

# LLHD HIGHLIGHTS

Keeping Up with Your **Health** Department

January 2024 — Issue 3

## Director's Corner

### Happy New Year!

I hope that the last few months have included some moments of peace and joy for you—no matter how or if you celebrate the winter holidays, it can be a complicated time of happiness and stress and I'm sending good wishes for a great start to 2024 to you all!

Complicated time sums it up for some of us on the LLHD team and explains why we are releasing the "January" edition on February 4th! Between family losses and illnesses we've been juggling competing priorities and fell a bit behind our schedule. Apologies all around—it's our intention to get these out to you on a predictable and consistent basis. That said, it provides an opportunity for me to ask you all to 'give yourself grace' when things don't go exactly to plan for you. I don't think we talk enough about how hard it is to be human! Shouldering stress and consistent feelings that you aren't quite hitting the mark can build up and contribute to anxiety and depression. On the heels of the holiday season and in these cold, dark winter days I know I for one can quickly find my mental health deteriorating.

Our Community Health Assessment shows me I'm not alone; mental health is a priority public health concern for us to address as a community. If you are finding yourself struggling maybe like me you will find some relief from bundling up and enjoying one of the many amazing hiking trails in Southeastern Connecticut, or connecting with community members at a class through our awesome partners at our area's Recreation Departments and Public Libraries. Or maybe you're ready to engage with mental health care, which can include medication and/or therapy. Taking care of our brains and emotions is crucial to overall health and nothing to feel ashamed about. If you need more information or help finding support please reach out, we'd love to connect. Call or email me! Or send us a message on social media, or call or text the CARES Navigators at 860.333.3494. Whatever feels most comfortable, we are here for you. And if you or someone you love are in distress there is free, confidential support is available 24/7 by calling or texting 988 or chatting at 988lifeline.org.

On behalf of the team,

*Jen* Jennifer Muggeo, [jmuggeo@llhd.org](mailto:jmuggeo@llhd.org)



Jen (and Bailey) enjoy a cold but sunny walk at the Connecticut College Arboretum

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Did you miss an issue of LLHD Highlights?  
Visit our website at [llhd.org/about-us/newsroom/](http://llhd.org/about-us/newsroom/).



LLHD staff at the Groton Wellness Hub ribbon cutting ceremony in December. (From left to right: Lizbeth Polo-Smith, Karl Jennings, Veronica Mallqui, and Amparo Bustamante.)

## GASP Coordinator and Volunteers Honored

The Connecticut Association of Prevention Professionals (CAPP) selected Carolyn Wilson to receive Prevention Professional of the Year 2023. CAPP receives nominations annually from membership across the State for several recognition awards given at their annual meeting.

Wilson has been a Health Program Coordinator with Ledge Light Health District since 2010 and has been the full-time coordinator for the Groton Alliance for Substance Use Prevention (GASP) since 2014. Wilson has served on the Board of Directors of CAPP since 2020. Wilson is degreed in Public Health, with a focus on behavioral science and health promotion. She is certified in both Health Education and Prevention.

Wilson notes, "I started as a volunteer and then was hired to support a few grant-funded health programs, including GASP and Ledyard Prevention Coalition. I am grateful for my early mentors, Michelle Hamilton and Kerensa Mansfield. I am happy that both coalitions are still thriving today."

GASP has been the local prevention council serving Groton since 1999. Since its inception GASP has been awarded several competitive grants from the State and Federal Government. Wilson adds, "Data has been the backbone and guiding light of our continued work", she said. "We have Archie Swindell to thank for that," noting his recent 2023 retirement from providing data and evaluation services.

Wilson acknowledges the importance of mentorship in the prevention field. "I believe in helping young professionals and those new to the field. Prevention is both art and science. It is multi-faceted, challenging and rewarding."

In addition to leading GASP, Wilson coordinates the Academic Detailing program at Ledge Light Health District, providing continuing education for prescribers and pharmacists about opioid safety, prevention and harm reduction. In her spare time, Wilson serves as an independent subcontractor with Uncas Health District as a tobacco cessation coach.

In addition to her award, Wilson announced that 3 GASP members are also being recognized for their contributions to local prevention efforts. CAPP recognizes "Sector All Stars" who are nominated by their peers who have made great contributions to local prevention efforts.



Sergeant Brenna Bolduc of the Groton Town Police Department was awarded for the Law Enforcement Sector for her work with MADD and as a drug recognition expert. A drug recognition expert or drug recognition evaluator (DRE) is a police officer trained to recognize impairment in drivers under the influence of drugs other than, or in addition to, alcohol. Wilson says, "Sgt. Bolduc's tireless efforts to make our community safer for everyone is commendable. Everyone knows this is more than just a job for her, she truly cares about prevention."



David Ogden, Guidance Counselor at Ella T. Grasso Technical High School was awarded for the Education Sector. Ogden serves as the advisor for the Students for Recovery group at Grasso Tech. "Dave took an issue that hit home for him and provided an opportunity for young people to create real, meaningful change. Wilson says, "It has been transformative to the students and alumni involved." Recovery Fest, a youth-led community event and resource fair started by the group has caught the attention of Recovery programs and leaders across the state.



Kayla Miner, Teen Coordinator at the Navy Subbase Youth Center, has been awarded for the Youth Serving Organization sector. Wilson says, "Teens from military families may have a unique set of risk and protective factors. Kayla taps into the needs of each child, empowers them, and engages them in healthy meaningful recreation and programming. She is such an asset to our community."

Wilson says, "It is an honor to be recognized by my peers. There is great work happening across Connecticut."

What is the 'Take Home' message about prevention? Wilson says, "the science about the impact of substance use on brain development is clear. Waiting until 21 to use drugs or alcohol can greatly reduce the risk of developing problem use or a substance use disorder later in life. It's as easy and as complicated as that." She adds, "The future of prevention relies on using evidence-based practices and data-informed interventions to make community and systems level change. Policy matters."

**FOLLOW GASP ON SOCIAL MEDIA @groton\_prevents**

## MRC Members Attend Nursing Academy

LLHD public health nurse Mary Day was selected to attend the 2023-2024 New England Nursing Clinical Faculty and Preceptor Academy. Participants are selected through a competitive application process and attend two conferences, held in November and March in Northampton, MA, as well as a series of virtual webinars, and precept two nursing students or new hire nurses. The objective of this training opportunity is to develop and support preceptors and clinical faculty to strengthen the nursing workforce. The New England Nursing Preceptor Academy is federally funded by the Nurse Education, Practice, Quality, and Retention - Clinical Faculty and Preceptor Academies program grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and is administered by the UMASS Chan Medical School/Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing in Worcester, MA in collaboration with partners across New England. Ledge Light public health nurses routinely precept nursing students during their public health clinical rotation. Special thanks to MRC volunteer Barbara O'Neill, PhD, RN for leading the Connecticut nursing cohort, pictured.



Connecticut Nursing Cohort at the 2023-2024 New England Nursing Clinical Faculty and Preceptor Academy. Mary Day pictured top row, third from left.

**FOLLOW OUR MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS  
ON FACEBOOK @LLHDMRC**

## Weekly Respiratory Virus Data Available on our Website

Respiratory virus activity reports will be posted on our website every week. Visit our data page to get the latest information about COVID and flu activity in our District.

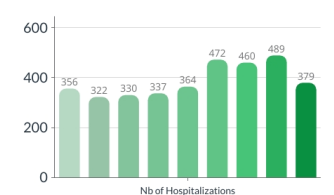
Monday, January 22, 2024:

**Respiratory Virus Trends are Slowly Decreasing**

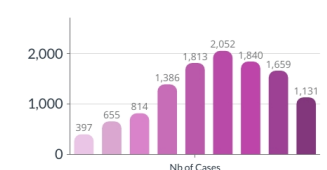
# of Lab-Confirmed COVID Cases by Week in CT  
11/18/24 to 1/20/24



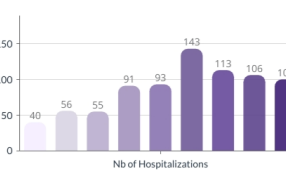
COVID-19 Associated Hospitalizations by Week in CT  
11/18/24 to 1/20/24



# of Lab-Confirmed Influenza Cases by Week in CT  
11/18/24 to 1/20/24



Influenza Hospitalizations by Week in CT  
11/18/24 to 1/20/24



Source: Viral Disease Weekly Update Dashboard by CT DPH

You can decrease your risk of CATCHING a respiratory virus or SPREADING a virus to others by **wearing a mask, getting vaccinated against COVID-19 and Flu, avoiding crowds, and remembering hand hygiene!**



# LET'S GET VACCINATED

**No appointment, No ID Required.**

**Flu and COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic**

**Wednesday, February 15th New London Senior Center**

**10 Brainard Street, New London**

**9:30-11:30 A.M**

**FREE FLU SHOTS AGES AVAILABLE FOR AGES 12+. FREE UPDATED PFIZER COVID-19 VACCINES AVAILABLE FOR ANYONE AGES 12-18, AND UNINSURED OR UNDERINSURED ADULTS AGES 19+.**

To schedule a COVID vaccine for children under age 12, or if you are 19+ and need help finding a COVID-19 vaccine, please contact Ledge Light Health District.

**FIND A COVID-19 VACCINE CLINIC NEAR YOU  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE [LLHD.ORG](https://www.llhd.org)**

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## Happy New Year from the Ledyard Prevention Coalition!



With our mission *to foster a healthy, safe, and drug free environment for Ledyard youth through community partnerships*, the Ledyard Prevention Coalition kicked off the New Year by bringing former NBA player Chris Herren to speak at Ledyard High School. Chris Herren was a celebrated star in his native Fall River, MA before graduating high school. He went on to play at Boston College and Fresno State, two seasons in the NBA – including one with his hometown team, the Boston Celtics, and seven seasons overseas before losing it all to the disease of addiction.

With the unwavering support of his family and friends, Chris has been sober since August 1, 2008 and he now shares his story with the goal of making a positive difference in the lives of others. His recovery journey has been documented in the bestselling memoir, “Basketball Junkie,” the Emmy-nominated ESPN Films documentary, “Unguarded” and in countless local, national and international stories by The New York Times, The Boston Globe and Sports Illustrated, among others. Through Herren Talks, Chris has spoken to over 1 million students and community members, sparking honest discussions about substance use disorder and wellness. In 2011, Chris grew his vision of support for others when he founded the nonprofit Herren Project. Through the organization, Chris and his team empower schools and communities to make healthy choices, while also guiding families through recovery. In 2018, Chris also founded Herren Wellness, a residential health and wellness program that helps guests lead healthy, substance-free lives.

This event was supported by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award funded by ONDCP.

Kerensa Mansfield, [kmansfield@llhd.org](mailto:kmansfield@llhd.org) and Karl Jennings, [kjennings@llhd.org](mailto:kjennings@llhd.org).

**FOLLOW LPC ON SOCIAL MEDIA @ledyardprevents**

## New Afterschool Snack Program Opens in Groton

On Tuesday, December 5th, Ledge Light Health District and Groton Parks and Recreation celebrated the grand opening and ribbon-cutting of the afterschool snack program located at the Groton Community Center. Community members were invited to tour the community center, obtain flu vaccines, and taste two nutritious snack recipes. Participants were encouraged to recreate the recipes at home by taking goodie bags with all the ingredients needed and a bi-lingual recipe card. The afterschool snack program was initiated by partnering with United Way/Gemma E. Moran and LLHD/Groton Parks and Recreation. Students who attend the afterschool program at the Community Center can now obtain free snacks and beverages!

Veronica Mallqui, [vmallqui@llhd.org](mailto:vmallqui@llhd.org)



## Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

When most people think of lead, they think of paint in and on old houses and perhaps leaded gasoline. A common misconception is that lead is no longer a problem since the government banned lead in paint in 1978 and in gasoline in 1986. Unfortunately, that is very far from the truth and here at LLHD, we see that lead is still very much a problem. In an effort to reduce the risk of lead poisoning in children, the State of Connecticut mandates that all children are screened annually for lead in their blood between the ages of 9 and 35 months; the results of these tests are required to be reported to local health departments. Once reported, local health departments have specific steps they must take to follow-up with the child and their guardian to provide education and determine where the lead hazards are in the home, and sometimes, order correction.

Even with strict screening and testing mandates, Connecticut still sees high rates of children under six experiencing lead poisoning or elevated levels of lead in their blood. In May of 2022, Public Act 22-49, An Act Reducing Lead Poisoning, was passed to help Connecticut lower the rates of lead poisoning in children. The Public Act is very comprehensive with a yearly staggered lowering of the level of lead allowed in children's blood, and mandates various timelines, among other requirements, at which the pediatrician and the health departments must follow-up with the children with elevated levels. Since January 1, 2023 and each year on the first through January 1, 2025, the level at which a child needs follow-up is reduced to be in alignment with the National EPA standards.

To be able to continue to provide comprehensive services to our communities, LLHD has a robust staff of environmental health professionals who are trained and committed to preventing lead

poisoning among children. LLHD environmental staff are certified to test and assess risks of lead in homes to assist in identifying potential lead hazards and requiring remediation of the hazards. For more information on lead poisoning or the Public Act 22-49, please contact Katie Baldwin, Supervisor of Regulated Facilities and Housing at 860-448-4882 ext. 1319. *Katie Baldwin, kbaldwin@llhd.org*



LLHD Environmental Technician Lupita Santos shared info about LLHD programs with a parent at a community event.

## New Cosmetology Regulation

Since 2005, with the inception of the Ledge Light Health District Cosmetology Regulation, LLHD has licensed and inspected various cosmetology (hairdressing, barbering, nails, and cosmetics) establishments throughout the District. The intent of these Regulations is to ensure that these establishments provide clean and safe services to the public because who doesn't love feeling pampered every now and then? As time moves on, fads come and go and more services become available, LLHD revised our Regulation in 2014 to be more comprehensive. Fast forward to 2020 and the State of Connecticut began requiring that nail technicians, eyelash technicians, and estheticians obtain a State of Connecticut license to practice their art. Previously, only barbers, hairdressers and cosmeticians had State licenses. We will again revise the Cosmetology Regulation to align with the State updates and to clarify other infrastructure and practice requirements following a public hearing in March 2024. If you are interested in viewing the Regulation and proposed updates please visit our website at [www.llhd.org](http://www.llhd.org) or email [jmuggeo@llhd.org](mailto:jmuggeo@llhd.org).

## Free Radon Test Kits Available

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 commenced our 7<sup>th</sup> year participating in the State of Connecticut Annual Radon Partnership Program. We received 90 radon test kits which have been available to residents free of charge at 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 analytical 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*

## 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.

### December

Ruben Santiago, 2 years

### January

Cindy Barry, 23 years

Odalys Reyes, 1 year

Estelle Harrison, 11 years

## GASP and NLC CARES Partner on Outreach



During the last week of 2023, GASP and NLC Cares worked together to conduct public health outreach at some popular Groton bars before one of the busiest times of year, New Years Eve. Program coordinators Margaret Lancaster and Carolyn Wilson both had community outreach visits as end-of-year goals. They joined forces to promote evidence-based primary prevention and harm reduction by providing education and resources for bars and restaurants. Improving ID checking policies and practices continues to be a key strategy in underage drinking prevention and an ongoing GASP priority. Naloxone saturation and training continues to be a key priority for NLC Cares. As neighbors in the office, Margaret and Carolyn discuss their projects often, and joining forces in the field was fun and rewarding for both of them. They look forward to future outings to support efforts to keep our community safer.

## How Can I Get Naloxone/Narcan?

Naloxone is the life-saving medicine that can reverse an opioid overdose and for the last several years we have been working to make it easier for everyone to carry and be ready to save a life! Narcan brand naloxone is available over the counter at local pharmacies for \$45. Note: It is often kept behind the cashier's desk, and not in the aisles, so you will have to ask an associate for assistance. No prescription is needed. Insurance is not used and it will not be in your medical record.

Naloxone is available by prescription from any licensed prescriber or trained pharmacist. It can be filled at the pharmacy and will be billed through your insurance. Note: It will be listed in your medical record. Naloxone is available without insurance for no charge through community programs, such as NLC Cares, when supplies are available. Naloxone can be accessed at NLC CARES emergency boxes across the region. If you see the box needs to be refilled, please call NLC Cares.

Naloxone is available at local pharmacies with or without a prescription. Trained pharmacists can prescribe and dispense naloxone and show you how to administer it. NLC CARES sponsors several naloxone emergency boxes across the community. Supplies include naloxone and fentanyl test strips. Supplies are free, with no questions asked. If you encounter a box that is empty or running low, please call or text NLC Cares at 860.333.3494.

### Community Narcan Box Locations

1. **Ledge Light**, 216 Broad St, New London: On apple tree
2. **Fiddleheads**, 13 Broad St, New London: By front door
3. **Quaker Hill Fire Dept**, 17 Old Colchester Rd, Quaker Hill
4. **Jordan Fire Dept**, 89 Rope Ferry Rd, Waterford
5. **Groton Human Services**, 2 Fort Hill Rd: Outside building
6. **Groton Library/ Thrive 55+** parking lot, 102 Newtown Rd
7. **Pawcatuck Fire Department**, 33 Liberty St
8. **Matt's Mission**, 70 Main St, Jewett City
9. **Montville Old Town Hall**, 310 Norwich-New London Turnpike, Uncasville: east exterior wall



All supplies in the community boxes are FREE. If you need support or more information, call 860.333.3494.

## Join our Community Email List

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

