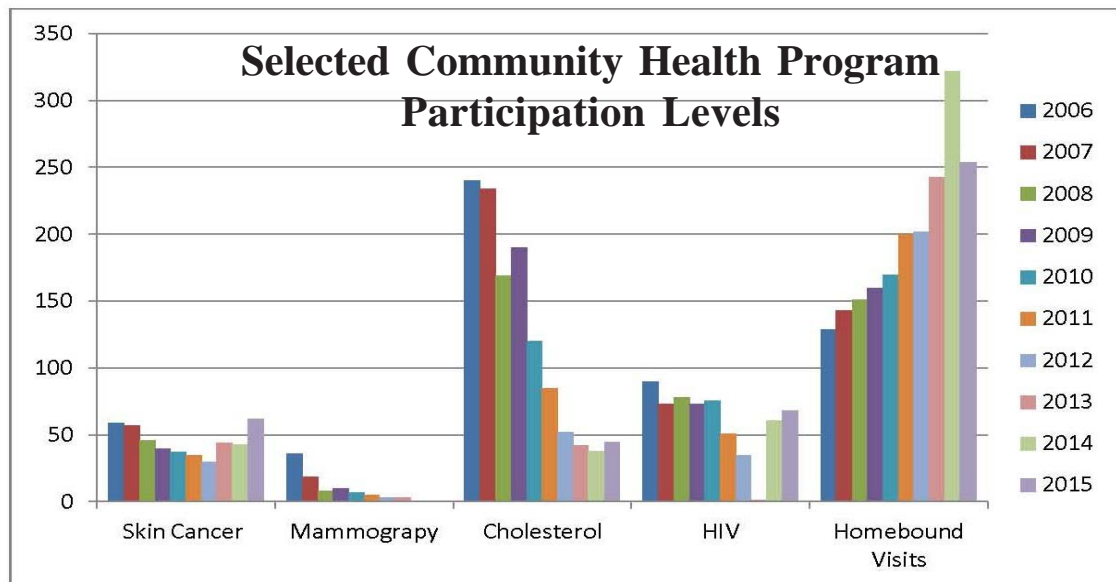
An important part of the District’s responsibility is to monitor the health of the community through the reports of specific infectious diseases that are required to be sent to the Director of Public Health by area physicians and laboratories. The Director is required to investigate the extent of certain reportable diseases and apply control measures when appropriate. This data is also utilized to proactively develop early detection and prevention strategies to help improve the public health of the community.

Selected Reportable Diseases



Education

Forums and presentations, on-going classes, publications and press releases for a variety of public health issues and concerns, are provided by staff and invited public health experts when appropriate.





Emergency Preparedness & Management

Overview

In response to the tragedy of September 11, 2001, federal and state initiatives have made homeland security and preparedness a priority. Whether natural or man-made, the impact of a disaster can be reduced if communities are prepared. The Health District has several mandates to be ready for whatever potential crisis may unfold.

In accordance with Title 28, Chapter 517 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the District must coordinate various aspects of emergency management. Potential threats that must be addressed include widespread foodborne disease incidents, a pandemic communicable disease outbreak or the use of a biological agent in a terrorist attack. Emergency preparedness and management activities include:

Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan

The Westport Weston Health District maintains a detailed, all-hazards plan. In the event of a public health emergency (or other emergency requiring the support of the Health District), the District has responsibility for putting the emergency plans into operation and organizing a response utilizing the Incident Command System.

Training, Drills, & Exercises

Staff and volunteers must be trained on core capabilities required to execute the plan. Certain training, such as the National Incident Management System and Incident Command System, are required of all emergency responders.

Emergency Supplies & Equipment

Primarily secured from grant funding, the Health District maintains a sizeable inventory of emergency medical supplies and equipment that may not readily be available from other sources in the first 24-48 hours of an emergency response.

Local Health Alert Network (LHAN)

The District has an important role in regional emergency communications and maintains an array of mechanisms to ensure that emergency communications can be conducted. This includes communications to the general public, specific target groups, and emergency response partners. All components of the LHAN must be tested regularly. Data, such as contact information, must be routinely maintained.

Medical Reserve Corps

The District is the housing organization for the Westport Weston Wilton Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), which organizes public health volunteers in our communities. Each year the District must survey members to determine availability and interest, as well as, conduct a membership drive for new medical and non-medical volunteers. The MRC mission is to provide trained and prepared individuals from both medical and non-medical backgrounds who will respond to public health emergencies in an effort to save lives and reduce the threat of disease or injury.

Emergency Preparedness & Management

NACCHO Recognition as a Project Public Health Ready Health District.

At the direction of the Connecticut Department of Health, all health departments/districts in Connecticut are expected to achieve recognition as a Project Public Health Ready (PPHR) agency. The National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) has defined PPHR as: *“a competency-based training and recognition program that assesses preparedness and assists local health departments, or groups of local health departments working collaboratively as a region, to respond to emergencies.”*

The Health District has been recognized as a PPHR community. The overall process to become PPHR certified took about three (3) years.

By achieving this recognition, WWHD has been recognized as a leader within our Region. The State of Connecticut has divided Emergency Support Functions (ESF) in various disciplines. Public health is known as ESF-8. Michael J. Vincelli, Emergency Preparedness Director for the Westport Weston Health District, has been elected by representatives of other area public health departments/districts in our Region as the ESF-8 Co-chairman.

Center for Disease Control

The Zika virus has quickly become a “hot” news topic. This outbreak continues to grow in size and reach around the world, as well as in the United States. In response to this emerging public health threat, the Center for Disease and Control (CDC) activated its Emergency Operations Center on January 22, 2016, to help coordinate the public health response. In addition, On February 1, 2016, the World Health Organization Director-General declared that “the recent clusters of microcephaly and neurologic disorders and their possible association with Zika virus constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.”

CDC is concerned about both imported and potential locally-acquired cases of Zika virus infection in the United States. With the recent outbreaks, the number of Zika virus disease cases among travelers visiting or returning to the United States will likely increase. While CDC cannot predict the spread of the Zika virus in the United States, federal, state and local health officials are actively monitoring the current outbreak to be prepared to address cases. What this will require of the Westport Weston Health District can not be determined at this time.

Response/Preparedness

Every public health jurisdiction in Connecticut is measured on their ability to prepare and respond to Mass Dispensing of medication incidents such as a pandemic, influenza or terrorism event. Each year since 2008, the District’s overall rating has increased. The State Department of Health’s assessment of the Health District’s preparedness level indicates we are as ready as one can be to respond to a number of local emergencies.



Budget Discussion

The Westport Weston Health District is the first officially recognized Health District in the State of Connecticut and is now one of 21 regional local health districts across the state. 2015 marked the District's 50 year anniversary of when the Towns of Westport and Weston voted to form the first health district in the state of Connecticut.

All District funding supports activities which range from identifying and responding to public health problems, promoting healthy lifestyles, emergency preparedness planning and response, protecting the health of our residents through immunizations and disease investigations, and reducing the incidence of foodborne illness through inspections and permitting of food service establishments. These efforts would not be possible without talented and dedicated staff.

2015 was a year with continuing high levels of construction activities, particularly in Westport. As a result, environmental permit fee revenue was greater than expected. To meet public service expectations, staffing had to remain flexible and innovative, by using part-time help and overtime hours to keep the work flow at a reasonable pace. Environmental staff has also been engaged in various water quality and food safety initiatives. For example, the WWHD is the lead agency on an innovative water testing program to use DNA analysis to identify sources of bacteria into local waterways. Partnering with Yale and others, a DNA sampling and testing protocol has been established which can be used by others in the future to more efficiently identify bacteria sources and develop strategies to reduce them. The Healthy Restaurant initiative is example of the District's efforts to reduce and prevent obesity and chronic disease in the community by promoting healthy lifestyles. By working with a coalition of local organizations and restaurants, the goal is to provide incentives for local restaurants to develop healthier menu items and the public to take advantage of them.

This year the District's operating expenditure budget had a negative operational balance. The was the result of having to cover unplanned staff medical leave and a reduction in Community Health Clinic revenues. This reduction in revenue is the unintentional consequence of accepting insurance payment for services rendered. Insurance compensation is a negotiated payment somewhat lower than direct customer payment.

This year's proposal is basically a maintenance budget with a modest increase to cover the increase in the basic cost of operations and have the staff necessary to meet all mandated service areas. The District's Board of Directors continues to review District operations and program areas as part of its long-term strategic planning effort, cognizant of the public's willingness and ability to support public health services.

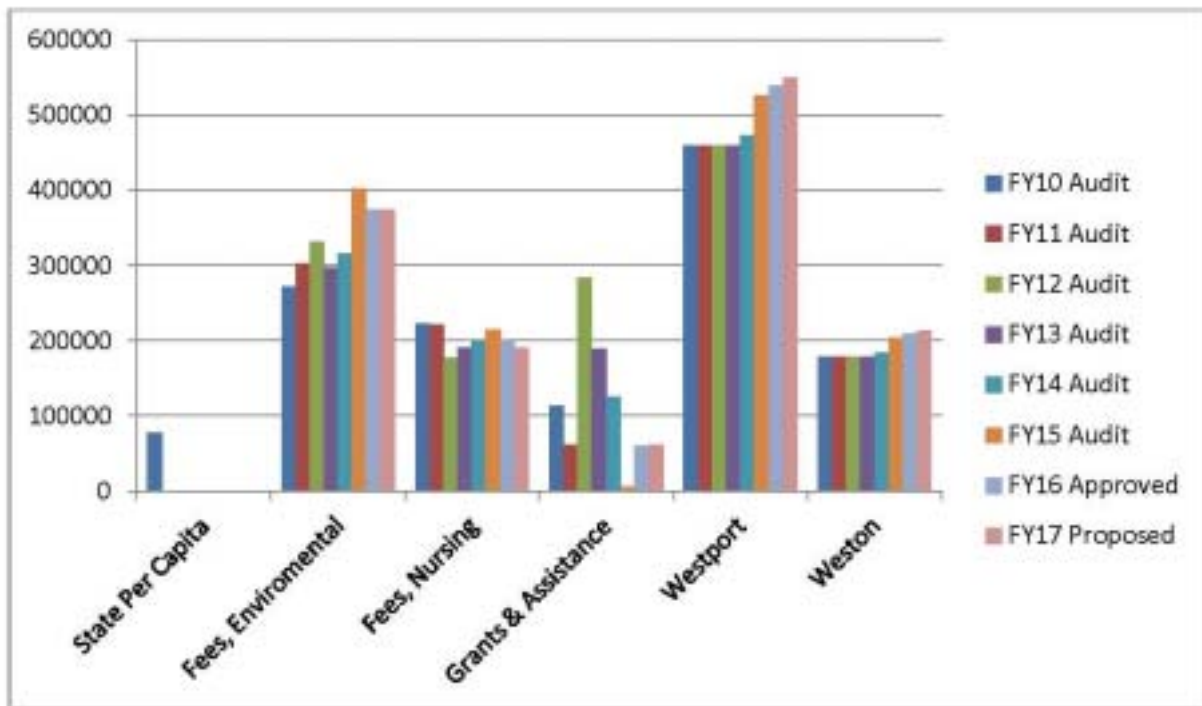


District Funding

The Health District's fiscal year ending June 30, 2015 had a negative operations balance of \$10,514. Although efforts were made to balance expenditures with revenues, there continued to be record levels of environmental work and an unexpected staff medical leave. Part time and straight overtime hours were needed to move work through the permitting system. Of concern is the continued decrease in the amount of State of Connecticut's Homeland Security grant funding formula which reduces funding for mandated emergency preparation activities. Another growing concern is the rapidly expanding spread of the Zika virus. What this will require of the Health District has yet to be determined.

The proposed budget for FY 2016-17 contains a 1% increase in our member towns' contributions. **Westport's contribution would increase by \$5,387 while Weston's contribution would increase by \$2,095.** Member town contributions are allocated on a per capita basis based on town population figures provided by the State. Our member town contributions ensure a stable revenue stream while funding from other sources can fluctuate significantly. Stable revenue is important so that the District can continue to provide essential and mandated public health functions while meeting customer service expectations.

WWHD Source of Funds - FY10 to FY17



What Is Public Health?

Public health is what we, as a community, do collectively to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy. Public health professionals strive to improve the health status of communities by applying science to medical practice, food preparation, environmental sanitation, personal behavior and public policy.

Responsive to changing community needs and priorities, public health's focus continues to evolve to meet new challenges, while the principle role of understanding and preventing disease and injury in groups of people through organized community effort remains as the primary goal.

It deals with preventive rather than curative aspects of health at the community-level, rather than individual-level. Public health professionals try to prevent problems from happening or re-occurring through implementation of educational programs, developing policies, administering services, and conducting research.

The United Nations' World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

The Westport Weston Health District endeavors to meet this objective by offering comprehensive services in Environmental Health, Community Health and Emergency Preparedness and using evidence-based practice to systematically and strategically assess the occurrence of disease and injury in the community, influence local policy development, and assure the effectiveness and quality of the services being provided.



The Westport Weston Health District is a governmental agency enabled by State Statute that provides public health services to the residents of Westport and Weston. Health District program areas include environmental health, prevention of disease, health promotion, emergency management and public education. Health District hours are 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, and by special appointment.



180 Bayberry Lane, Westport, CT 06880-2855

Tel. 203.227.9571

Fax: 203.221.7199

Website: www.WWHD.org



Westport Weston Health District



#wwhd1