



# ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

## NAUGATUCK VALLEY HEALTH DISTRICT

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*Ansonia ° Beacon Falls ° Derby ° Naugatuck ° Seymour ° Shelton*

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# ABOUT NAUGATUCK VALLEY HEALTH DISTRICT

The Naugatuck Valley Health District (NVHD) was founded in 1972 as a collaborative effort to provide public health functions to the towns of Ansonia, Derby, Seymour and Shelton. Beacon Falls and Naugatuck were included in the voluntary effort in 1980 and 1985, respectively. The NVHD is an independent governmental entity formed under the CT General Statutes. One of twenty health districts in the state of Connecticut, it was the third district to be formed. The NVHD serves a population of approximately 127,000 residents. The district is governed by a board of directors comprised of representatives appointed by the towns served by the District. It was the first health district in Connecticut to achieve national public health accreditation.

## VISION

Optimal health and quality of life for our communities.

## MISSION

The Naugatuck Valley Health District, as the official public health agency for its partner communities, is committed to improving the quality of life for all it serves through the promotion of health, prevention of disease, and by assuring a safe and clean environment.

## VALUES

### ***Professionalism***

We will treat all our community members, clients, partners and colleagues in a caring, respectful, ethical and fair manner.

### ***Knowledge***

We will utilize the most current evidence-based information in all our work and embrace ongoing workforce and leadership development.

### ***Integrity***

We will be truthful, honest, fair and hold ourselves to the highest standards while being fully accountable for our decisions and actions.

### ***Dedication***

We will work to demonstrate our commitment to the Naugatuck Valley Health District and to the public health of the communities we serve.

### ***Teamwork***

We will support each other in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation for the public good.



# A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present the 2017-2018 annual report for the Naugatuck Valley Health District, highlighting the accomplishments of the District and the public health services provided to residents of the member municipalities.

This year marked a year of change for the Naugatuck Valley Health District. After leading the District for nearly 20 years, Director of Health, Karen Spargo, announced her retirement. In addition, the Assistant Director of Environmental Health, David Rogers, also decided to retire after 19 years of service to the District. The Board of Directors, NVHD staff and I wish them all the best as they move on to new endeavors.

Our public health responsibilities follow the 10 Essential Services as defined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guide to public health services in Connecticut at both the state and local level. According to the CDC, these services fall into three key areas: assessment, assurance, and policy development. The assessment standards include services for monitoring health status to identify and solve community health problems and diagnosing and investigating health problems and health hazards in the community. The policy development standards include informing, educating, and empowering people about health issues; mobilizing community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems; and developing policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts. For the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year, the District has accomplished much in these service areas.

Kind regards,

Jeffrey Dussetschleger, DDS, MPH  
Director of Health

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2015-2020

The purpose of the Naugatuck Valley Health District Strategic Plan is to:

1. Affirm a shared vision, mission, and core values that serve as guiding principles for our stakeholders.
2. Establish clearly defined priorities, goals, objectives, and strategies for the district in a realistic time frame suitable to the district's capacity for implementation.
3. Provide a guide for making informed decisions that balance allocation of resources with the pursuit of priorities and strategies.
4. Effectively communicate priorities and strategies to our staff, board, member municipalities, partners, and community.
5. Identify a base from which to measure progress and evaluate the need for change when required.
6. Provide a process to continually improve organizational focus, efficiency, and effectiveness.

**Strategic Priority 1: To utilize current and emerging technologies to improve the effectiveness of our data, information management, and evaluation systems.**

Goal 1: To upgrade, improve, and utilize technology to allow the staff to work more effectively.

Goal 2: To enhance information management in program evaluation (e.g., tracking goals and activities).

**Strategic Priority 2: To build capacity in the organization through proactive recruiting and relevant training and development efforts.**

Goal 1: Succession planning and active recruiting for the board.

Goal 2: Succession planning for the staff.

**Strategic Priority 3: To raise the Agency's visibility as a means to increase the community's awareness of the District's roles, responsibilities, and services.**

Goal 1: To get messages out to folks in the community about services being offered.

Goal 2: To expand the use of communication media beyond print and use more Social Media platforms, including but not limited to, Facebook and Twitter.

**Strategic Priority 4: To develop a long-term financial plan to enhance management of current assets and to seek new sources of revenue.**

Goal 1: To develop a long-term financial plan to enhance management of assets.

Goal 2: To explore and expand on ways to participate in Commercial Insurance and Medicaid.

**Strategic Priority 5: To maintain high-quality mandated services and to implement evidence-based programs based on community needs assessments.**

Goal 1: To become more proactive than reactive.

View the full Naugatuck Valley Health District Strategic Plan online at [www.nvhd.org](http://www.nvhd.org).



# ESSENTIAL SERVICE 1

The focus of this Essential Service is the accurate collection and tracking of health data for the purpose of intervention planning and tracking.

The District addresses this in several ways. The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) provides access to a surveillance tracking system which allows local public health entities to track communicable diseases and lead poisoned children. The system allows for the uniform collection of lab results and provides a conduit to DPH experts for assistance in case management/follow-up.

The District continues to serve as the host site for a **Regional Field Epidemiologist**, who provides valuable assistance in epidemiologic investigations.

Through the District's membership with the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health, the District has access to a new Health Equity Index. The Index provides municipal level data encompassing the social determinants of health, health outcomes and demographic data.



*Monitor  
health  
status to  
identify and  
solve  
community  
health  
problems*



## ESSENTIAL SERVICE 2

This service includes epidemiologic identification of emerging health threats; active infectious disease epidemiology programs; and technical capacity for epidemiologic investigation of disease outbreaks and patterns of chronic disease and injury. To this end, the District provided:

**1,869 infectious disease follow-ups** and did not have any communicable disease outbreak(s) that required an investigation.

Direct observed therapy, which consists of home visits for residents with infectious tuberculosis and screenings for the potentially exposed, increased this year from 189 home visits to **395**, a 109% increase.

The Public Health Nurse managed human cases for those potentially exposed to the rabies virus by providing vital health education, consultation, referral and laboratory testing of animals with the state lab. The number of **potential rabies cases remained stable at 11**.

District residents sent **95 ticks** to the CT Agricultural Experiment Station for laboratory testing for tick borne diseases. Follow-up was provided to residents by the public health nurse. Of the ticks sent for laboratory testing **23 were positive for a tick borne illness**.



To reduce the impact of **childhood lead poisoning**, NVHD provided case management, medical provider coordination and education for families of children under age 6 with elevated lead levels. Staff conducted environmental investigations of paint, dust, soil and water samples from premises where poisoned children were identified. Orders were issued to property owners to ensure that lead hazards are eliminated.

**Investigations managed: 20**  
**Environmental inspections and visits: 77**  
**Orders issued: 16**



*Investigate  
health  
problems  
and  
environmental  
public health  
hazards*

### ***Communicable Disease Cases in District Reported to NVHD 2014-2018***

<b>Selected Diseases</b>	<b>Cases 2017-2018</b>	<b>Cases 2016-2017</b>	<b>Cases 2015-2016</b>	<b>Cases 2014-2015</b>
Chlamydia	361	462	373	274
Syphilis	47	54	9	14
Gonorrhea	64	32	42	46
Lyme	151	103	31	61
Babesiosis	12	13	9	11
Streptococcal	89	53	38	35
Staphylococcus	131	42	44	38
Influenza A & B	659	319	186	192
Pneumococcal Disease	58	39	20	20
Hepatitis B	21	32	30	24
Hepatitis C	250	262	208	250

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NVHD sanitarians provided **environmental health** investigations of resident complaints subject to state and local laws and regulations with the goal to protect the health of the public from illness, disease and injury from health hazards.

### ***Environmental Complaints Investigated***

Food Establishments: 48

Housing: 161

Nuisance: 56

Septic and Sewage: 11

Pools: 3

Air: 2

Salons: 6

Total Environmental Complaints Investigated: 287



## ESSENTIAL SERVICE 3

This service involves providing health information that is easy for people to get and understand, and providing health promotion activities and immunizations.

NVHD provided **childhood immunizations** through the **CT Vaccine Program**.

Vaccine for Children Program: 81

Adults (Cocoon Program): 7

The **Childhood Immunization Registry and Tracking Service (CIRTS)** tracked children's immunizations scheduled in health care providers' offices for an assigned region of NVHD, and also Oxford, Trumbull, Stratford and Monroe.

CIRTS follow-up: 1324

**Influenza vaccine**, recommended for residents six months and older, was provided throughout the community at senior centers and health fairs. One emergency clinic was hosted in partnership with the Pomperaug District Department of Health in response to the high number of cases this past season.

Influenza vaccine recipients: 505

**Adult immunizations** were offered on-site and in community settings by nursing staff.

Adult immunization recipients: 36



*Inform,  
educate  
and  
empower  
people  
about  
public  
health  
issues*

The District continued offering two very popular programs: A Matter of Balance and Freedom2Breathe.

**A Matter of Balance** is a multi-session evidenced-based program focused on reducing the fear of falling and increasing physical activity among seniors. Participants in this program felt it was an excellent program and felt strongly that other seniors should participate when offered again.



**Freedom2Breathe** is an educational program provided to parents and caregivers, and childcare and medical providers to increase awareness and utilization of asthma action plans with the purpose of reducing hospitalizations and emergency room visits caused by uncontrolled asthma.

Backpack stuffers were provided to elementary school children to educate parents about childhood lead poisoning. More than 1000 letters were sent to Valley rental property owners with information on their responsibilities in controlling lead hazards and information on the District's lead remediation program, NauVEL.

The District provided **149 radon home test kits** to residents at no cost. This year 16 of the homes were found to have indoor air radon levels at a level where remediation should be considered by the homeowner. All homeowners received their test results and those with elevated levels were provided information on how to remediate the problem. The NVMRC also hosted an evening community training session on Radon Awareness during January, National Radon Action Month.



A monthly newsletter is distributed in the community, through both hard copy and electronic means. Topics address timely health issues. This year a new feature was added to the newsletter; an easy to prepare healthy recipe.

The NVHD website, [www.nvhd.org](http://www.nvhd.org), continues to offer information and links to reliable sources on a range of public health topics. The District also is active on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



## ESSENTIAL SERVICE 4

This service involves convening and facilitating community groups and associations to build coalitions focused on improving the community's health.

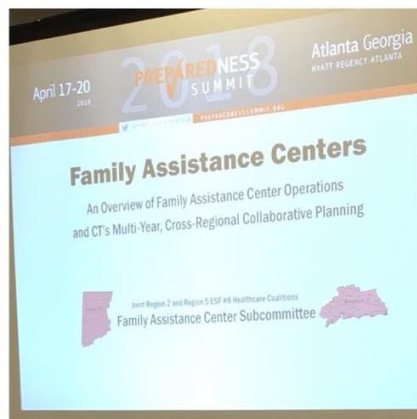
In partnership with the Echo Hose Ambulance Company, the **Naugatuck Valley Medical Reserve Corps** (NVMRC) prepared, trained and credentialed volunteers to respond to various emergencies in the jurisdiction.



The NVMRC also continued its efforts addressing the opioids crisis by establishing community partnerships through its Naugatuck Valley Overdose Prevention & Education (N.O.P.E.) Campaign. For more information about the NVMRC, please visit [www.nvmrc.com](http://www.nvmrc.com).

Active members: 66

NVHD's Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator was appointed the Chair of the Joint Region 2 and Region 5 **Family Assistance Center Subcommittee** and led the efforts to develop and formally adopt training curriculum and response plans as part of the State mass fatality management response program. Working with private and public sectors from around the State to accomplish this project, she was an invited presenter at the National Public Health Emergency Preparedness Conference in Atlanta, Georgia along with the Coordinator from the East Shore District Department of Health.



*Mobilize  
community  
partnerships  
to identify  
and solve  
health  
problems*

The District continued its partnership with the Waterbury Health Department to host the **WIC** Program for the jurisdiction to provide a supplemental food and nutrition education program for pregnant and postpartum women and children up to age five years.

Participants: 965



The District convened the **Valley Maternal Health Coalition** in 2014 in response to rising rates of inadequate prenatal care and decreasing availability of reproductive services to women in Naugatuck Valley. The Coalition has continued to meet every 2-3 months, serving as an ongoing networking vehicle for its partner members, which include Griffin Hospital, Griffin's high school-based health center, the two community health centers, TEAM Inc., Nurturing Families Network, Child First/Parent Child Resource Center, Valley United Way, Waterbury WIC, and the school nurses from the 6 local high schools.

In FY2017/2018, the Coalition's primary activities were:

- Updating its Naugatuck Valley Maternal & Reproductive Health Resource Directory (first issued in 2017)
- Distributing bags of personal care items donated by Prudential, to the local high schools
- Learning about two innovative maternal health initiatives (One Key Question and Expect with Me)
- Conducting a needs assessment of local high school nurses, to identify health education opportunities for the Coalition

NVHD manages two priority areas in the Community Health Improvement Plan: Asthma Prevention & Self-Management and Healthy Homes.



The goal of the **asthma prevention** group is to raise awareness in the community, provide asthma education in the community to parents, pediatrician offices and daycare providers, and reduce the rates of emergency visits to Griffin Hospital. Our partners in this group include: Griffin Hospital, school nurses, Griffin Hospital parish nurses, Children's Medical Associates and community members. NVHD, Griffin Hospital and the Valley Parish Nurses

also collaborated to develop a Public Service Announcement (PSA) emphasizing the importance of having an Asthma Action Plan. The PSA was shared across social media, on the NVHD website, and can be viewed on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjBu4KRINWc>.

The **Healthy Homes** team has been advocating and educating the community about the importance of lead testing for children under the age of six, completing healthy homes assessments and remediation through the NauVEL program, and surveying

the community about the effects of secondhand smoke. The partners on this team are Griffin Hospital Parish Nurses, Ansonia and Derby's Youth Service Bureau, Naugatuck Mayor's Office, and TEAM.

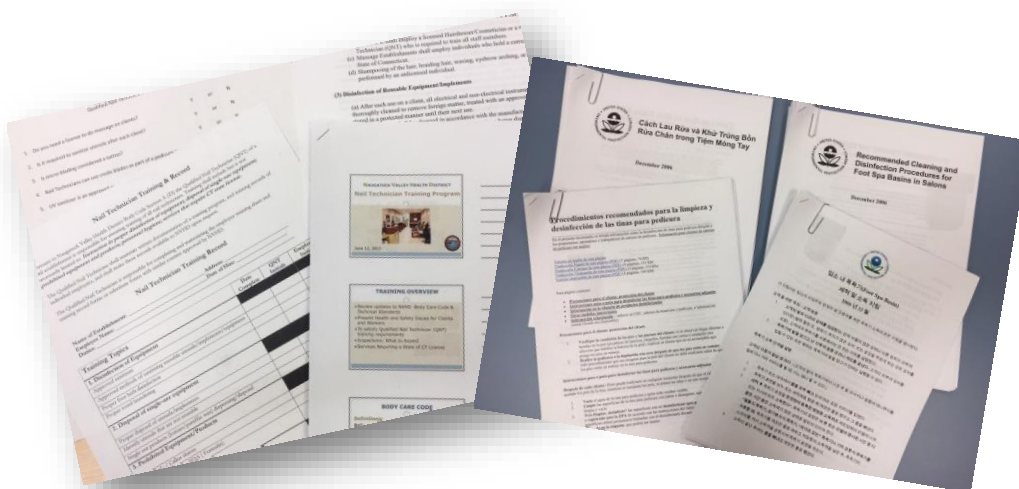




## ESSENTIAL SERVICE 5

This service looks to the development of codes, regulations and legislation to guide the practice of public health.

As part of the District's Quality Improvement Plan (see Service 9), sanitarians were asked to review common violations of the Body Care Code. They found that within nail salons there were violations that occurred with a higher frequency at many nail salons that could pose a risk to the public. The Body Care Code was revised to include clearer language to make it more understandable and added a requirement that at least one manager or nail technician from each salon participate in a 1-hour training on infection control provided by the District.



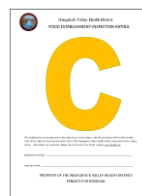
*Develop  
policies and  
plans that  
support  
individual  
and  
community  
health  
efforts*

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE 6

A large part of the District's activities fall into this essential service. In addition to the work described below, this year, the Environmental Health staff worked to prepare for the upcoming changes to the food code. Connecticut has adopted the FDA Food Code with full implementation occurring by January 1, 2019. This past fiscal year saw limited implementation of certain aspects of the code. The major activity for the sanitarians was the 40+ hours of online and in-person training needed to become certified to enforce the new code once enacted.

NVHD licensed, inspected, reviewed plans and provided education to **food service establishments (FSE)** including restaurants, markets, caterers, private clubs, itinerant vendors, school cafeterias, group homes, day care centers, nursing homes and temporary events.

<b>FSE licenses issued</b>	<b>662</b>
<b>Temporary event licenses</b>	<b>373</b>
<b>Food plan reviews</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Inspections and visits</b>	<b>2,103</b>



The NVHD responded to **housing code complaints** filed by residents with investigations that may result in enforcement activities including the issuance of violation orders and/or litigation.

<b>Complaints investigated</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Inspections and visits</b>	<b>267</b>



*Enforce  
laws and  
regulations  
that protect  
health and  
ensure  
safety*





NVHD issued permits and supervised the installation of private **subsurface sewage disposal systems (SSDS)**, and provided deep-hole tests, inspections and investigations. Plans were reviewed for change of use, additions, and engineered systems.

<b>SSDS permits issued</b>	<b>New: 19</b>
	<b>Repair: 66</b>
<b>SSDS visits</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Subdivision lots</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Test hole applications</b>	<b>45</b>

NVHD issued permits and inspected all **private well** construction sites working with homeowners, the construction industry and other government agencies to resolve water quality problems and protect the water supply at the local level.

<b>Well drilling permits issued</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Private well water visits/sample</b>	<b>57</b>

NVHD issued permits and inspected all **public pools**.

<b>Inspections and visits</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Closed</b>	<b>9</b>

NVHD issued permits and inspected all **tattoo and body piercing establishments and body care salons** including **hair, nail, massage and tanning salons**.

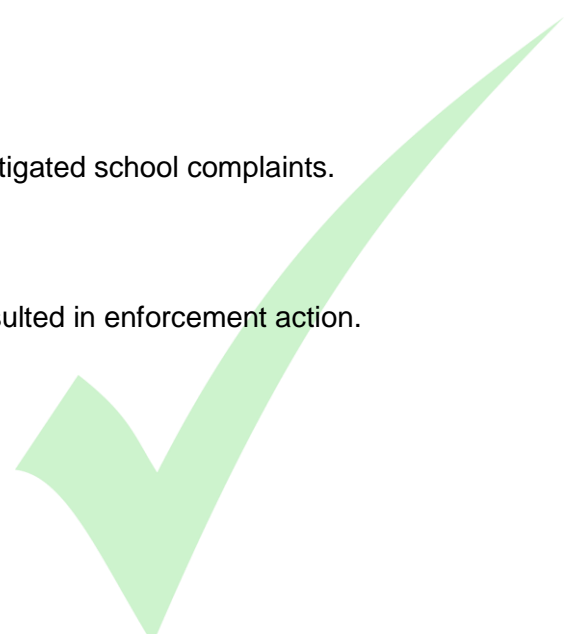
<b>Body Care permits</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>Inspections and visits</b>	<b>216</b>
<b>Tattoo and Body Piercing permits</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Inspections and visits</b>	<b>17</b>

NVHD provided **day care inspections** for state licensing and investigated school complaints.

<b>Inspections and visits</b>	<b>34</b>
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NVHD provided a range of **nuisance** inspections that may have resulted in enforcement action.

<b>Nuisance</b>	<b>56</b>
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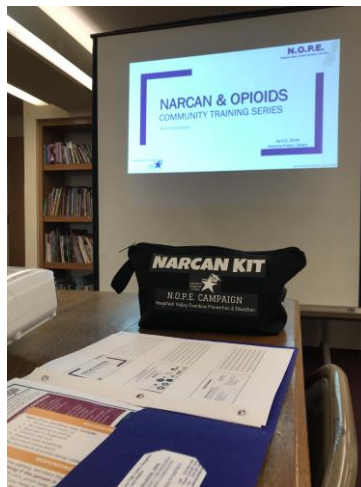
## ESSENTIAL SERVICE 7

This service (often referred to as “outreach” or “enabling” services) includes providing culturally and linguistically appropriate materials; targeting health information to at risk groups; and working with the community to improve health care access.

The District provides educational materials in multiple languages to the public and subscribes to a telephone based translation service to serve the needs of non-English speakers. This year the District began to develop a policy to ensure all written materials could be easily understood by the public.

In collaboration with many partners, the District provided health education materials on asthma, women’s health, the risks of lead based paint, the need to assess homes for health risks and responded to the opioid crisis.

Naugatuck Valley Medical Reserve Corps (NVMRC) established its Naugatuck Valley Overdose Prevention & Education (N.O.P.E.) Campaign to bring opioid-related education and resources to the Valley. Funding for this opportunity was available through a cooperative agreement between National Association of County and City Health Officials and the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response. NVMRC partnered with BHcare’s Alliance for Prevention & Wellness to develop Valley specific Narcan & Opioids training for the general public. **NVHD’s N.O.P.E. campaign has given out 20 free Narcan kits and hosted 8 community Narcan trainings.**



*Link people  
to needed  
personal  
health  
services and  
promote  
strategies to  
improve  
access to  
health care  
services*

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE 8

This service includes education and training for personnel to meet the needs of agencies involved in delivering the activities of public health. To this end, NVHD has developed a Workforce Development Plan that includes a Multi-Year Staff Training and Exercise Plan (MYTEP). The plans are reviewed annually and are based on the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals from the Council on Linkages and the Fifteen Preparedness Capabilities from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This past year mandatory training topics included:

- Communications Training
  - CDC's Zombie Apocalypse Tabletop Exercise
- Safety Training
  - Panic Button Training
  - Customer Interaction Tabletop Exercise
  - A-L-I-C-E Active Shooter Training
  - Respiratory Protection Training & N95 Fit Testing
- HIPAA/Confidentiality; FOI; 19a-25 Training
- Health Disparities Training
- Incident Command System Training
- Mass Dispensing Tabletop Exercise
- Point of Dispensing Full-Scale Exercise, simulating a response to an anthrax attack

In addition, staff completed individual training needed to maintain licenses and certification. All staff are encouraged to participate in trainings provided by the Connecticut State Department of Public Health, professional organizations and academia throughout the year to agency staff so they can keep abreast in a dynamic science-based field.



*Assure a  
competent  
public  
health  
workforce*

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE 9

This service calls for ongoing evaluation of health programs, based on analysis of health status and service utilization data, to assess program effectiveness and to provide information necessary for allocating resources and shaping programs.

The NVHD Quality Improvement Plan serves as the foundation for the agency's efforts to continually improve our services to our six communities. As part of our PHAB accreditation, NVHD supports at least one administrative and one program QI project at all times. In 2017/2018, Improving Customer Service through Improved Internal Communication continued to be our administrative improvement focus: we clarified staff roles and we conducted a customer service survey. Our program improvement initiative was the revision of public code for Licensing of Body Care Establishments, with a particular focus on addressing code violations of nail salons through implementation of a mandatory training for nail technicians. The newest QI project undertaken is the Standardization of Environmental Health Communications, to improve communication and increase efficiency of our sanitarians and our administrative staff.

In addition to these three larger scale QI projects, we have introduced a Just Did It! (or, Quick QI) initiative. This allows us to recognize those smaller improvement efforts that result from everyday attention to providing services more effectively and more efficiently.



*Advancing  
public health  
performance*



*Evaluate  
effectiveness,  
accessibility  
and quality of  
personal and  
population  
based health  
services*

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE 10

NVHD, in partnership with the Pomperaug District Department of Health, applied for and received a grant from the Connecticut State Innovation Model (SIM) to explore providing diabetes and asthma management and education to area residents. The SIM is developing a strategy to promote healthier people, better care, and smarter healthcare spending and health equity by moving away from traditional medical billing to one which rewards healthcare providers for improved patient outcomes. The SIM sees community based organizations and local health as potentially having a role in this change. The grant supplies funding and technical assistance for the two health districts to develop a business plan to present to healthcare organizations for the districts to supply diabetes education and management to patients in need, and be reimbursed by the healthcare organization for the services.



*Research  
for new  
insights and  
innovative  
solutions to  
public health  
problems*

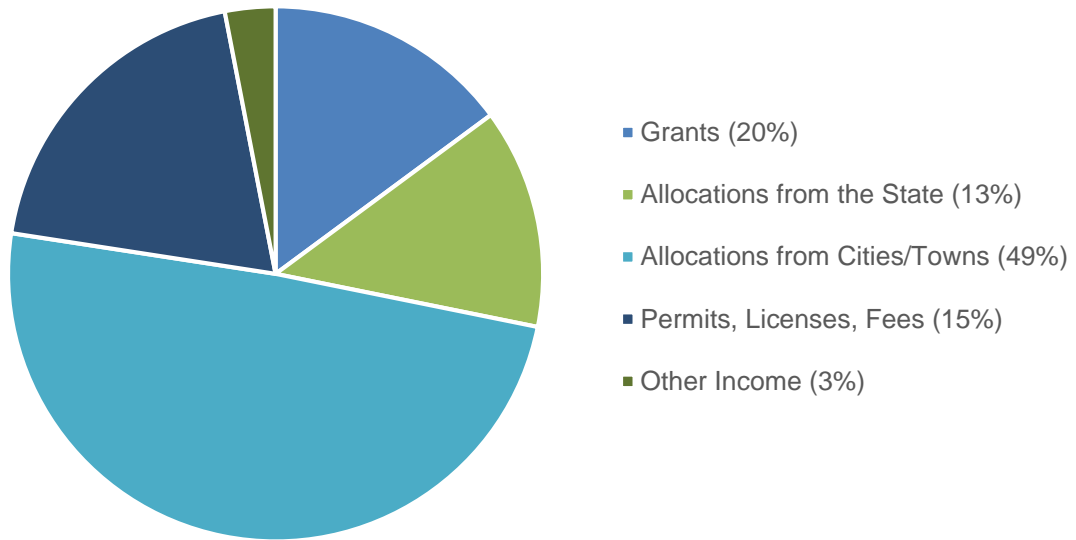


**POMPERAUG**  
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH**



## FUNDING SOURCES

## FISCAL YEAR 2017-2018



### GRANTS AWARDED

Immunization Action Plan	\$86,633
Public Health Emergency Preparedness	\$87,702
Medical Reserve Corps	\$14,300
MRC Challenge Award (NACCHO)	\$7,500
Preventative Health Block Grant	\$32,914
Freedom2Breathe (Valley Community Foundation)	\$25,000
A Matter of Balance (CT Community Foundation)	\$4,700
Valley Needs & Opportunities (Valley Community Foundation)	\$4,000
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>\$262,749</b>

### OTHER

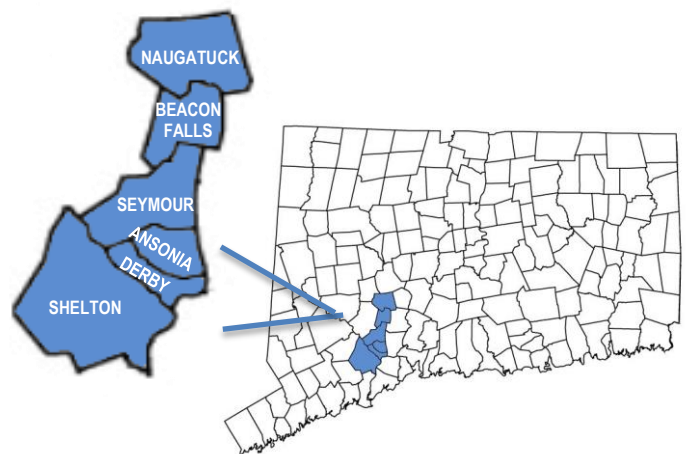
Allocations from the State	\$234,846
Allocations from Cities/Towns	\$869,566
Permits, Licenses, Fees	\$344,568
Other Income	\$53,871
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>\$1,502,851</b>

**Total Revenue including Grants: \$1,765,600**

## POPULATION

Ansonia	18,732
Beacon Falls	6,095
Derby	12,631
Naugatuck	31,392
Seymour	16,553
Shelton	41,334

**Total District Population: 126,737**







### **NVHD BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

John Zikaras, Chair, Shelton  
 Rosalie Averill, Vice Chair, Seymour  
 Thomas Clifford, Exec Committee Chair, Ansonia  
 Gary Merlone, Ansonia  
 Susan Mis, Beacon Falls  
 Lisa Brailey, Derby  
 Camille Kurtyka, Derby  
 Mary Connolley, Naugatuck  
 Edie Sletner, Naugatuck  
 Jenn Saska, Seymour  
 Jean Jones, Shelton  
 Barbara Lombardi, Shelton  
 Edward Kisluk, Shelton

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Jeff Dussetschleger, Secretary/Treasurer/Ex-Officio  
 Elizabeth King, Recording Secretary

### **PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS**

Kenneth Ward, MD, Medical Consultant  
 Frederick Stanek, Esq, Legal Consultant

### **NVHD STAFF**

Jeff Dussetschleger, DDS, MPH, Director of Health  
 Carol Slajda, MBA, MA, NauVEL Program Manager  
 Jess Stelmaszek, MPH, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator  
 Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator  
 Joan Lane, MPH, Public Health Specialist

#### **Administrative Support**

Lisa McEachern, Business Manager  
 Gaby Reyes, Administrative Assistant  
 Judith Waleski, Administrative Assistant

#### **Environmental Health Division**

Melanie Dokla, BS, RS, Acting Assistant Director  
 Rita Fazzino, RS, Housing Code Enforcement  
 Pran Gjeloshi, BS, RS, Sanitarian  
 Laurel Shaw, MPH, RS, Sanitarian  
 Yvonne Douglas, BS, Sanitarian

#### **Community Health Division**

Carissa Caserta, MPH, Assistant Director  
 Kristin Charest, RN, Public Health Nurse  
 Elizabeth Green, BS, Immunization Coordinator