

# Department of Public Health



## *At a Glance*

**JEWEL MULLEN, M.D., M.P.H., M.P.A., *Commissioner***

***Established – 1878***

***Statutory authority - CGS Chap. 368a, Sections 19a-1a et seq.***

***Central office - 410-450 Capitol Avenue,***

***Hartford, CT 06106***

***Number of employees – 843***

***Recurring operating expenses -***

***Federal: \$135,332,926***

***State: \$91,552,145***

***Additional Funds: \$30,698,539***

***Organizational structure -***

- **Administration Branch**
- **Affirmative Action Office**
- **Agency Legal Director**
- **Communications Office**
- **Fiscal Services Section**
- **Government Relations Office**
- **Health Care Systems Branch**
- **Laboratory/Mobile Field Hospital Liaison**
- **Local Health Administration Branch**
- **Operations Branch**
- **Office of Health Care Access**
- **Oral Public Health Office**
- **Planning Branch**
- **Public Health Initiatives Branch**
- **Public Health Laboratory**
- **Regulatory Services Branch**

## **Mission**

*To protect and improve the health and safety of the people of Connecticut by:*

- *Assuring the conditions in which people can be healthy;*
- *Promoting physical and mental health; and,*
- *Preventing disease, injury, and disability.*

## **Statutory Responsibility**

The Department of Public Health (DPH) is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy. The agency is the center of a comprehensive network of public health services, and is a partner to local health departments for which it provides advocacy, training and certification, technical assistance and consultation, and specialty services such as risk assessment that are not available at the local level. The agency is a source of accurate, up-to-date health information to the Governor, the Legislature, the federal government and local communities. This information is used to monitor the health status of Connecticut's residents, set health priorities and evaluate the effectiveness of health initiatives. The agency is a regulator focused on health outcomes, maintaining a balance between assuring quality and administrative burden on the personnel, facilities and programs regulated. The agency is a leader on the national scene through direct input to federal agencies and the United States Congress.

## **Public Service**

### **Administration Branch**

The Administration Branch assures that department-wide administrative activities are coordinated and accomplished in an effective and efficient manner. The branch provides the following services across the agency:

### **Human Resources Section**

The Human Resources Section provides comprehensive personnel management to the department, including labor relations for seven bargaining units and managerial/confidential employees, recruitment, merit system administration, performance appraisal review, statistical personnel status reports, payroll, fringe benefit administration, classification work for appropriate job titles, and Performance Assessment and Recognition System for managers.

### **Contracts and Grants Management Section**

The Contracts and Grants Management Section prepares, issues, and manages contracts, grants and low interest loans in support of for-profit and non-profit service providers, federal and local governments, and individuals. The services funded by these contracts and grants provide otherwise unavailable health and/or support services to underserved residents of Connecticut and improve the Connecticut healthcare service infrastructure.

The section provides:

- oversight and administration of the department's RFP/bid process used to solicit and review proposals from potential service providers and award contracts
- oversight and administration of approximately 700 contracts, grants and loans totaling approximately \$310 million, \$110 million annually, in state and federal funds
- support services to the department in the following contracting areas: training and education, fiscal oversight, compliance with state and federal regulations, contract budget planning, approval processing, standardization of processes and documents, contract expediting and process and procedure guidance
- a liaison function between the department and the Office of Policy and Management, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Administrative Services, Office of the Treasurer, and the Office of the State Comptroller concerning contract and grant, bond fund and loan functions
- collaboration with other state agencies and oversight units to improve inter-agency standardization and adoption of best practices

### **Administrative Facility Management**

Integrating people, place, processes and technology in partnership with a multi-disciplinary team and the Department of Administrative Services to create an optimal, safe and cost-effective work environment for the provision of public health programs and services.

### **Affirmative Action / Equal Employment Opportunity Office**

The Affirmative Action Office, also known as the Equal Employment Opportunity Office, is responsible for ensuring that the department guarantees equal opportunity for all individuals, in all programs and services, without regard to race, color, religious creed, age, sex, marital status, national origin, ancestry, past or present history of mental disorders, mental disability, intellectual disability, physical disability (including blindness) or learning disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, domestic violence, prior conviction of a crime, and/or previously opposing such discriminatory practices (regardless of substantiation). Program responsibilities include:

- *Equal Employment Best Practices*: manage and direct department equal employment best practices for compliance with the law including supplier diversity and outreach/recruitment programs
- *Affirmative Defense*: establish, disseminate (and enforce) department prevention policies (anti-harassment policies) and facilitate department diversity, sexual harassment awareness prevention and related training to provide strategies and remedies available including the department's internal discrimination complaint procedure
- *Enforcement and Auditing*: strategies and compliance monitoring in conformance with employment discrimination law and department policies
- *Internal Investigation*: of complaints/allegations of discrimination/harassment, Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance Coordination and monitoring the internal investigation program for patterns or practices which may impede full and fair participation

- *Affirmative Action Plan*: responsible for implementing and compiling the annual department plan submitted to the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) in July of each year

### **Agency Legal Director Office**

The Agency Legal Director Office includes the Public Health Hearing Section, the Ethics Officer, the HIPAA Privacy Officer, and the Attorney General Designee. The Agency Legal Director is responsible for overseeing the legal activities of the office and providing legal support for the commissioner and agency as well as overseeing the Stem Cell Research Program and the Human Investigations Committee.

The Public Health Hearing Section provides legal and administrative support for 15 professional licensing boards (*e.g.*, the Connecticut Medical Examining Board, Board of Examiners for Nursing, *etc.*), and presides over hearings and renders decisions concerning:

- Individual licensing actions for providers who do not have licensing boards
- Appeals of orders issued by local health directors
- The Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) program
- The need for new or expanded emergency medical services
- Disciplinary actions against day care, youth camp licensees, and health care facility licensees (*e.g.*, long term care facilities)
- Voluntary and involuntary transfers of water companies/appeals of orders issued to water companies
- Involuntary discharges from long-term care facilities

The Hearing Section also maintains indices and the originals of all department decisions, and reports to federally mandated and private professional databases.

The Ethics Officer responds to ethics questions, provides training, conducts investigations, and makes referrals, as necessary; the HIPAA Privacy Officer conducts privacy training, responds to requests for personally identifiable health information, and generally ensures HIPAA compliance; and, the Attorney General Designee represents the department in cases before the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO).

The Stem Cell Research Program is responsible for managing all aspects of Connecticut General Statutes §19a-32d through §19a-32g and 4-28e(c)(3), "An Act Permitting Stem Cell Research and Banning the Cloning of Human Beings", including working out committee appointments, conducting and coordinating internal and external meetings, and establishing and fostering collaborative relationships with members of the Connecticut Stem Cell Research Committee, advocates, and policy makers.

The Human Investigations Committee is charged with reviewing, monitoring, and approving research using identifiable health data obtained by the Department of Public Health with the aim to protect the rights and welfare of the research subjects.

The Committee meets at least monthly if agenda warrants to review protocols or modifications of protocols which have been submitted, consistent with Connecticut General Statutes §19a-25, and Sections 19a-25-1 through 19a-25-4 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. The Committee consists of not less than five voting members appointed by the Commissioner of Public Health.

### **Communications Office**

The Communications Office provides a full range of communication activities that serve the department and its stakeholders. Key functions of the office include public information, freedom of information, media and community relations, marketing communications, issues management and public affairs, Internet services, internal communications, and crisis and emergency risk communications. These and other communication activities serve to manage the department's reputation as the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy, and achieve its mission to protect and improve the health and safety of the people of Connecticut.

### **Fiscal Services**

The Fiscal Services Section administers budget planning and preparation, monitoring of 19 state and 146 federal accounts for expenditures, revenue accounting, accounts payable/receivable, and purchasing, including emphasis for procurement activities from small and minority-owned vendors; provides mail services and inventory control; provides agency grantees and their auditors a single point of contact for accounting and audit issues related to grants and over 650 contracts; provides technical assistance to contracting units within the department and monitors the final financial settlement of agency grants and contracts, including adherence to cash management and all applicable federal regulations for financial reporting.

### **Government Relations Office**

The Government Relations Office is responsible for the full range of legislative and regulatory information and referral activities, including:

- Management and development of the department's legislative and regulatory programs and the implementation of strategies to achieve the goals of the department's legislative agenda
- Track and analyze public health related legislation. Once codified into statute, ensure the implementation of approved legislation.
- Coordinate the development of the agency's regulations
- Acts as the commissioner's liaison to the General Assembly, congressional delegation, community-based organizations, private sector organizations and other public interest groups
- Coordinate the maintenance and answer questions concerning the Public Health Code
- Assist in the development of the department's informational materials and publications
- Participate in special projects, workgroups and taskforces

## **Health Care Systems Branch**

The Health Care Systems Branch regulates access to health care professions and provides regulatory oversight of health care facilities and services. The branch protects public health by ensuring competent and capable health care service providers. The branch consists of three major program components, which have responsibility for implementing state licensure and federal certification programs. The branch has the authority to investigate and take disciplinary action against providers who are in violation of the law or otherwise pose a risk to public health and safety.

The branch consists of the following sections and programs:

### **Facility Licensing & Investigations**

- Licensing, certification and investigation of healthcare institutions, including:
  - Ambulatory care services
  - Clinical laboratories
  - Dialysis facilities
  - Home care and hospice services
  - Hospitals
  - Intermediate care facilities for the mentally retarded
  - Nursing homes
  - Substance abuse and mental health treatment facilities

### **Practitioner Licensing and Investigations**

- Licenses, certifies and registers health practitioners in 55 professions
- Investigates consumer complaints and other practice related issues involving licensed/certified/registered health care practitioners
- Administers the Connecticut Nurse Aide Registry
- Maintains the Physician Profile program

### **Legal Office**

- Criminal background checks program
- Prosecution of regulated entities
- Legislative and regulatory support

## **Laboratory/Mobile Field Hospital Liaison**

The Laboratory/Mobile Field Hospital Liaison is the commissioner's liaison for agency infrastructure projects. Initiatives are ongoing to: construct a new state-of-the-art Public Health Laboratory; implement a new Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS); support the operational development of a Mobile Field Hospital (*Ottolie W. Lundgren Memorial Mobile Field Hospital*); and improve isolation care capacity in acute care hospitals statewide.

## **Local Health Administration Branch**

The Local Health Administration Branch is the primary interface and liaison between the department and Connecticut's local health departments/districts (LHDs). Responsibilities include:

- Advising the commissioner on the approval of appointments of local directors of health and acting directors of health
- Coordinating an orientation for newly appointed and employed local health officials (e.g., Board of Health members, senior local health staff, etc.)
- Providing technical assistance and consultation to Department of Public Health programs, local health directors, local officials and residents on local public health issues and health promotion activities
- Administering per capita grants-in-aid for LHDs
- Planning and coordinating the commissioner's semi-annual meeting for local directors of health
- Maintaining a current local health department/district database
- Collecting annual reports from local health departments and analyzing data to monitor activities to assure compliance with Connecticut statutes
- Working with local health departments to integrate and promote integration of the National Public Health Performance Standards
- Collaborating with the DPH Planning Branch, Performance Improvement Section to facilitate integration of quality improvement activities and a data driven performance managed system.
- Maintaining and developing Connecticut's Health Alert Network (HAN) and assisting local health departments with the development of local HANs
- Strengthening Connecticut's public health infrastructure by collaborating with other Department of Public Health programs, state and federal agencies and professional organizations
- Providing guidance and working with part-time health departments to expand services to full-time operations or to join a health district
- Participating in regional emergency preparedness planning initiatives and exercises
- Maintaining the virtual Office of Public Health Nurses to collaborate and coordinate public health nursing activities at the state and local level

## **Operations Branch**

### **Office of Emergency Medical Services**

The Office of Emergency Medical Services administers and enforces emergency medical services statutes, regulations, programs and policies. Responsibilities include:

- Developing the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) plan and training curriculum, including EMS for Children
- Providing regulatory oversight of licensing and certifying emergency response personnel and licensing and certifying provider organizations, facilities and approving sponsor hospital designations

- Conducting complaint investigations
- Coordinating emergency planning with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP)
- Integrating statewide electronic EMS and trauma system data collection
- Issuing trauma center designations

### **Informatics**

The Informatics Section directs information technology functions of the agency. Responsibilities include strategic planning, maintaining critical agency infrastructure and providing help desk services to agency employees along with outside organizations with interfaces to agency systems. The section provides service level support for application development and infrastructure to support programs. The section also provides oversight and maintenance of over 100 application support agency programs.

### **Public Health Preparedness**

The Office of Public Health Preparedness is responsible for the design, development and implementation of the department's public health emergency plans and initiatives. The office ensures compliance with state and federal mandates with respect to public health preparedness, and is responsible for identifying and securing grants in support of the state's public health preparedness efforts. Within the department's incident command structure, the office provides operational management. This office also coordinates the federal Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Hospital Bioterrorism grant submissions. This function includes outfitting and operations of a 100-bed mobile field hospital. This office also partners with the Connecticut Military Department in the operations of the New England Disaster Training Center in Windsor Locks.

### **Office of Health Care Access**

The Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) oversees the state's health care delivery system to ensure that access to affordable, quality care is available to the residents of the state. The office's major functions are preparation of the Statewide Health Care Facilities and Services Plan; administration of the certificate of need (CON) program; health care data collection, analysis and reporting; and hospital financial review and reporting.

The agency is responsible for managing the CON program in order to promote appropriate health facility and service development that addresses a public need. The CON process ensures service accessibility while limiting duplication or excess capacity of facilities and services. The process also allows for public opportunity to comment during health facility/service project development.

OHCA has statutory authority to gather and analyze significant amounts of hospital financial, hospital, billing and discharge data. Information collected, verified, analyzed and reported on includes hospital expenses and revenues, uncompensated care volumes, and other financial data as well as hospital utilization, demographic, clinical, charge, payer and provider statistics.

## **Office of Oral Health**

The Office of Oral Health strives to promote health and reduce disease and health disparities in Connecticut through enhanced oral health and oral health care access. The office works to build the public health infrastructure for oral health within the Department of Public Health and throughout Connecticut in order to reduce the prevalence and impact of oral diseases and conditions and to enhance oral health care access.

## **Planning Branch**

The DPH Planning Branch works to assess Connecticut's health services and health status by developing proactive planning and policy development initiatives that are supported by a competent workforce. The branch serves public health stakeholders, such as local health departments, hospitals, healthcare service providers, academic researchers, legislators, partner state agencies, and the public, and is responsible for:

- The promotion, enhancement, and protection of health data for community and state planning, and policy development
- Training and professional development activities
- Eliminating health disparities and promoting health equity
- Successful implementation of a health information exchange system

The branch consists of four offices, two registries and two sections:

### **Office of Multicultural Health**

The Office of Multicultural Health promotes access to quality and culturally competent health education and health care services in collaboration with statewide partners through the Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership.

### **Genomics Office**

The Genomics Office promotes the responsible and effective translation of current and emerging genome-based information into health benefits for the population of Connecticut in collaboration with a DPH Council of Genomics (COG) and an external Expert Genomics Advisory Panel.

### **Health Information Exchange Office**

The Connecticut Health Information Exchange (HIE) Office is responsible for developing and implementing the Strategic & Operational Plan to ensure measurable progress within the state towards universal adoption of HIE.

### **Performance Management Office**

The Performance Management Office works to increase the capacity for routine evaluation and improvement of program resources, practices, and partnerships. The office provides training for public health professionals and leaders on performance management and quality improvement tools and methods.

### **Vital Records Registry**

The State Vital Records Registry maintains a statewide registry of all births, marriages, deaths and fetal deaths that have occurred in Connecticut since July 1, 1897. The registry:

- Provides vital record data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/National Center for Health Statistics as part of the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program
- Maintains the state paternity registry and collaborates with the Department of Social Services and obstetric hospitals to encourage unwed couples to establish paternity
- Processes all adoptions for Connecticut-born children, foreign-born children adopted by Connecticut residents, and adoptions finalized in Connecticut

### **Connecticut Tumor Registry**

The Connecticut Tumor Registry is a population-based resource for examining cancer incidence and trends in Connecticut. The registry's electronic database of over 840,000 cancers includes all reported tumors diagnosed in Connecticut residents from 1935 through 2009, as well as treatment, follow-up and survival data. All hospitals and private pathology laboratories in Connecticut are required by law to report cancer cases to the registry.

### **Planning and Workforce Development Section**

The Planning Unit provides support and technical assistance to the department, state and local agencies and policymakers in determining health status and public health resource needs, setting public health priorities, and developing a comprehensive and coordinated State Health Plan.

The Workforce Development Unit works to assure a competent public health workforce by offering professional development and continuing education through distance learning and other modalities, training evaluation, and participating in workforce development initiatives including recruitment and internship activities.

### **Health Information Systems and Reporting Section**

The Health Information and Reporting Section is responsible for the collection of health morbidity and mortality data, and the enhancement of statewide registries for births, deaths and marriages in Connecticut. The section analyzes and interprets vital statistics, adult and youth health surveys, hospital discharge and hospital quality of care data, and chronic disease surveillance.

### **Public Health Initiatives Branch**

The Public Health Initiatives Branch improves and protects the health of Connecticut's residents through promotion of primary and preventative health care; monitors trends to improve the needs of the maternal and child health population; provides education to individuals and target population groups to make choices in diet, exercise and personal protective measures that enhance health, promote wellness and reduce risk of injury and preventable disease; collects data to assess chronic and infectious disease and associated risk factors; and identifies and responds to emerging infections, and conducts outbreak investigations and surveillance.

The branch consists of the following four sections:

**1) AIDS and Chronic Diseases**

- HIV/AIDS Prevention Program
- AIDS Health Care and Support Services Program
- HIV/AIDS and Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Program
- Chronic Diseases Program
  - Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention
  - Diabetes Prevention and Control
  - Hepatitis Prevention

**2) Family Health**

- Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program
  - Medical Home Initiative
  - Early Hearing, Detection & Intervention
  - Sickle Cell Disease
- Primary Care and Prevention Programs
  - Community Health Centers
  - School Based Health Centers
  - Family Planning
  - Sexual Violence & Rape Prevention Education
  - Case Management for Pregnant Women
- Immunizations Program
  - Registry & Program Support

**3) Health Education, Management and Surveillance**

- Women, Infant and Children Supplemental Food Program (WIC)
- Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention Program
- Asthma Prevention Program
- Epidemiology
- Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Program
- Injury Prevention Program
- Comprehensive Cancer Program
  - Breast & Cervical Cancer
  - WISEWOMAN
  - Colorectal Cancer

**4) Infectious Diseases**

- Emerging Infections Program
  - Foodborne Disease
- Epidemiology
  - Public Health Preparedness
  - Vector borne and Zoonotic Diseases
- Healthcare Associated Infections
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases Program
- Tuberculosis Control and Prevention Program

### **Public Health Laboratory**

The Public Health Laboratory serves all communities in the state through the analysis of clinical specimens and environmental samples submitted by federal and state agencies, local health departments, clinical laboratories, health care providers, and water utilities. The laboratory provides over 2 million test results on approximately 250,000 specimens and samples it receives each year. Although the laboratory does not charge sister agencies or local health departments, the value of these testing services is over \$7 million per year. Analytical data are used to monitor for agents harmful to the public, identify the cause of outbreaks, and assure that control measures (e.g., vaccines, antibiotics, environmental remediation) are effective. The laboratory is comprised of the following testing sections:

**Biological Sciences** – This section tests for infectious agents in humans, animals, food and water and provides reference testing in support of epidemiological surveillance and outbreak investigations. Laboratory services exclusively provided by the Connecticut Public Health Laboratory in this section include testing for emerging infectious diseases, rabies testing, DNA fingerprinting of foodborne pathogens, identification of agents of bioterrorism, and testing of all Connecticut newborns for the presence of approximately 45 inherited disorders that cause severe mental and/or physical illnesses.

**Biomonitoring** – This section tests approximately 55,000 children each year for the presence of elevated lead from exposure to lead-based paint, folk remedies, or other sources.

**Environmental Chemistry** – This section tests for over 100 toxic chemical agents in public drinking water supplies and private wells; in rivers, lakes and streams; in wastewater, landfills, spills, and soils; in consumer products and other materials where there is potential human exposure. This section also provides analytical support by testing environmental samples collected for investigations involving elevated blood levels in children. Other services include monitoring of the nuclear power industry, serving on the state's nuclear response team, and maintaining preparedness and capabilities to respond to radiation emergencies. The laboratory is also designated as the state's Chemical Terrorism Response Laboratory in the event of a terrorist attack involving chemical agents or Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs).

### **Regulatory Services Branch**

The Regulatory Services Branch has regulatory oversight of the state's drinking water systems, child day care facilities, youth camps and environmental services. Programs include licensure, investigation, and enforcement action against suppliers/providers that are in violation of the law or otherwise pose a risk to public health and safety. The branch also operates prevention programs focusing on health education. Providing technical assistance to licensed providers is a priority.

The branch consists of:

### **Community-Based Regulation Section**

Licensing, technical assistance, and investigations of facilities, including:

- Child Day Care centers
- Group Day Care homes
- Family Day Care homes
- Youth camps

### **Environmental Health Section**

The Environmental Health Section (EHS) is comprised of ten programs, which are diverse in their scope, and oversight of both regulated and unregulated professions/entities. The section works closely with local health departments and a licensed workforce of practitioners to provide technical assistance, training, and risk assessment on emerging environmental health issues. EHS also manages the initial licensure of environmental health practitioners, and assures regulatory activities are executed in accordance with established standards of practice, regulations, and statutes. Programs within EHS include:

- Asbestos Program
- Environmental Engineering Program
  - On-Site Subsurface Sewage Systems
  - Mausoleums, Crematories and Private Burial Grounds
- Environmental Laboratory Certification Program
- Environmental and Occupational Health Assessment Program
  - Environmental Public Health Tracking Unit
  - Toxicology Unit
  - Occupational Health Unit
  - Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Unit
  - Indoor Environmental Air Quality Unit
- Environmental Practitioner Licensure Unit
- Food Protection Program
- Lead and Healthy Homes Program
- Private Wells Program
- Radon Program
- Recreation Program
  - Bathing areas
  - Beaches
  - Public pools
  - Family campgrounds

### **Drinking Water Section**

The Drinking Water Section (DWS) is responsible for the administration of state and federal drinking water regulations and is dedicated to assuring the purity and adequacy of our state's public drinking water sources. DWS provides technical assistance, education and regulatory enforcement to over 2,600 public drinking water systems, which provide public drinking water to approximately 2.7 million persons on a daily basis. The section maintains a commitment to

drinking water treatment and monitoring, sanitary review of all public water systems statewide, drinking water source protection, water supply planning and consumer education in order to assure and maintain the high standard of drinking water Connecticut's residents have come to expect and enjoy.

***Compliance Regions North and South*** - The Compliance Regions provide daily technical assistance and response to all public water systems. DPH staff work to keep public water systems in compliance with state and federal requirements or to allocate sufficient resources to facilitate their return to compliance.

***Enforcement and Certification Unit*** - handles all enforcement actions for the Drinking Water Section and also ensures that community and non-transient non-community public water systems are being operated by properly certified individuals

***The Information Systems Unit*** - manages all of the data systems used by the Drinking Water Section

***The Planning Unit*** - coordinates statewide planning of public water systems to ensure the purity and adequacy of all public drinking water supplies

***The Capacity Development Unit*** - oversees the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund which provides millions of dollars in low interest loans and subsidies to Connecticut public water systems' each year for important drinking water infrastructure projects.

***The Source Water Protection Unit*** - responsible for the purity of Connecticut's 4,000 surface and ground water drinking water supply sources

## **Improvements/Achievements 2010-11**

### **Government Efficiency and Performance**

- DPH successfully applied for a federal grant to implement an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) solution for adaptation to the Connecticut WIC Program. EBT will result in issuing WIC food benefits through debit cards and eliminate the use of WIC checks. It will also increase client usage by reducing the stigma associated with federal assistance programs while allowing for improved efficiencies, adherence to federal policies by retailers and recipients, and data collection.
- The department's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) opened a second permanent site in the City of Bridgeport. The two new locations are strategically placed near community health centers, which also enroll clients in the HUSKY program. Having two sites has improved access to services for participants who live throughout the city. This reduces travel time to WIC sites and has improved client satisfaction with services.
- Transitioned the initial review of applications for head teacher approval to Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC) through the Early Childhood Professional Registry. Applicants

are able to submit their initial application online by visiting the CCAC web site. CCAC reviews each request and supporting documentation. A report on each application is then sent to the DPH for final review of the application and approval. If approved, the applicant will be sent an email by CCAC and will be able to download the personalized head teacher certificate.

- The Environmental Engineering Program (EEP) published revisions to the Technical Standards for Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems (Technical Standards), which became effective on January 1, 2011. The Technical Standards govern septic system design, construction, and installation for both residential and commercial buildings in Connecticut. The revisions address administrative and technical issues related to septic system repairs on older lots, and provide greater flexibility for property owners pursuing building additions.
- The Occupational Health Unit developed educational materials, including a press release, cautioning salon owners and workers about formaldehyde levels in keratin-based hair straightening products. DPH was the first state health department to issue such a warning, and several state health departments have since issued similar alerts.
- The Indoor Environmental Quality Unit expanded its efforts to provide support for Connecticut school districts. With the recently enacted school green cleaning law and ongoing flu-related infection control issues, the unit collaborated with UCONN and the DPH Infectious Diseases Section to provide training to assist districts in implementing the green cleaning law, and to prevent unnecessary school closings and overuse of hazardous disinfectants. Over 600 school custodial staff have been trained so far.
- The Environmental and Occupational Health Assessment Program provided technical assistance to local health departments for over 11 major mercury spills. Two of these cases were unusually complex – a large multi-specialty medical practice seeing over 350 patients daily, and a residential dwelling involving a family using elemental mercury for medicinal purposes.
- The DPH Child Daycare SAFER (Screening Assessment For Environmental Risk) continues to protect children from exposure to hazardous chemicals. This collaborative program identifies child daycares located on or near hazardous waste sites and improves siting of new child daycares.
- The DPH Lead and Healthy Homes Program completed the development and implementation of a new electronic web-based surveillance system. The development of this system involved the migration of over 1 million blood lead records, the migration of environmental records, the testing of the system, as well as the training and utilization of the system by program staff and local health departments.
- The Lead and Healthy Homes Program implemented a statewide Healthy Homes Initiative, engaging non-profit, public and private industry partners in improving the quality of housing factors related to health. The year 2011 marks the first year that DPH will collect housing-related data for this initiative.
- DPH established the Health Information Technology Exchange of Connecticut (HITE-CT), a newly formed quasi-governmental agency. HITE-CT promotes the development of health information technology, and works to increase adoption and meaningful use of electronic health records, assure the privacy and security of electronic health information, and collaborate with the State's Medicaid agency and Regional Extension Center to enable information exchange and monitoring of provider participation in the HIE. DPH received U.S. Office of the National Coordinator approval for the "Connecticut Health Information

Technology Plan" and was awarded \$7.29 million to plan and build a coordinated, sustainable statewide health information exchange system for Connecticut.

- Initiated the new Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) to replace the current paper-based system. EDRS will enable funeral directors, hospitals, nursing homes, medical personnel and town registrars to complete and register death record through a secure, web-based system. EDRS will provide many benefits to Connecticut citizens. A few of these benefits include:
  - Enhanced fraud protections by eliminating the transference of paper copies of certificates between the towns and the state, thereby eliminating the potential for lost or stolen certificates
  - Timely delivery of death data to the Department of Public Health, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, physicians, researchers, and other government agencies during pandemics and other mass casualty events
  - Reduced costs of the death registration process
- Received a \$1 million grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as part of the National Public Health Improvement Initiative (NPHII). The purpose of the initiative is to establish a performance management system, training, and collaboration.
- The new Public Health Laboratory in Rocky Hill is well into the construction phase. The project is currently within budget and on schedule for substantial completion by the end of calendar year 2011.
- The Public Health Laboratory validated and placed in use two new mass spectrometers. New units, with increased sensitivity, will increase accuracy for screening newborns for inherited disorders.
- New guidelines for the collection of newborn screening specimens from pre-term, low birth weight, and sick newborns were implemented. These guidelines standardize the collection of specimens from all birthing centers.
- The Public Health Laboratory provided testing for local health departments in some shoreline communities for uranium in drinking water. The local health departments offered residents the testing in order to encourage them to test for uranium. Uranium is a natural component of certain bedrock formations and had been found in some groundwater in the area. Elevated uranium levels have been associated with health concerns.
- The Public Health Laboratory supported an investigation of an elevated blood lead level in an adult patient by testing a sample of an "herbal" ayurvedic remedy from India. Lead was found in the remedy, and results were reported back to the submitter on the same day the sample was received.
- The Laboratory worked with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and DPH's Environmental Health Section on a volatile organic chemical "hot spot" in a central Connecticut community. Several samples had concentrations over the regulatory limit, with the highest sample concentration at several hundred parts per billion.

## **Health Promotion and Disease Prevention**

- The DPH worked collaboratively with the Department of Social Services to implement the Connecticut Insurance Premium Assistance (CIPA) program for people living with HIV/AIDS in May 2011. The program will pay for health insurance for people living with HIV/AIDS that are enrolled in the Connecticut AIDS Drug Assistance Program.
- Over the last 10 years, Connecticut has maintained some of the highest children's immunization coverage rates in the nation. Connecticut received two national immunization awards: the Adolescent Improvement Award for outstanding achievement in improving adolescent immunization coverage by 16% from 2008-2009; and the Influenza Vaccination Coverage Award for extraordinary accomplishment in achieving 55.6% coverage of influenza vaccination among children by December 2010.
- The Connecticut "Putting On AIRS" Program provides patient education and home assessments for Connecticut residents living with asthma. A net savings of \$26,720 per 100 participants was estimated at 6 months follow-up due to decreases in unscheduled acute care visits. Significant improvement in quality-of-life and decreases in healthcare resource utilization were also noted.
- The Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Program expanded Quitline services for all Connecticut residents. In the past two years, a decrease has been noted in Connecticut's adult smoking rate from 15.4% to 13.2%.
- During 2006–2010, the average annual incidence of tuberculosis (TB) in Connecticut was 95 cases, which represented a 10.9% decline from the average annual incidence of 107 cases for the previous five year period, 2001–2005. In 2010, there were 85 cases of TB in Connecticut, the lowest number of cases ever reported.
- Implemented the requirement that all children aged 6–59 months attending a licensed child day care center, group day care home, or family day care home shall have received at least one dose of influenza vaccine between September 1 and December 31 of 2010.
- The Food Protection Program completed distribution of educational materials to reduce the incidence of foodborne disease caused by food workers who work while ill. Posters and brochures were developed to educate food workers about how easily they can transmit foodborne disease to patrons if they work while ill. These materials were provided to local health departments for distribution to all food service establishments with some training.
- Developed the Healthy Connecticut initiative as our state's translation of the national Healthy People initiative. Like Healthy People, Healthy Connecticut provides a framework for health promotion and disease prevention through a set of goals and objectives to identify and reduce the most important preventable threats to the health of our population.
- Published the Directory of Connecticut Public Health Plans with abstracts of 35 recent health improvement and strategic plans issued by the Connecticut Department of Public Health. Each abstract contains summary listings of goals, objectives, strategies, priorities, and/or recommendations from the plan, along with other key information. Plans are cross-referenced by subjects and population groups to identify areas of mutual interest and facilitate collaboration and consistency among public health programs and services to improve public health in Connecticut.

## **Health Care Quality and Regulatory Standards**

- The department received \$1.9 million in federal grant funds to establish a criminal history and patient abuse background search program for employees in long-term care settings and successfully drafted and passed legislation establishing a program to process background checks and applicant clearance for long-term care employment.
- The department continues to expand its use of the states' eLicense system by migrating its health care facilities licensing and emergency medical services provider licensing databases into the eLicense system, continuing progress toward a single licensing system for all licensed providers statewide. The integrated licensing system for the more than 200,000 regulated health care, environmental health, emergency medical service providers and facilities is expected to yield efficiencies and savings in data management costs, and make more information available to the public on-line about licensed professionals and the healthcare workforce in general.
- The department's Health Care Systems Branch collaborated with partners to promote legislation enabling standardized protocols for care of newborns.
- With the potential for 69 nursing home labor contracts expiring, the department developed an operations plan to manage activity and continuity of operations in the event of a labor action.
- An agreement was finalized between the Connecticut Departments of Social Services (DSS) and Public Health (DPH), which called for the transfer of federal funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) from DSS to DPH to fund enhancements of the child care licensing system. Efforts were made to prepare for the transition of multiple Access databases to the statewide enterprise level licensing system called eLicense, which takes advantage of new technology capabilities that will increase efficiency and service quality for licensed providers, researchers, parents, the general public, and other interested stakeholders.