SELECTED MILESTONES

THE NAUGATUCK VALLEY HEALTH DISTRICT

1878  First Annual Report of the Connecticut State Board of Health: “Our city fathers, generally, have not yet quite reached the plane of appreciation of preventive medicine, so that we have but one thoroughly organized local health board in the State, although matters are fairly under way in one or two of the cities, with a promise of good results.” (The organized health board was in New Haven).

1887  State law now requires every town to organize a “working board of health, in place of the fiction which has heretofore existed in most towns; and further, the new laws bring the State Board into definite correspondence with the local boards, in every case of the occurrence of smallpox or cholera, and of every epidemic of infectious diseases.”

1917  Enabling legislation allows formation of local district departments of public health. In 1966, Westport and Weston form Aspetuck Health District as the first health district.

1953  Salmonella epidemic occurs at a local health care facility.

1954  Local mayors and selectmen, with urging from civic groups, authorize Yale Department of Public Health to survey health conditions and seek cost-effective answers to area’s increasing public health problems. Survey sparks lively debate with health district defeated.

1955  The Flood of 1955 requires extraordinary public health control measures.

1957  WADS in Ansonia broadcasts Valley Health Story, nine daily radio programs with Dr. Ira V. Hiscock, Chairman of the Yale Department of Public Health. WADS President, Sydney Byrnes, broadcasts several editorials on the proposed health district.

1970  Valley Council of Governments’ Health Study Committee prepares A Proposal for the Establishment of a District Public Health Department.

1971  Ansonia, Derby, Seymour and Shelton pass local resolutions agreeing to form Connecticut’s third district department of health.

1972  The Lower Naugatuck Valley District Public Health Department opens its doors at Plaza-On-The-Green, Derby. Susan Addiss is Director of Health and Paul Pawlak is Chairman of the Board. First Registered Sanitarian is Joseph Hock and Code Inspector is Albin Karczmarczyk.
1972  The 1st Annual Flu Shot Campaign for the Elderly offers mass influenza vaccine.
1973  Valley school children receive 12,500 doses of oral polio in response to epidemic of paralytic polio in CT.
1973  Procedures for Handling Problem Lots (for septic systems) was adopted. In 1974, the district adopts its first Sanitary Code, Food Section, and in 1981 the district adopts its first Well Code Ordinance.
1974  The district implements its first high blood pressure screening program.
1975  The district moves to Liberty Street in Ansonia.
1975  Lorraine Hart, first Nurse Practitioner, implements Health Services for the Elderly Program.
1976  The district implements WIC Program with Kathleen Dinice as Coordinator.
1976  Initial cases of Swine Flu match 1918 flu strain that killed 21 million people worldwide. The district immunizes more than 11,200 people and distributes 5,765 doses to medical providers. The effort halts when a possible connection is detected between swine flu vaccine and Guillain-Barre Syndrome.
1978  Lead levels in paint are regulated to protect children from lead poisoning. District launches lead screening and prevention program.
1978  Legislation requires that each child is fully immunized prior to school entry.
1979  Yale Public Health students develop local hazardous waste plan.
1979  World’s last case of smallpox is reported.
1979  Cardiovascular diseases and cancers become #1 killer of Americans. For the first time in history, infections are no longer #1 cause of death in USA. Most are preventable diseases associated with behaviors like smoking cigarettes, lack of exercise and poor nutritional habits.
1980  Town of Beacon Falls joins district
1980  The district moves to Shelton.
1980  The district’s Maternal and Child Health Section assumes Well Child Clinic sites,
coordinated by Dr. Christina Smillie and Lucy Potts, Nurse Practitioner. In 1982,
home visits for WCC enrollees are implemented.

1981  AIDS first reported in 5 patients. In 1982, the district’s first case is diagnosed. By
2000, 36 million infected worldwide.

1982  An Act Concerning Child Passenger Restraint Systems in effect and district
offers infant car seat restraint program.

1984  Maternal and Infant Health Protection Program assists with health care services
for pregnant women and children. In 1989, Healthy Start follows. In 1998,
HUSKY provides free or low cost health insurance for uninsured children.

1985  The Borough of Naugatuck joins. The district’s name changes to the Naugatuck
Valley Health District (NVHD).

1985  Elevated cholesterol is linked to coronary artery disease. Community screenings
follow.

1985  TB rates in nation reached an all time low and begin to increase again.

1991  NVHD establishes a housing code section with Rita Fazzino as first Housing
Code Enforcement Officer.

1991  First case of raccoon rabies found in CT. In 1992, Shelton raccoon is first in
region to test positive.

1991  The last case of poliovirus is reported in the Western hemisphere thanks to
immunizations.

1992  Antibiotic resistant diseases emerge. In 1993, WHO declares TB a global health
emergency and Direct Observed Therapy is launched as a strategy.

1993  More than 600 illnesses in nation are traced to E. coli bacteria in undercooked fast
food hamburgers resulting in greater emphasis on foodhandling and safe cooking
temperatures.

1994  A Needs Assessment Study leads to federal designation for a Public Health Clinic
in Ansonia.

1996  Medicaid Managed Care Program presents a major shift in the health care funding
environment. Health departments and other “safety net” service providers face a
shifting and diminishing client base. NVHD becomes a “provider of last resort.”

1997  Legislation requires a Qualified Food Operator Certification for food service.
NVHD implements the amendment to the State Public Health Code requiring review for change of use, building conversions and additions for homes with septic systems.

First NVHD website started on Electronic Valley.

Pneumonia vaccine for those over 65 years is offered jointly during community influenza immunization clinics.

Mosquito-borne West Nile virus appears.

Irene Reshetar becomes first recipient of NVHD Peer Recognition Distinguished Service Award.

Industrial accident cross-contaminates the public water supply in areas of Shelton and Stratford.

Tattooing and body piercing become popular but present risk of developing infection and hepatitis from needles so NVHD implements local ordinance, inspection and training requirement for operators.

Y2K leads to emergency preparedness.

NVHD adopts its first Public Pool Code, implements inspection and training.

First NVHD Strategic Plan is implemented.

Komen Foundation funds breast cancer outreach program.

March of Dimes funds Healthy Futures to provide health education and outreach to women of childbearing age.

Events of September 11th begin a new era of local public health emergency preparedness.

NVHD accesses National Pharmaceutical Stockpile in response to anthrax case in Oxford resident.

Meningococcal vaccine is mandated for all on-campus residents in CT colleges.

Recognition by Valley Council for Health and Human Services as Agency of the Year.

NVHD becomes a field site for the new Regional Field Epidemiologist Program in partnership with the State Department of Public Health. Staff and volunteers receive smallpox vaccine in preparation to bioterrorism concerns.
2003  NVHD adopts and implements its first Cosmetology, Barber Shop, Beauty Salon, and Nail Salon Code.

2005  NVHD relocates to its new offices at 98 Bank Street in Seymour.

2007  NVHD WIC becomes a regional satellite office of Waterbury Health Department while NVHD implements Regional Putting On Airs Asthma Program.

2008  NauVEL is launched as a $3 million, 3-year HUD grant for residential lead safe repairs. In 2012, a Healthy Homes component is added to the 2nd cycle of NauVEL.

2010  The first Valley CARES Quality of Life Report is released.

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