

LLHD HIGHLIGHTS

Keeping Up with Your Health Department

November 2023 — Issue 2

Director's Corner

Happy November!

Well, it seems like it is finally really and truly autumn; after a few almost 80 degree days last week we've had our first frost and consistently cooler temperatures. It's a good time to do a health check on your heating equipment and ensure proper ventilation and other safety measures are working. If you need assistance paying for heat this winter please contact our friends at TVCCA to enroll in the energy assistance program—call them at 860.425.6681 or go online to tvcca.org/energy-assistance.

It's also a good time to remember that although it's cooler now it's not consistently cold, which means we should still be on the lookout for ticks! Ticks may be active any time the temperature is above 40°F, so while you're enjoying the changing leaves use tick protection strategies to stay safe. You can find them on our website at llhd.org or pick up a pamphlet at our office.

Finally, many of us have holiday meal planning on our minds! We hope that everyone enjoys a safe, healthy and happy holiday season and avoids foodborne illness by following good practices when defrosting, preparing, cooling and storing all the delicious food your family traditions call for. We'll be sharing easy to follow guidelines on our website and social media the week of Thanksgiving so check them out before you get cooking!

On behalf of the team,



Jennifer Muggeo, jmuggeo@llhd.org



Jennifer Muggeo
Director of Health

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Did you miss Issue 1 of LLHD Highlights? Find it on our website at <https://tiny.llhd.org/Issue1>



We're so grateful for our community partnerships! "Cross-sector collaboration" sounds jargony but it's what we call the simple and common sense approach of different organizations bringing resources and expertise together in service of our community. In October, we met our colleagues from Uncas Health District at Backus Hospital to receive a donation of flu vaccines and EpiPens. The hospital resources of vaccines combined with the health district resources of mobile health services means that more people in our region will be protected against the flu this season! Thank you Backus Hospital!

Jennifer Muggeo, jmuggeo@llhd.org

Lead Poisoning Prevention

October 22-28 was National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week but we think about lead poisoning prevention all year long! Even though it was banned as an additive in paint in 1978, lead is still very much present in our environment. Homes that were built before 1978 are at a greater risk of containing many lead painted surfaces—it is estimated that at least 71% of all homes in Connecticut were built before 1980 meaning that there is a high potential for exposure in our communities. While lead poses a risk

to persons of all ages, children under the age of 6 are at the highest risk as lead affects brain development. That's why Connecticut has mandated that all children are screened each year between 9 and 35 months of age. The capillary screening process consists of a prick to the finger or heel in the pediatrician's office and results are usually presented immediately. If a child has a capillary screening result of 3.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ or greater, the pediatrician will require the child to have a lead venous (in the arm) draw at a laboratory. If you reside in a home that was built before 1978 and have children under the age of 6, call your pediatrician today to discuss having your child tested for lead!

Ledge Light Health District has a robust staff of environmental health professionals who are committed to preventing lead poisoning among children in Connecticut. If you have concerns about your home and lead paint, LLHD inspectors are certified to assess risks of lead in homes and can assist you in identifying potential lead hazards. An inspector will conduct a site visit and perform a visual and environmental assessment of your space. The inspector will provide education on lead hazards and prevention. If you are interested in a home risk assessment, please contact us at 860-448-4882 to schedule an in-home lead risk assessment. *Katie Baldwin, kbaldwin@llhd.org*



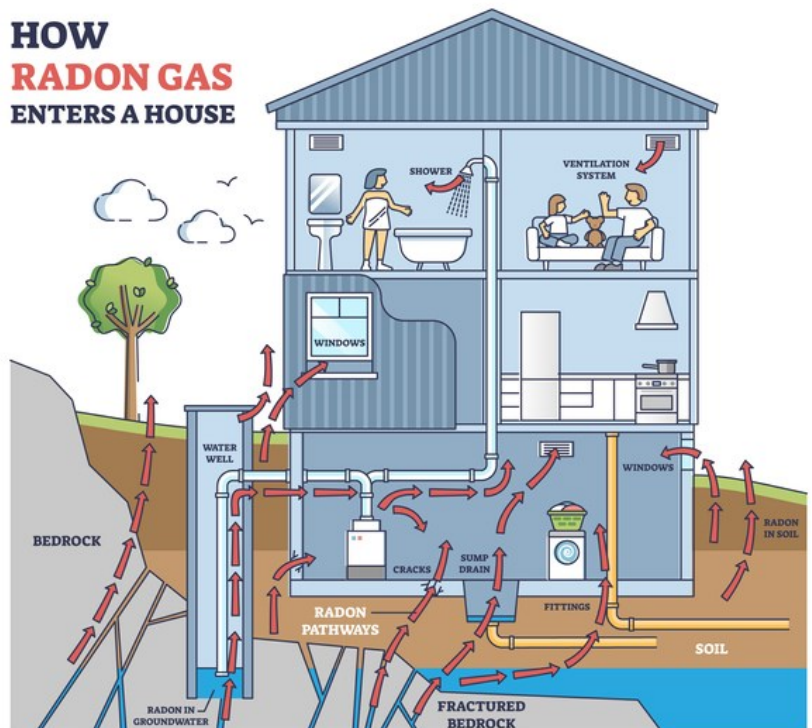
In this picture Katie Baldwin, Supervisor of Regulated Facilities and Housing, is collecting a dust wipe of a floor in a home. She places the wipe in a clean tube which is then sent to the lab to be analyzed for lead content in the floor dust. The result should be less than 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ft}^2$.

Radon Awareness Month

January is National Radon Awareness Month! Radon is a naturally occurring odorless, tasteless and radioactive gas released

into homes from rock, soil and water from the breakdown of uranium. Since you cannot see or taste the gas, the only way to know if it is present in your home is to test! On January 2, 2024, Ledge Light Health District will commence our 7th year participating in the State of Connecticut Annual Radon Partnership Program. We are anticipating receiving 50 radon test kits which will be available to residents free of charge on a first come, first served basis. The test kit includes the short test kit, instructions on testing and a pre-paid envelope to mail the test kit directly to the laboratory. Please contact Tyler Do-Taylor at 860-448-4882 ext. 1346 to obtain a free test kit. For technical and basic radon questions, please contact Supervisor of Regulated Facilities and Housing, Katie Baldwin at 860-448-4882 ext. 1319. *Katie Baldwin, kbaldwin@llhd.org*

HOW RADON GAS ENTERS A HOUSE



Public Health Nursing in the Community

It is the busiest time of the year for public health nurses! Since September, LLHD has been providing flu shots for residents ages 6 and up. We have administered 194 flu vaccines so far this season with more to go. We have small clinics arranged with community partners, as well as some larger events open to the public. We also vaccinate homebound residents. While we get many inquiries to host clinics, we focus efforts on outreach to underserved populations. Our goal is to minimize or eliminate barriers to vaccine access such as cost, health insurance status, proximity, and convenience. So far this season, we have done vaccination events with New London Adult Education, Alliance for Living, Church of the City, Waterford Farmer's Market, New London Community Meal Center, New London Homeless Hospitality Center, New London Senior Center, Hispanic Alliance of SECT, Waterford Farmer's Market, Alliance for Living, and Old Lyme VNA, and we will continue to schedule events into the winter. We are also assisting the Naval Submarine Base with a four-day mass vaccination event in November.

LLHD has purchased a small amount of COVID-19 vaccine to administer to our homebound residents. We've also received a small amount of free COVID vaccine through the State of Connecticut Childhood Vaccine Program and the Center for

Disease Control and Prevention Bridge Program. Vaccines provided through these programs are for adults who self-attest that they are uninsured or underinsured and for children ages six and up. LLHD will not be doing mass COVID vaccination clinics for the public, but individuals who meet the above criteria can schedule vaccination appointments with one of our public health nurses. LLHD will also help to connect any community member with COVID vaccine appointments at pharmacies and with their primary care providers. Please contact us at 860.448.4882 for more information or assistance.

These immunization activities would not be possible without the help and support of our Medical Reserve Corps volunteers. Thank you to the LLHD MRC Unit for your service!

Mary Day, mday@llhd.org



Boost your safety this holiday season! Vaccines are available to protect us from illnesses including, pneumococcal disease, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), flu and COVID. Contact us for more information and help finding a vaccine!

Medical Reserve Corps

Our Medical Reserve Corps volunteers can be found doing blood pressure checks, helping at the New London Food Pantry, and vaccinating folks against flu and COVID. If you came to any of our many vaccine clinics over the past few years, one of our volunteers gave you your shot. We have 147 volunteers, who are medical and non-medical, but we have a core group of about 30 that always sign up to work. Last year our volunteers contributed 2,387 hours providing services to our communities.

Recently, on a very rainy and windy Saturday, 21 of our volunteers assisted the Old Lyme VNA in giving 200 flu shots in a drive-thru clinic. MRC volunteers assisted with traffic monitoring, greeting, and vaccinating.

In November, some of our physicians, nurses, and pharmacists will be at the submarine base vaccinating 4,000 sailors and staff against flu. The base clinic does not have the manpower to vaccinate so many. Even though we have to be on the base at 0530, that hasn't kept our volunteers from signing up.



Anyone interested in joining our MRC unit, please sign up via <https://ctresponds.ct.gov/>

Kris Magnussen, kmagnussen@llhd.org

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Youth Substance Use Prevention

The start of the school year has meant a ramp up of activities for youth prevention coalitions across the region. LLHD facilitates the prevention coalitions in Ledyard and Groton, which have been very busy coordinating with community partners to increase protective factors to keep young people safe and healthy!

Ledyard Prevention Coalition (LPC)

The LPC recently completed year 7 of our 10-year Drug Free Communities funding from the CDC. In October, we launched *Take it To the Box Radio Campaign* on WBMW and WJJF. The Campaign ran for the month of October and concluded with National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on October 28th at the Ledyard Police Department. Thank you to Chief Rich, Principal Amanda Fagan, Mayor Allyn, Parks and Recreation Director, Scott Johnson and Ledyard Town Council Member, Gary Paul for participating in the campaign.



Our 2023 Ledyard Youth Survey Report has been completed. This survey is a tool to measure practices and attitudes related to substance use among the town's young people. Results are used to develop appropriate prevention and intervention strategies for youth and for general comparisons with regional and national statistics. Youth in grades 6 through 12 participated in the survey.

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An abbreviated version of the report will be distributed to the community in November. Overall, we are seeing positive results such as: increased rate of harm of using substances, increased difficulty in obtaining substances, and increased disapproval rate of using substances by friends.

The LPC continues to collaborate with Ledyard Youth and Social Services to facilitate the Ledyard Juvenile Review Board. This year the Juvenile Review Board has seen 9 cases between October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023.

Other highlights include:

- Implemented a parent education campaign, "Talk They Hear You" this campaign was created by SAMHSA.
- Participated in several events including National Night Out, Farmer's Markets, and Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation's Suicide Prevention Event.
- Recruited 30 Ledyard Middle School students and provided a leadership program at Waterford Country School's Ropes Course and Nature Farm.
- Provided substance prevention education classes at the Ledyard Parks and Recreation Department as part of their summer program.

Kerensa Mansfield, kmansfield@llhd.org and Karl Jennings, kjennings@llhd.org.



Groton Alliance For Substance use Prevention (GASP)

Groton Alliance For Substance use Prevention (GASP) is funded largely by the CT DMHAS part B grant focused on underage drinking prevention. The two risk factors we are addressing are family norms and retail availability. With our partners, this summer we focused on surveillance and enforcement of establishments that sell or serve alcohol. We are developing our new Project 21 materials that promote policies and practices that may prevent underage sales and service. This summer and back to school season, we have been focused on family outreach and parent recruitment. By building our contact list, we can have a larger, more meaningful reach in Groton.

Carolyn Wilson, cwilson@llhd.org

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MUJERES ENTRE CULTURAS (WOMEN BETWEEN CULTURES)

Culture, social connectedness, and celebrations are important parts of a healthy and well community! During the months of September and October we celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month (Sep 15-Oct 15) in three towns for the first time! Thank you to the community partners in New London, Waterford and Groton who hosted events and created opportunities for women of different nationalities to participate with typical dances and showing their crafts and their representative dresses. We also recognized Hispanic businesses and individuals who are actively involved in helping the Hispanic community.



As another part of our Hispanic Heritage Month celebration, and with thanks to the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, we hosted a deal of meals at the New London Community Meals Center. Our group so enjoyed sharing their time and food with the guests of the Meal Center!

Upcoming November Events and Women Across Cultures Workshops, open to the community:

- Culture Week at Mohegan Sun Casino: November 13th - 17th
- Knitting groups (every Friday) with a scarves and hats project to donate to a community organization.
- Nutrition Workshop
- Event for the fight against gender-based violence
- Dance workshops

Contact us to learn more!

Lizbeth Polo-Smith, lpolosmith@llhd.org

Amparo Bustamante, abustamante@llhd.org

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM
[@mujeresentreculturas](#)

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.

October

Amparo Bustamante, 1 year
Dawn DeStefano, 3 years

November

Wendy Brown-Arnold, 9 years
Patti Myers, 7 years
Nisha Patel, 5 years
Charlene Swink, 7 years



Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and on October 22, LLHD joined hundreds of other community members for the Safe Futures walk at Waterford High School. If you or someone you know are experiencing domestic violence, please know that LLHD, Safe Futures and the community stand ready with resources and support. You can learn more at safefuturesct.org or call their 24/7 confidential hotline at 860.701.6001 or text CT Safe Connect at 888.774.2900. All services are free and confidential.

FREE COVID-19 AT-HOME TESTS AVAILABLE
Place your order at COVIDTests.gov.
Need help placing an order for your at-home tests?
Call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489)
Need an at-home test right away? Call LLHD at 860-448-4882.

COVID-19 Self-Test (Rapid Antigen Test)

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COVID-19 Self-Test (Rapid Antigen Test)

LLHD
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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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