



Miscellaneous

National Association of County and City Health Official (NACCHO)

I attended NACCHO's Monthly All-Local Health Organizations Call on January 23rd. The main topic of discussion (or lack of) was the federal memo issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on January 21, 2025, with the subject: Immediate Pause on Issuing Documents and Public Communications – ACTION. With this communication pause, we are unable to obtain communication, health alerts, public health guidance, historical or new data, or even access some federal websites. HHS has 13 operating divisions that had to follow the communication freeze, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Center for Medicaid Services (CMS), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and several other smaller agencies. The communication freeze is expected to end in early February.

NACCHO also provided an overview of some of the expected public health programs that may be impacted (either negatively or possibly expand attention on) by federal public health policy: chronic diseases & prevention; food as medicine; preparedness and response; substance use/opioids; vaccines; and the reduction of authority of the CDC.

CT Association of Directors of Health (CADH)

Positions held: Member; Elected to Board of Directors; Emergency Preparedness Committee Chair; Advocacy Committee Member

The CT Association of Directors of Health continues to co-host statewide local health calls with DPH. The monthly CADH Board of Directors meeting was held January 21st.

Statewide DPH & Local Health Meetings

I continue to attend the monthly meeting held for local health and DPH staff. NVHD staff also attend if their schedule permits. January's meeting was held on the 8th.

de Beaumont Foundation 40 Under 40 in Public Health

A leadership development meeting was held on January 28th.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism (IDEA) Committee

There were no committee updates during January. Each month, the IDEA committee features one term or concept from NVHD's IDEA Glossary as the "IDEA of the Month" to better acquaint staff with the contents of the glossary; the term is also featured in NVHD's monthly newsletter. January's "IDEA of the Month" was the term "Structural Racism". See definition below:

"The normalization of an array of dynamics—historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal—that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism—all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism. It involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism."

Until further notice, NVHD's IDEA Committee and important work related to this topic are on pause in response to President Trump's Executive Orders entitled *Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing* and *Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Action*. Additionally, in response to these federal policy updates, the Public Health Accreditation Board has also paused accreditation requirements for adopting definitions of equity terms and the requirement of a department-wide policy, declaration, or initiative that reflects a specific intention focused on inclusion, diversity, equity, or anti-racism.





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Quality Improvement

Carissa continues to Chair the QI Committee. The Reconstruction of the Temporary Event Process Project continues.

Workforce Development

Lisa continues to chair the NVHD Workforce Development Committee. Staff continue to work on completing the required two online training courses this quarter.

I was asked to be part of a small committee that is working on creating program requirements and evaluating curriculum for a new public health associate's degree that will be offered through the CT State (Community College) network. We will also eventually review the other (undergraduate and graduate) curriculum offered in the state. This workforce initiative is led by CT DPH in collaboration with academia partners. We will be meeting monthly moving forward.

Air Quality and Climate Change

Grant: EPA Air Quality Monitoring Grant

Status: Still Pending Sub-Contract from CT DPH

Naugatuck Valley Overdose Prevention & Education (NOPE) Program

The Valley Prevention Council meeting was held virtually on January 29th, was facilitated by BHcare's Alliance for Prevention & Wellness, and was attended by me, Austin, and Tracy as well as Carissa and Lisa. Topics included funding, opioid overdoses, a recap of recent completed educational activities, the introduction of a new prevention specialist focused on adult alcohol use, a cannabis environmental scan project, and the revised DARE curriculum.

Grant: Overdose Data to Action: Limiting Overdose through Collaborative Actions in Localities (OD2A)

Status: Year 2 Sub-contract Executed with New Haven Health Department

Austin and I attended the OD2A partners meeting on January 9th where we heard updates from the partner health departments/districts and reviewed and provided feedback on draft marketing assets that New Haven Health Department contracted with Cashman Katz to develop.

Austin and Tracy both completed Mental Health First Aid and QPR Suicide Prevention Training in January.

Updates from Austin (Valley Overdose Prevention Navigator):

In January, Austin focused on becoming more familiar with the towns in the Valley area. He had the opportunity to meet with the director of the Naugatuck YMCA to explore potential collaboration and successfully scheduled a Naloxone training session for him and his staff. Additionally, he worked with community members and colleagues to identify encampments in Naugatuck and Shelton, gathering valuable information to support outreach efforts.

Updates from Tracy (Milford/Orange/West Haven Overdose Prevention Navigator):

Tracy met with Dr. Kerner who leads the Mobile Addiction and Treatment Team (MATT) Van. She also established relationships with Recovery Support Specialists. Tracy participated in a SAMHSA webinar on January 8th.





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Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)

ESF 8: Public Health & Medical Services, Chair

I facilitated the Region 5 ESF 8 meetings on January 10th and the Region 2 ESF 8 meeting on January 15th. I attended the Region 5 REPT and Special Steering Committee meeting on January 13th.

Statewide Training and Exercise Workgroup (STEW)

The STEW met on January 8th and topics included training and exercise updates, the Integrated Preparedness Plan, a Multi-Year Training and Exercise Calendar, the creation of a Charter, and more.

CT Healthcare Coalition (HCC)

Public Health Representative & Voting Member; Elected to the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee meeting was held on January 25th.

Medical Reserve Corps

NVMRC was awarded a \$10,000 2025 Operational Readiness Award (ORA) Grant from the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO). The 2025 ORA will primarily cover the costs associated with purchasing training items for volunteers for programs like STOP THE BLEED[®], Adult Mental Health First Aid Certifications, Opioid Prevention & Response Training (including Narcan kits), updated ID lanyards, office supplies, and 2 hours per week of my time for supervising the program. Work will begin on this once we have received our contract from NACCHO.

We are still in the process of coordinating dates for our Region 5 MRC BLS and First Aid Training program that is being funded through a CT HCC grant. Once the dates are confirmed, the training information will be sent to active MRC volunteers in good standing (meaning they have a current CTResponds.CT.gov profile, have passed a background check, have completed orientation and have completed a Loyalty Oath).

The CT DPH MRC Coordinator held a quarterly meeting for MRCs on January 7th.

NACCHO Preparedness Policy Advisory Group (PPAG)

Connecticut Representative

The PPAG met on January 15th. There was discussion on how the recent pandemic exposed gaps in our public health response and ability to order, manage, and distribute medical countermeasures (MCMs) and other public health assets.

NACCHO will be conducting an assessment that I will complete in February to understand how local health departments (LHDs) manage vaccines, therapeutics, and other critical public health assets.

ELC Grant: Surveillance & Outbreak Response Team (SORT)

- COVID-19 – Status: Endemic Response
 - *An endemic means a disease is spreading in a community at normal or expected levels*
- Mpox – Status: Surveillance
- Flu, RSV, and Pertussis – Surveillance for cases and dissemination of education
- H5N1 Bird Flu – Status: Monitoring; low public health risk
 - [Please visit the CDC webpage dedicated to H5N1 Bird Flu updates](#)





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The following update is provided by Paulina:

In January, Beatriz did community outreach at multiple churches; she also coordinated with Community Health staff to schedule and organize several Teddy Bear Clinics in the Valley.

Paulina and Beatriz have begun developing a Long COVID community learning session. This program will address misconceptions and stigmas related to the condition and educate residents about symptoms, effects, and treatment options. The program will also incorporate the micro-documentary featuring Valley residents sharing their Long COVID story produced by NVHD in July 2024, which can be watched at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zh7-HRPZzgU>. Program staff are slated to begin presentations in March 2025.

Table 1. Adult Case Statistics (18+)

	December	January
Total Cases & Contacts Managed	47	98
Attempted Contact: Letters Mailed	43	86
Consultations with Residents	2	1

Table 2. Youth and Teen Case Statistics (0-17)

	December	January
Total Cases & Contacts Managed	6	14
Attempted Contact: Letters Mailed	6	14
Consultations with Residents	0	1

*Please note that "Total Cases & Contacts Managed" also includes reports of self-tests originating from various sources such as schools, childcare centers, congregated living facilities, etc. and as such do not always come with contact information and/or do not always warrant further follow-up by NVHD staff.





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COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES
Carissa Caserta, MPH
January 2025

Community Health Assessment: The Valley Index (CHA)

Lisa and I continue to collaborate with the CHA Steering/Planning Committee, which also includes the Executive Director of the Valley Council for Health and Human Services, Griffin Hospital, the Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center, and the Valley Community Foundation. We received and have begun reviewing the raw data from CT DataHaven. The new Valley Index will be published early Summer.

Community Health Programs

Kristie has passed the LiveWell Leader Training course to train others in Chronic Disease Self-Management! We will host a LiveWell Leader Training in the Spring.

Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP)

Kristie and Lisa T. will be hosting a DSMP at the Seymour Community Center starting on March 3rd.

Chronic Disease Self-Management (CDSMP)

Lisa and I started a CDSMP at the Ansonia Senior Center on January 14th which is a full class with 14 participants. That class will run until the end of February.

Mental Health Programs

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

Lisa will be hosting the first MHFA training for the new year at NVHD on Saturday, February 22nd (snow date March 1st) in collaboration with the Meriden Health Department. This is open to the public and registration is required:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JHM9RVL>.

QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer Suicide Prevention)

Lisa held 1 QPR virtual training on January 16th and had 12 participants (several NVHD staff attended too). There will be several QPR training courses coming up as part of the Preventative Health Services Block Grant (Block Grant) deliverables. I highly recommend Board members take the one-hour training!

Suicide Prevention & Postvention

Lisa attended a workgroup for legislative advocacy around suicide awareness and prevention on 1/31/25. She met with both CT lobbying firm Pryzbysz and then a small workgroup of Region 2 Suicide Advisory Board and Region 5 Suicide Advisory Board folks to work on a one sheet designed to inform for legislators about the work in the region.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Lead case management continues to grow and is being completed by Lisa daily. There continues to be an increase in lead on-site inspections and epidemiological investigations carried out by several of our staff.

Immunization Grants & Clinical Services

Immunization Action Plan (IAP) Grant Program

Elizabeth continues to meet her grant deliverables and has shared several educational opportunities and materials to pediatric offices within her grant jurisdiction.





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CDC Immunization Grant January Outreach Events Summary

The Blessing Pantry Seymour	Vanessa, Bea, and Austin attended the Trinity Episcopal Church weekly food giveaway event once this month. They were able to connect community members with appropriate resources while they grabbed food giveaways.
Salvation Army	Vanessa attended the Salvation Army continued coat drive in January. She also set up future outreach events with Captain Cherl, Vanessa, and Bea will be attending the kids club once a month and providing relevant health information to the children in attendance, they will also do a fun health-related activity with them.
Backpack Food Giveaway Salem Elementary School, Naugatuck	Vanessa packed reusable totes with immunization information, tissues, hand sanitizers, and how to stay safe this respiratory virus season flyers for 8 families that attend Salem Elementary School. These 8 families are in need of weekly donations, so Vanessa has found a way to donate a few more items to these families, once a month.
Media Marketing Meeting NBC, Peacock, and Telemundo	Jess, Carissa, and Vanessa met with NBC to discuss the opportunity of working together to create marketing material in a new format – television and streaming service commercials in addition to other methods. We have received a package of quotes, but this has been put on pause until Jess receives the amended contract and funding from CT DPH.
Teddy Bear Clinics	Vanessa, Kristie and Bea have been working for a few months with Whittmore Library in Naugatuck to schedule a teddy bear clinic. This will be a fun event for children to bring their teddy bear and will simulate a doctor’s visit. The aim of this event will be to ease children’s fears of going to the doctor and a chance to meet our staff. We will be promoting our services and walking the children through a typical doctor’s visit with vaccines and crafts.
Translation: Vanessa assisted community health staff many times with translating from Spanish to English and vice versa.	

Clinical Services

In January, Kristie provided 30 vaccines to children in the Valley.

Kristie has planned several blood pressure screenings throughout the Valley in honor of Heart Health month! See the flyer below for more information and where she will be throughout February.

Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) & Healthcare-Associated Infections & Antimicrobial Resistance (HAI-AR)

DPH continues to host a monthly meeting with the CT DPH HAI-AR staff and local health departments/districts building capacity in Infection Prevention & Control (IPC). Jess attended the monthly meeting on January 21st. Jess also attended the CT DPH & Local Health Infection Prevention meeting on January 22nd, which provided updates to the List of Reportable Diseases, Emergency Illnesses and Health Conditions and Reportable Laboratory Findings for 2025.





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Tuberculosis (TB)

There are no active cases at this time.

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Radon

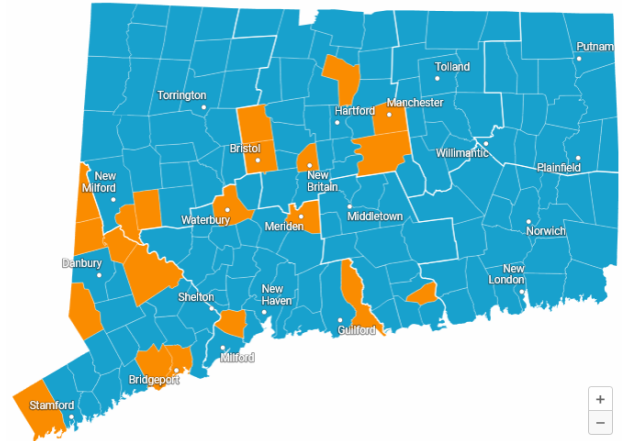
As you know, January is radon awareness month, and we have 100 test kits available for the community to come pick up. Melanie, Lisa, and Vanessa created a great video that is on our website (<https://www.nvhd.org/radon2025/>), social media pages, and [YouTube channel](#) regarding what radon is and how to test for it. We have about 40 test kits left if anyone is interested.

Testing is the only way to know if your home has elevated radon levels. NVHD is able to provide the free test kits to residents in partnership with the CT DPH Radon Program and many other local health departments and districts across the state.

2024-2025 Local Health Partners

- Aspetuck, 2. Bethel, 3. Central Connecticut, 4. Chatham, 5. Chesprocott, 6. Cromwell, 7. CT River Area, 8. Danbury, 9. Darien, 10. East Hartford, 11. East Shore, 12. Eastern Highlands, 13. Farmington Valley, 14. Guilford, 15. Hartford, 16. Housatonic Valley, 17. Ledge Light, 18. Middletown, 19. Milford, 20. Mohegan Tribal, 21. Monroe, 22. Naugatuck Valley, 23. New Canaan, 24. New Haven, 25. North Central, 26. Northeast, 27. Norwalk, 28. Quinnipiac Valley, 29. Redding, 30. Somers, 31. South Central, 32. South Windsor, 33. Stratford, 34. Stamford, 35. Torrington Area, 36. Trumbull, 37. Uncas, 38. Wallingford, 39. West Hartford-Bloomfield, 40. West Haven, 41. Westbrook, 42. Wilton

Participating
No Yes



Watch by clicking here:





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February is known as **American Heart Month**, and it's a time designed to raise awareness about **cardiovascular health**. It's an important subject to observe because heart disease is the **leading cause of death** for men and women in the U.S.

To help raise awareness, Nurse Kristie will be in the community performing blood pressure screenings and sharing free heart health resources. **Stop by any of the locations below:**

**Tuesday,
February 4th**

**Derby Senior
Center**

11am-1pm

**Wednesday,
February 5th**

**Beacon Falls
Senior
Center**

10am-12pm

**Friday,
February 7th**

**Ansonia
Senior
Center**

9:30am-
11:30am

**Thursday,
February 13th**

**Trinity
Church Food
Pantry in
Ansonia**

11am-1pm

**Friday,
February 14th**

**Naugatuck
Senior
Center**

10am-12pm

**Thursday,
February 20th**

**Shelton
Senior
Center**

10:30am-
12pm

**Friday,
February 21st**

**ShopRite-
Shelton**

10am-12pm

**Tuesday,
February 25th**

**Seymour
Community
Center**

11am-
12:30pm

**Friday,
February 28th**

**ShopRite-
Derby**

10am-12pm





ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
Melanie Dokla, BS, RS
January 2025

Food Service Establishments

The renewal of all existing food service licenses has been completed. A total of 68 (61 last year) establishments submitted their applications after the expiration date. In total, \$4,780 (\$4,620 last year) was collected in late fees. Establishments were called via The Voice Reach System 3 times prior to the expiration date and “live” calls were made to the outstanding establishments after the expiration date.

Staff continue to conduct plan views and site visit inspections for food service establishments that are new or changing ownership.

Glenda Buenaventura, per diem food inspector, continues to assist in conducting food service inspection after hours and on the weekend, up to 20 hours a week. We appreciate her assistance.

Tattoo Establishments

Applications for the renewal of the exiting tattoo and/or body piercing establishments were sent out; these permits expire on March 1st. Routine inspections of the establishments will be performed as the renewals come in and the process should be completed by mid-March.

Body Care

Staff also continue to conduct plan views and inspections for body care establishments that are new or changing ownership.

Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems (SSDS)

Staff continue to conduct SSDS inspections, B-100 visits, soil testing, B-100 plan reviews, new SSDS plans reviews, and issue permits to construct/discharge.

Laurel continues to train staff in the SSDS program.

Housing Complaints

As the temperature becomes cooler, the department is seeing a rise in housing complaints. These complaints are regarding no heat, no hot water and/or heat that is not reaching the required 65°F (Connecticut General State Statutes Section 19a-109).

Pools

Staff are conducting routine inspections for indoors pools; this should be completed in the next few weeks. NVHD currently permits 17 indoor pools and spas.

Lead

Starting January 1st new requirements for elevated blood lead levels went into effect. NVHD is now required to complete a full comprehensive lead investigation for any child under the age of 6 with a blood lead level of ≥ 5 ug/dL.

Previously, an on-site inspection was conducted by NVHD staff when a child under the age of 6 had a blood level ≥ 5 ug/dL but < 10 ug/dL. A comprehensive inspection was conducted by NVHD staff when a child under the age of 6 had a blood lead level of ≥ 10 ug/dL.



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This change will certainly increase the environmental health staff's workload in the upcoming months.

Lead abatement plans submitted by lead abatement contractors are being reviewed and property owners are issued written orders from this office. Once the project has received approval and work is completed, a final inspection is conducted to ensure work was done as specified in the plan.

Miscellaneous

Congratulations to sanitarians John Mucha, Amanda Ruchin and Amy Durand, for passing the Registered Sanitarian/Registered Environmental Health Specialist exam. Obtaining this credential requires a lot of time committed to studying a variety of Environmental Health topics.

The environmental section continues to work on a quality improvement (QI) project. The goals of this project are to review and revise the application and guidelines, create educational materials, reduce the number of late applicants and improve compliance. We are hoping to have everything completed for the start of 2025 temporary event season.



Emergency Responses

	Date/Time	Location	Description of Event
1.	1/26/2025 7:00pm	The Spot, Ansonia	Provide guidance to the Ansonia Police Department

