

LLHD HIGHLIGHTS

Keeping Up with Your **Health** Department

September 2023 — Issue 1

Director's Corner

Happy September!

It's hard to believe summer is over and schools are back in swing, but thank goodness we still have a few weeks of lovely weather. Hopefully that weather is not impacted by a busy hurricane season but it's always good to be prepared! September is National Preparedness Month—look for tips and resources about getting ready for hurricanes and other emergencies on our website.

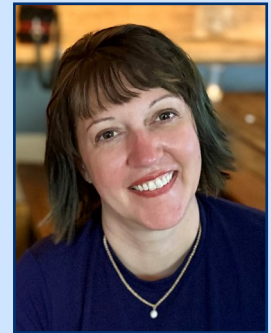
As we leave summer and head into fall we are finalizing our 2023-2028 Strategic Plan, which includes goals and objectives related to equity, workforce development, communications and community building. We are grateful for the time and insights of the community partners and community members who participated in the focus groups, interviews or surveys that helped shape our plan. Look for it to be launched on our website next month.

As always, there are a TON of activities happening at your health department—we've highlighted just a few things in this newsletter but hope you will stay up to date with us by following us on social media, visiting our website, or just giving us a call when you have a question. We are committed to working in partnership with all of you to promote a healthy community for everyone!

On behalf of the team,



Jennifer Muggeo, jmuggeo@llhd.org



Jennifer Muggeo
Director of Health

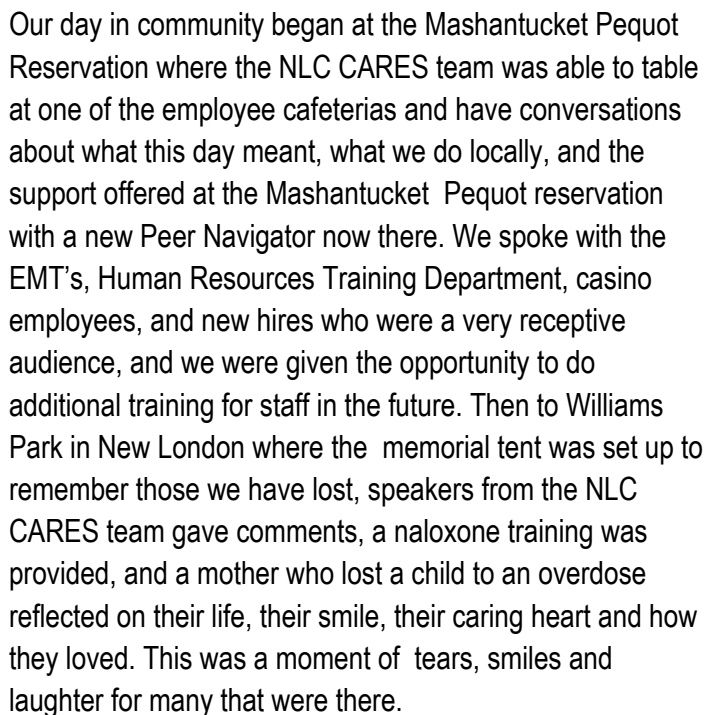
COVID is Still Here — and So are We!

LLHD continues to support our community with the COVID-19 response. Throughout the summer, we distributed COVID-19 test kits, isolation and exposure guidance, and hand sanitizing wipes while promoting COVID vaccination to community partners and residents. Since July, we have observed an increase in COVID cases and outbreaks. If you are sick, please stay home and get tested. If you need help finding a test kit, masks, or COVID vaccinations or treatment—or just have a question, please call us! Look out for more information on updated COVID-19 vaccines in the coming weeks! *Mary Day, mday@llhd.org*

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International Overdose Awareness Day was held on Thursday August 31, 2023. This year's theme was "We See You" and together with our partners at Alliance for Living, we started the day with a premiere of the NLC CARES team thank you video to our community. The [video](#) speaks to and touches everyone in the community that has been impacted by the overdose epidemic and features some of our local faith leaders, businesses, and local political figures that have been assisting and supporting the work being done to help save a life by learning how to administer Narcan (Naloxone).



Other team members participated in the Community Speaks Out event at Ocean Beach while a third group supported Chatham Health District's efforts to get the message out in their community about overdose and how to save a life with naloxone. All of the towns were provided resource information about the NLC CARES program, Peer Navigators, locations of emergency naloxone boxes and how to contact the team for support.

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@oat sect

National Immunization Awareness Month

August was National Immunization Awareness Month - dedicated to promoting on-time vaccination for people of all ages and celebrating the 4-5 million deaths prevented by vaccines worldwide each year. This year LLHD celebrated by hosting social media campaign called "Wellness Wednesdays" highlighting different vaccine related messages. LLHD promoted a media toolkit to 87 healthcare providers and pharmacists and hosted a "lunch and learn" for 67 pediatricians and other providers on the topic of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and the new vaccines and monoclonal antibody products to prevent it among adults, pregnant women and infants. To learn more, watch this short clip - [Preventing RSV in Babies: A Scientific Milestone](#); certainly, RSV is a disease you will be hearing more about. Education materials were provided at New London food pantry sites and in collaboration with local farmers markets in Niantic, Ledyard, Groton and New London, LLHD provided community outreach, speaking to hundreds of residents about the vaccines across all ages and distribute COVID test kits. *Cindy Barry, cbarry@llhd.org*



Public Health Nursing in the Community

In addition to leading the COVID response, the public health nursing team has been busy with other disease surveillance and response, including Mpox, Vibrio, Tuberculosis, and foodborne illnesses. We continue to host ongoing blood pressure screening events at various locations, and are putting plans in place for respiratory disease season. We will be offering free flu and COVID-19 vaccines for ages 6+, prioritizing outreach to underserved populations through small mobile clinics and events organized with community partners. *Mary Day, mday@llhd.org*

Beach Water Program

Labor Day Weekend marked the close of Ledge Light's 2023 beach water sampling season. We had five samplers on the ground every week for the last 15 weeks sampling 45 beaches throughout East Lyme, Groton, Waterford, New London, Stonington, Ledyard and Old Lyme.

Of those 45 areas, there are just three bodies of fresh water – the rest are marine bathing areas. There are different thresholds of bacteria that establish acceptable water quality standards for fresh water versus marine water, and different bacteria for which the water is being tested. Fresh water is tested for E. Coli while marine water is tested for enterococcal bacteria. Any results above the respective thresholds are considered to be at a concentration that could adversely affect human health and would trigger a swimming advisory and/or beach closure issued by LLHD.

Vibrio hit the headlines this year due to at least three confirmed cases of the infection in our state. Vibrio can

cause infection via consumption of contaminated, raw, or undercooked shellfish, or by sustaining an injury while exposed to marine water. It can also enter the bloodstream through an open wound that was not properly covered before entering the water. While LLHD does not test marine water for the vibrio bacteria, the State of CT Bureau of Aquaculture, a division of the State's Department of Agriculture, *does* test various shellfish beds throughout the state. Connecticut shellfish have never been linked to any vibrio vulnificus infections. The bacteria itself is naturally occurring and lives in coastal and brackish water. Infections are extremely rare, and people who are at the greatest risk are those with weakened immune systems and the elderly. Next year, LLHD plans to revamp our beach page on our website, returning with our interactive map of sample locations, as well as adding an FAQ section to address our most common inquiries (including vibrio!).

Danielle Holmes, dholmes@llhd.org

Black Health Collective: Group Therapy



The Black Health Collective—an action team of the Health Improvement Collaborative of SECT, has been very busy implementing elements of our mental health campaign this summer. The centerpiece of this effort has been our collaboration with artist Frank Colmenares, whose album “Beautiful Trauma” explores themes related to domestic violence, mental health and healing. Through a unique performance experience we call “Group Therapy” Mr. Colmenares shares his music and then participates in therapy in real-time and with audience interaction. The goal of this effort is to normalize discussions about mental health and breakdown misperceptions about therapy. We are grateful to Mr. Colmenares, the band, and therapist Jewell Jones for sharing their gifts at performances at The Garde Arts Center, Sailfest and The Telegraph this summer and are looking for opportunities to continue and expand the reach of this project. *Stephanye Clarke, sclarke@llhd.org*

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@BlackHealthCollectiveNLC

Groton Community Center Project

Through a grant from the National Parks and Recreation Association we have been collaborating with Groton Parks and Recreation on developing a Wellness Hub at the Groton Community Center. Our focus throughout the summer months has been gathering community feedback on the type of services that members are interested in obtaining at the Community Center. LLHD Health Program Coordinator Karl Jennings, Groton Community Ambassador Neelam Talati, along with LLHD Community Health Workers Lizbeth Polo-Smith and Amparo Bustamante have successfully connected with community members at several sponsored survey events held in Groton. Over 200 surveys were completed by community members via digital and paper applications.

In addition to community feedback surveys, our partnership offered nutrition education sessions at Thrive 55+. LLHD Health Program Coordinator Veronica Mallqui held six interactive 1-hour workshops throughout the summer. Those who attended the sessions were highly motivated and eager to learn about food and nutrition. The workshops allowed community members to learn how to read nutrition facts labels; how to shop on a budget; and how to choose foods lowest in salt, sugar, and saturated fats. Some of the feedback received from these workshops included, “I am now reading the Nutrition Label when I go shopping” and “I now compare the foods to select the best option”.

*Karl Jennings, kjennings@llhd.org. and
Veronica Mallqui Reyes, vmallqui@llhd.org*

Academic Detailing on Opioid Safety (ADOPS)

Our Academic Detailing on Opioid Safety program is focused on reaching prescribers and pharmacists in Eastern CT. We are offering brief, focused modules with an emphasis on increased knowledge and behavior change. Available modules include prescription monitoring, naloxone, medications for opioid use disorder, pain management and having difficult conversations. We are seeking interested providers to participate in the program. Our program assistant, UCONN School of Pharmacy student Tiffany Vicente, has been with us helping us conduct provider outreach. Continuing education credits and incentives (depending on employer policy) are available. Referrals are welcome! *Carolyn Wilson, cwilson@llhd.org*

MUJERES ENTRE CULTURAS (WOMEN BETWEEN CULTURES)

The work with immigrant women in the community continues for now with activities in areas such as parks and playgrounds, gardening at FRESH and trips to the beach.

In these last months we have been working with driver's licenses, we have helped them collect all their documentation, address changes, obtain their passports, and proof of their residency in Connecticut. A total of 30 immigrants applied for the license; unfortunately only one could give take the exam because we found many obstacles regarding the proof of residency. We have made new appointments for each of the applicants and sought how to obtain more proof of residency. We are helping immigrants to have their passports and identifications from their countries of origin so it facilitates the procedures they must do here, (DMV, healthcare, schools, obtain savings accounts in banks, changes of address, registration in the Libraries to access the different programs for children, recreation department, etc.). To help more community members navigate these systems we have created a "map" where we indicate each step to follow to start their new life in this country.



In recent months we have seen an increase in cases of domestic violence, which in most cases are not treated as quickly as we would like and this causes anxiety and fear in women. The biggest obstacle in these cases is the lack of knowledge of the laws and their rights regardless of a

individual's immigration status. We have heard four lawsuits in both the New London and Norwich courts; all of them in favor of women victims of violence.

We are supporting some church communities with donations of clothes, furniture, diapers, which we collect from some organizations or from people who always help us by giving us these things. We have also held classes including "Stop the Bleed" to help build capacity in our community members to respond to emergencies.

For the month of July, August and September, we have the events of raising the flags of the different countries, for which we work together with the organized groups of each country and the city towns. We are also getting ready for Hispanic Heritage Month, which will include the women serving lunch at the Community Meal Center as well as a number of community celebrations. We will have a "multicultural event" where women who have participated in the crafts workshops will offer everything they have done and learned, there will also be a walk of typical costumes where they will show their clothes and tell us about what each costume means. For this event we have sponsors who can have an information table and will donate some gifts to be raffled that day.



We continue to follow up on families twice a week, for this we make appointments with them and visit them in their homes and talk about how the processes they are doing are going and we see what their most urgent needs are and if necessary we make medical appointments or in organizations with which they have services.

Lizbeth Polo-Smith, lpolosmith@llhd.org and Amparo Bustamante, abustamante@llhd.org

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM
@mujeresentreculturas

Summer Means Temp Events!

We've had so far 246 temp event vendors for this summer. Some of the events that we have had and will have are Sailfest, North Stonington Fair, Garlic Festival, Taste of Mystic, American Food Truck Festival, Celebrate East Lyme, Tour de Lyme & Farmer Markets. LLHD team members work to make sure all vendors have appropriate food safety plans and practices in order to reduce the chance of food borne illness from these fun events.

Tyler Do-Taylor, tdotaylor@llhd.org

Grant Management

During the past fiscal year, July 2022 through June 2023, LLHD received and managed twenty-seven grants awarded from the federal and state government and foundations totaling \$3.35 million. Utilizing these funds, we administered and managed thirty-three sub-contracts to local health departments and community partners totaling \$1.02 million. We also managed memorandums of agreement and donations to LLHD totaling \$630 thousand acquired from LLHD Member Municipalities, staff speaking stipends, community organizations and individual contributions received over the past two years.

Catherine Dragoo, cdragoo@llhd.org

Happy “Knight-iversary”

We celebrate and acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the LLHD team members! Each one of the “Ledge Light Knights” is an integral part of our team working with each other and community partners to promote healthy communities.

June

George Calkins, 15 years

July

Kris Magnussen, 15 years

August

Mike Bibens, 12 years

Kim Hamley, 5 years

September

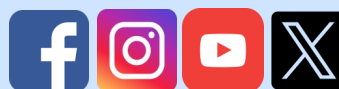
Helen Adap, 2 years

Katie Baldwin, 15 years

Melissa Edmonson, 2 years

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[@ledgelighthd](https://www.instagram.com/ledgelighthd)



Please visit www.LLHD.org for our schedule of upcoming vaccination clinics.

#FIGHT FLU



LLHD
Ledge Light Health District

Join our Community Email List

Get our newsletter and important updates sent directly to your inbox. [Email us at eharrison@llhd.org](mailto:eharrison@llhd.org).

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