



STRATEGIES FOR HEALTH

AT A GLANCE

PUBLIC HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS



49,860 MEALS

Meals provided to families through the South End Community Center food pantry.



178 IMMUNIZATIONS

Residents vaccinated against life threatening diseases by public health nurses.



1,184 POUNDS

Medication deposited in the police station drop box. Every household received information about this service.



560 CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

Complaints related to garbage, housing, and other environmental health issues followed up on by health inspectors.



3,268 PATIENT VISITS

Stratford youth treated or counseled by school-based health or community services clinicians.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

It's amazing to see all the incredible things we do in the community...and yet, hardly anyone knows about it. Public health and the work of a local health department is often done quietly, in the background: **preventing illness** with offerings like childhood vaccinations and flu clinics; **protecting the public** by ensuring the regulated community such as restaurants, hair and nail salons, and beaches are in compliance; and **promoting health and wellness** with initiatives like Know Your Numbers, a monthly mobile food pantry, and Putting on AIRS, our asthma management program. One way we get the word out is with a new issue of *Strategies for Health*, our annual report. Since 2012, we use this platform to capture the varied work we do in Health and Community Services. Whether it is honing our emergency preparedness skills by participating in a full-scale antibiotic dispensing exercise with our Trumbull and Monroe partners or engaging the community to talk about adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and how to build resilience, we dedicate ourselves to fulfilling our vision of a healthy people thriving in a healthy Stratford.

One of the ways we accomplish all that we do is collaborating with the Health Improvement Alliance, (formerly know as Primary Care Action Group [PCAG]) where we come together with hospitals, clinics, other local health departments in the Greater Bridgeport area, as well as other agencies to leverage resources, provide outreach, and brain storm ways to address the many social needs that exist beyond the doctor's office and the emergency room. Together we strive to create environments and opportunities for people to focus on healing, educate residents to prevent illness and injury in the first place, and promote community well-being.

Dive into our 7th annual report to see how we collect, analyze, and use data to guide us in the prevention of disease and promote and protect the health of Stratford Residents.

In Health,

Andrea L. Boissevain, MPH
Director of Health

ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

FULL-SCALE EXERCISE

In partnership with Trumbull and Monroe Health Departments, the SHD lead a Point of Dispensing exercise at Trumbull High School in June 2019. The drill tested dispensing medications related to a fictional anthrax emergency.

REGIONAL STRUCTURE

The SHD was voted unanimously by Region 1, and confirmed by the State, to lead a new and regional Mass Dispensing Area (MDA) model. Under this new structure, the MDA will include the municipalities of Greenwich, Stamford, Darien, New Canaan, Westport, Weston, Fairfield, Easton, Bridgeport, Trumbull and Monroe. Towns and cities will work collaboratively to plan and practice for public health emergencies.

MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

Stratford-Trumbull-Monroe MRC members participated in trainings, exercises, and volunteer opportunities throughout the year. Stratford EMS provided *Stop the Bleed* training where volunteers learned how to recognize and respond to uncontrolled bleeding with the use of a tourniquet and wound suppression. Members were also trained on using Narcan to respond to an opiate overdose. Volunteers distributed food at Holy Name of Jesus Church through the CT Food Bank mobile food pantry and participated in flu clinics and health screenings.



HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

The SHD partnered with over 60 community organizations in Stratford and Bridgeport to implement the EPA's AirNow Air Quality Flag Program, which raises awareness of outdoor air quality and provides guidance on how to modify behavior to protect health. With the support of an EPA Healthy Communities Grant, the SHD provided program materials and training to community partners. Each day, partners check a mobile app to see the daily air quality and hang a colored flag that reflects the air quality forecast. Vulnerable populations most sensitive to poor air pollution include individuals with heart disease, lung disease (including asthma), and diabetes, the elderly, children and pregnant women. SHD also met with parent groups to discuss the topic of outdoor air quality and raise awareness of the AirNow Program.

The SHD collaborated with the CT DPH, CT DEEP, and EPA to provide local public health input and perform community outreach on the Raymark Superfund Site. The SHD hosted frequent Raymark Community Advisory Group meetings to discuss updates, questions and concerns on the cleanup project and solicit community feedback. The SHD also fielded numerous questions and concerns about Raymark, Brownfield Sites, and other environmental contamination. In July 2018, the SHD welcomed the addition of Stratford's Blight office. This department was integrated into the SHD to streamline response to citizen complaints about blight-related nuisances that can effect public health such as garbage, vermin and other hazards.

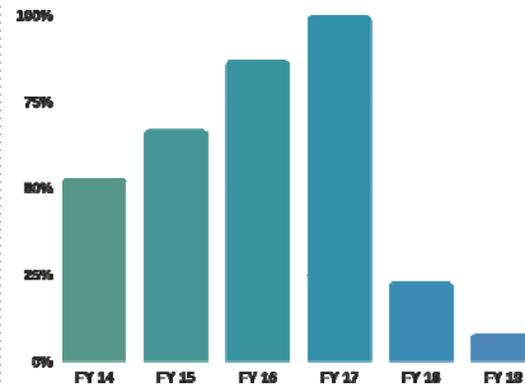


FOOD SAFETY

425 Food establishment inspections and re-inspections were conducted, a 20% increase in total inspections from the previous year. The SHD led multiple foodborne illness (FBI) investigations to determine risk to the public. The SHD nursing division tracked follow-up actions to FBI reports and completed a rapid cycle Quality Improvement (QI) project to improve response times.



Using input from food vendors, SHD revised temporary event and food truck permitting protocols to streamline internal licensing processes and be more consumer friendly.

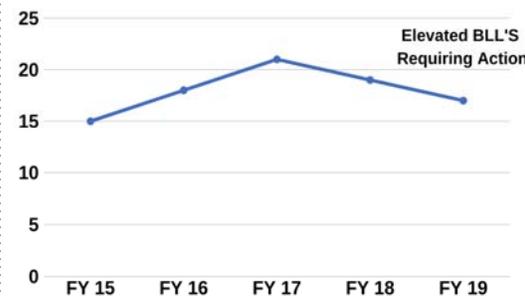


NAIL SALON FAILURE RATE

The SHD continued QI activities in response to high nail salon inspection failure rates and critical health violations documented in previous years. The SHD submitted final revisions of the Chapter 55 (Barbershops, Hairdressing, Cosmetology) Town Ordinance and fee schedule to Stratford's Ordinance Committee. Approved by the Town Council, revisions more clearly define establishment standards, rules and regulations and set stricter penalty fees associated with the most serious health violations. Overall, establishment failure rate dropped dramatically since undertaking QI activities.

LEAD PREVENTION

The SHD continued to perform educational home visits and environmental testing in the homes of lead poisoned children. Toxic levels of lead were identified in dust, paint, soil and imported food products. Home visits were also conducted in multiple pre-1978 Housing Choice Voucher Program units where young children reside to proactively identify lead hazards. With the assistance of a CT DPH grant, lead dust cleaning kits were provided to families to reduce hazards. The SHD was also awarded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to initiate a financial assistance program for lead hazard.



VAPE-FREE YOUTH

In response to alarming rates of vaping and e-cigarette use among teens, the Stratford Partnership for Youth and Families (Partnership) Youth Committee launched a "Popcorn Lung" campaign to raise awareness about the health consequences and dangers of using vape products. The committee designed a sticker with a message to question whether one would prefer eating a bag of popcorn or popcorn lung, a side effect from the ingredients in vape products. The sticker on the reverse side displayed a variation of "nutritional facts" that listed the ingredients in vape products along with the dangers of using these products. Popcorn bags were distributed at the annual Thanksgiving Football game, Movin' On Up programs and other events. The Partnership also teamed up with Public Works to post signs indicating areas at schools that are smoke and vape free. The Partnership also worked to provide education, support and resources to encourage students who vape to quit.



COMMUNITY PREVENTION

Make it a journey you'll remember...

HAVE SAFE GRADUATION! 

Stratford Partnership for Youth and Families
wants you to
celebrate safely

- ★ Remember to charge your cell phone and bring an ID.
- ★ Do not allow anyone in your car that has alcohol or drugs.
- ★ Contact your parents if your plans change.
- ★ Talk to your friends about plans and responsible decision-making.
- ★ Keep in contact with your friends and family. Know where you are.

DATA BREAKFAST

In January 2019, the Partnership co-hosted a *Caring for Our Kids* breakfast event for community partners including Town administrators, public safety, Stratford Public Schools administrators, members of the Board of Education, elected officials, and members of the business community. Results from the 2018 Search Institute Student Survey data were shared with approximately 100 attendees. The survey collects data from students in grades 7 through 12 on use, perception of harm and parent disapproval related to 4 key substances: alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and prescription drugs. Trend data demonstrated an overall reduction in 30-day use of these substances in the past 20 years. Lower rates of use were directly connected with students having positive relationships with adults and thriving indicators, such as school success, resisting danger, and ability to delay gratification. Due to the success of the first event, members of the youth committee also presented information the data to the Police Department, Public Schools faculty, Stratford Rotary Club and the Chamber of Commerce.

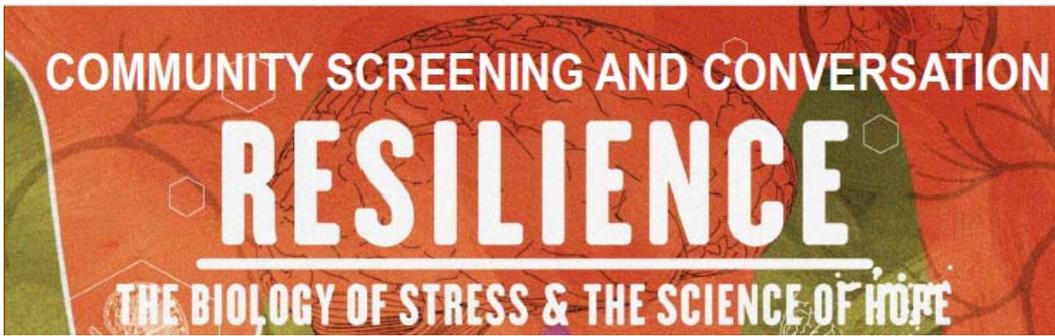
THRIVING FAMILIES

The Partnership mobilizes youth and community partners to reduce youth substance abuse and create a safe, healthy and drug-free environment where youth and families thrive. An array of prevention strategies to reduce youth substance use were implemented over the year. For example:

- **Safe Prom and Safe Graduation** — Prom safety messages coinciding with prom ticket distribution were presented to high school Seniors and families during graduation rehearsals.
- **Enforcement** — Compliance checks were conducted with Police resulting in a 36% failure rate of tobacco merchants and 33% failure rate of off-premise alcohol merchants (liquor stores). Establishment failure rates increased for both by nearly 25% from last year.
- **Freshman Forum** — An annual underage drinking and youth marijuana use prevention campaign was again held for 9th graders and their families.



Stratford Partnership for Youth and Families



SOUTH END COMMUNITY CENTER (SECC)

The SECC distributed food, clothing and holiday toys to low-income families throughout the year. An **on-site Food Pantry** was open 3 mornings a month and on average served 73 adults, 54 children, and 28 seniors with a total distribution of about 4,155 meals per month. As part of a **Back-to-School Drive**, new backpacks, school supplies, and uniforms were given to 40 children. During the 2018 holiday, 80 children received gifts. The SECC also hosted a summer **lunch program** weekdays with an average of 38 children receiving lunch daily. The SECC's **licensed K-6 After-School Enrichment (ASE) Program** had 15 elementary-aged children enrolled. Of those, 45% of families were low income and eligible for Care4Kids scholarship assistance. This year the ASE welcomed a new playground. The SECC hosted the **Summer Soiree Enrichment Program** designed to prevent the dip in achievement scores among low-income children that comes with a lack of learning opportunities during summer vacation. Along with typical day camp activities like swimming and field trips, homework packet assistance and activities that focus on academic skills were incorporated in weekly theme-based curriculum. During summer 2018, 34 children attended camp with 76% considered low-income and qualifying for scholarship assistance. The SECC is home to ABCD, **Inc. Head Start**, licensed for 51 children, including 16 infants/toddlers and 35 preschoolers. SECC staff provided free tax return preparation assistance to 392 low/moderate income workers through the **IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** program.



ADVERSE EXPERIENCES AND RESILIENCE

Under the umbrella of the Stratford School Readiness and Childcare Advisory Council (SRACCAC), the SHD led a workgroup that included Community Services, Wooster School-Based Health Center, Stratford Public Schools, United Way of Fairfield County, and Stratford Parents Place to tackle the issue of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Trauma, and Resilience in the community. As part of the initial awareness stage, screenings of the film *Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope* were shown around Stratford. The events included an expert-led panel discussion and community conversation. Approximately 200 parents and professionals attended the three events held throughout the year. *Resilience* is a one-hour documentary that looks at the science of ACEs and a new movement to treat and prevent toxic stress, which is now understood to be one of the leading causes of health and wellness problems in the United States, including heart disease, cancer, substance abuse and depression.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Stratford Community Services (CS) mission is to enhance the quality of life of Stratford's diverse community by providing clinical and social services, linking residents to resources, and planning and coordinating partnerships and initiatives. Core services include youth and family counseling, social services, child and youth development, substance abuse prevention, and advocacy. CS is also the local Youth Service Bureau and works closely with the Partnership to assess community needs, develop plans to meet those needs, and implement programs directly or in cooperation with other organizations.

- **After-School Clubs** — 179 middle school students participated in programming to build character, foster appropriate development, and improve academic performance.
- **Counseling** — 1656 counseling sessions, offered in multiple languages, were provided by licensed clinicians to Stratford youth and families.
- **CT Energy Assistance Program** — 175 applications were processed, assisting a total of 503 residents with benefits to help offset winter heating costs.
- **Mental Health and Youth Mental Health First Aid** — 2 workshops prepared 37 adults and 17 youth to recognize when a person is developing a mental health issue and connect them to appropriate support.



- **Juvenile Review Board** — 64 youth were referred and 15 panel meetings took place with the JRB, a community-based diversion process that serves as an opportunity to reduce youth involvement with the juvenile justice system when a youth is involved in a crime.

- **Center for Family Justice** — CS continued to provide a satellite office location for the CFJ, providing local victims of domestic and sexual violence access to shelter, support, information and referral, and other crisis services.

COMMUNITY SERVICES



GROWING GARDNERS

The SHD was awarded a Community Impact Grant from the Stratford Rotary Club to implement gardening initiatives throughout town with the overall goal of preventing and reducing childhood obesity. Eight center-based child care facilities were provided with equipment and plants/seeds to establish produce gardens along with lesson plans and activities on gardening and healthy eating. The SHD also created a Garden Kit Lending Program at the Stratford Library and Stratford Parents Place to allow parents and home-based childcare providers to rent a garden kit and establish a produce garden at-home with children.

OUT AND ABOUT

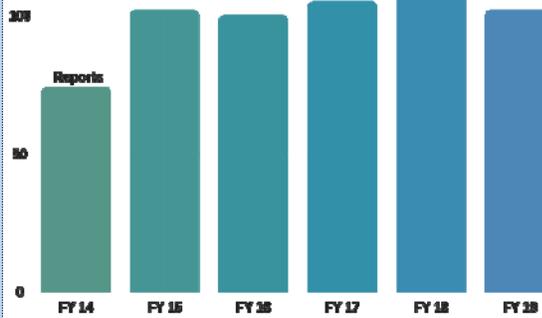
The SHD engaged in community events including the Main Street Festival, Pumpkin Festival, Family Fitness Day, Latin Festival, YMCA Kids Day and more. In August 2018, the SHD once again hosted Kids Day at the Farmer's Market. Stratford organizations including Stratford Library, YMCA, Recreation, Community Services, Arts Commission, Public Safety, and a local Yoga studio, and more provided a variety of healthy activities for children while parents were able to discover local health and wellness resources and shop for fresh produce.



COMMUNITY HEALTH

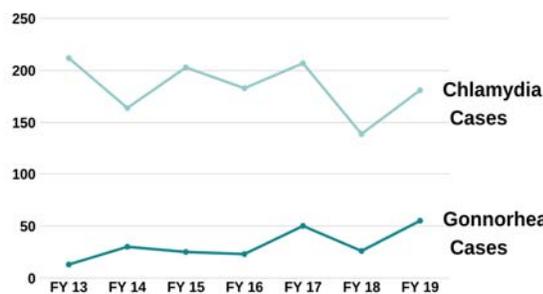
HEPATITIS C CASE REPORTS

The SHD participated in the statewide Data for a Cure (D4C) workgroup to develop strategies to identify residents with Hep C and link to treatment. The group focused on disparities in data collection and reporting to state and local health departments and the SHD revised past data sets based on new information. The group made recommendations for laboratory reporting policy changes to the CT DPH Communicable Disease Reporting Advisory Group and partnered with Gilead Pharmaceutical to educate providers about treatment options for patients with Hep C.



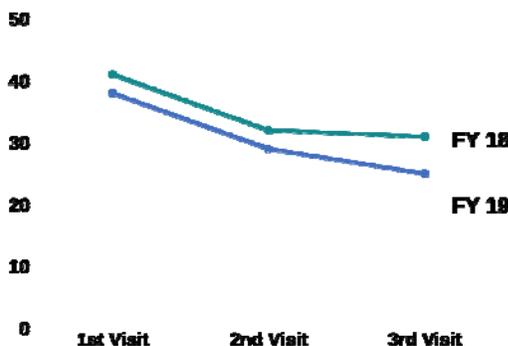
STI RATES

The SHD implemented strategies to address Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) rates among teens in partnership with the Stratford Library, YMCA, Schools, religious leaders, Planned Parenthood, SBHC's and others as part of a community collaborative. Data was gathered through focus groups with teens and parents and used to refine strategies. Staff launched an HPV campaign at both Stratford middle schools and health care providers were sent information about talking to their young patients appropriately about sexual health.



ASTHMA PROGRAM COMPLETION

The Putting On AIRS asthma program expanded to include Community Health Workers (CHW) who provided additional support to patients working to control their asthma through environmental changes and medication adherence. CHWs are trained professionals who act as a bridge between their communities and health care and social service systems. Using CHWs can drastically improve the rate of program adherence. Data will be monitored to see if the introduction of CHWs significantly impacts the completion rate for 3rd visits over time.



SCHOOL HEALTH

WELL-CHILD VACCINATIONS

Public Health Nurses provides 92 children's immunizations and 86 pediatric flu vaccines particularly at a Star Wars themed clinic.

SCHOOL-BASED CLINIC

The Wooster School-Based Health Center (SBHC) had 429 students enrolled (80% of students) and provided 2633 medical and mental health visits. The SBHC was selected to take part in a National QI cohort through the School-Based Health Center Alliance. The initiative focused on increasing annual risk assessments and connecting students with follow-up care. The project resulted in a nearly 70% increase in unduplicated medical users (patients) receiving a risk assessment. Of those, 21% were found to be at risk with the top 3 risk identified as depression, poor nutrition and lack of helmet use. 100% of students identified as at risk were connected with follow-up care.



COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The SHD, in partnership with area hospitals and other Health Improvement Alliance (HIA) agencies, published an updated Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The Community Wellbeing Survey, a comprehensive collection of data from local residents, served as the basis for the CHA. Focus groups, community conversations, key informant interviews, and other data were also used to formulate the document that assesses everything from happiness to safety to disease through a social justice lens. Draft assessment data was shared with residents through a variety of mechanisms for comments and reflection and used to develop CHIP strategies. Work groups were formed around identified health priority areas (Healthy Lifestyles, Behavioral Health, and Access to Care) and meet monthly to track progress and evaluate effectiveness.



HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

By February 2022, promote healthy lifestyles to reduce diagnosed hypertension and diabetes in adults by 3%.

Strategies:

1. Continue *Know Your Numbers* health screening and heart disease prevention campaign
2. Increase number of days adults exercise each week
3. Decrease rates of residents who report using tobacco and e-cigarettes and/or vaping products
4. Increase access to healthy foods with a focus on addressing social determinants of health

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

By February 2022, increase social and emotional support for adults by 2%.

Strategies:

1. Increase access to mobile and community-based services and supports for behavioral health in the Greater Bridgeport area
2. Develop targeted messaging around behavioral health in the Greater Bridgeport area to increase awareness of available resources
3. Improve the coordination of care for frequent users of ED in local hospitals

ACCESS TO CARE

By February 2022, 87% of adults will report having a medical home and 74% will report visiting a dentist at least once in the past year.

Strategies:

1. Increase the percentage of residents who have a medical home
2. Increase the percentage of residents who see a dental provider annually
3. Increase access to specialty care providers
4. Continue to improve access to reliable medical transportation
5. Increase implementation of CLAS standards by health care organizations

STRATEGIES FOR PERFORMANCE

In the Spring of 2019, the SHD began formulating an updated strategic plan. This process occurs every 5 years and will guide departmental work for fiscal years 2020 through 2025. As part of the process, staff revisited the vision, mission and values of the SHD and identified strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities to the organization. Three topic areas are central to the plan: Healthy Living, Access to Services, and Organizational Capacity. Progress on meeting the 9 major goals of the strategic plan will be tracked through a new online, cloud-based performance management program.



STRATEGIES FOR HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT FY 19



STRATFORD HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Committed to improving the quality of life for Stratford residents through the promotion of health, prevention of disease, and by assuring a clean and safe environment.