

It is with a heavy heart to announce Elizabeth “Betty” Palma (Guardiani) King, age 87, of Ansonia, passed away peacefully at Griffin Hospital on May 8, 2025. Betty worked in various administrative support roles for the Naugatuck Valley Health District since August 7, 1998; most recently serving as the Recording Secretary for the Board of Directors. Betty became more than just a colleague to staff. Betty’s legacy of friendship, kindness, and style will continue to inspire us. Our deepest condolences and sympathies to her family and friends. We will miss her dearly.

### **Miscellaneous**

#### **National Public Health Week (April 7 – 13, 2025) Recap**

In an effort to increase awareness and visibility of services we provide, NVHD launched a new video series “Get to Know NVHD” during NPHW. In each short clip, a staff member takes the viewer along and describes a specific public health service in more detail. Our videos are shared across our social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. We have also created a playlist of the short videos on YouTube. Click here to view <http://bit.ly/Get2KnowNVHD>! Thank you to Paulina and Vanessa for editing the videos and to all the staff that contributed pictures, video, and audio!

#### **Video topics:**

- 📺 Community Outreach and Programming
- 📺 Lead Poisoning Prevention and Response Program
- 📺 Food Service Establishment Inspections
- 📺 Body Care Establishment Inspections
- 📺 Public Pool Inspections
- 📺 Subsurface Sewage Disposal System (Septic) Program
- 📺 Vaccine Appointments

#### **Employee Spotlight!**

Every year, during NPHW, NVHD staff anonymously vote for the person who has demonstrated hard work, dedication, and kindness towards the community we serve. Congratulations to the 2025 winner of the NVHD Distinguished Service Award, Vanessa Lopez! Vanessa has been an integral part of NVHD’s community outreach team, representing the district at events all across the Valley promoting immunizations, health, and wellness to the residents. Vanessa has served as an Immunization Program Specialist since 2022 and effective May 1, 2025, Vanessa will be moving into a new role serving as NVHD’s Public Health Specialist, working on various initiatives and community outreach! Congratulations, Vanessa!



#### **Staff Updates**

Please help extend a warm welcome to NVHD’s new Business Manager, Laurie Veillette! Laurie has jumped right in and has been completing training and orientation with me all month. For business related inquiries, you can contact Laurie at 203-881-3255 x 106 or by email at [lveillette@nvhd.org](mailto:lveillette@nvhd.org).

#### **National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)**

I attended NACCHO’s Monthly Nationwide All-Local Health Organizations Call on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

### 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. The meeting was held on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

### CT Association of Directors of Health (CADH)

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

CADH held a training for Directors of Health on Engaging Elected Officials to Advocate for Public Health. The training was facilitated by James Albis, Partner of Graff Public Solutions (who is also CADH lobbyist). The training reviewed the legislative process overview, key opportunities for CADH and local health involvement in the legislative process, and strategies and suggestions for communicating with legislatures. The monthly CADH Board of Directors meeting was held April 15<sup>th</sup>. The CT Association of Directors of Health continues to co-host statewide local health calls with DPH.

### Quality Improvement

Carissa continues to Chair the QI Committee. The Reconstruction of the Temporary Event Process Project continues and is highlighted in the Environmental Health section of this report. Carissa, Jess, Laurie and Vanessa will begin an administrative-focused project in June.

### 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.

On Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup> Health Educator, Lisa Trupp, took part in the CT Department of Public Health's Workforce Development 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual NexGen Showcase at Central CT State University. This event provides public health students with an opportunity to connect with professionals currently working in the field. Speakers included CT DPH Commissioner Manisha Juthani, MD, Maggie Litwin, CT Public Health Association Mentor Committee Chair, Rob Rubbo, President of the CT Association of Directors of Health and Director of Torrington Area Health District, Brianna Britos-Swain, President of the CT Environmental Health Association, and Tom St. Louis, Director of CT Public Health Workforce Development. Lisa led a roundtable discussion with Jenifer Clarke-Lofters, Community Health Coordinator of Milford Health Department, where they spoke with students about how to prepare for a career in public health and how to navigate the changing public health landscape.





**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Naugatuck Valley  
Health District**

Board of Directors  
Monthly Public Health Report: April 2025

Former NVHD Health Educator, Jamie Luckhardt, MPH, CHES is now faculty at the University of New Haven. Professor Luckhardt invited Lisa and Austin to speak to students in her Public Health Practice course during two opportunities in April. Lisa guest lectured for a virtual public health program planning and evaluation class and shared how we evaluate our programs at NVHD. Austin participated in an in-person panel with other local health professionals to talk about the importance of building networks and supporting one another as public health professionals, especially in times of turbulence. Moments like these show how vital it is to bridge the connection between education and local health to shape the future of public health.



### **Air Quality and Climate Change**

Grant: EPA Air Quality Monitoring Grant

*Status: I have received and signed our contract! NVHD & DPH are just awaiting the AG's signature for full execution*

Now that we finally have our contract, we will begin work on this grant in May 2025. The contract period is through March 31, 2027, and the total contract is \$113,608.44. Intern Liliana Restrepo will be returning to NVHD to complete her summer 2025 internship, with full-time hours from May 18, 2025 to August 15, 2025. Among other public health activities, Liliana will help support this grant in collaboration with community and environmental health staff.

### **Naugatuck Valley Overdose Prevention & Education (NOPE) Program**

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

*Status: Year 2 Sub-contract Executed with New Haven Health Department; Carryover funds pending*

The quarterly meeting for local health departments working on OD2A contracts and CT DPH was held on April 9<sup>th</sup>. CT DPH, Hartford Health & Human Services (and their partners), and New Haven Health Department (and their partners) provided updates and discussed how we can better support each other in this work. We will reconvene in August.

The New Haven OD2A partners meeting was held on April 10<sup>th</sup>. I have received an amended contract from the City of New Haven, and we have received word that our Year 1 Carryover Budget has been approved by the CDC. I will be hiring for the Milford/Orange/West Haven Overdose Prevention Navigator position in May/June 2025.

### **Updates from Austin (Valley Overdose Prevention Navigator):**

Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> was recognized as Save a Life Day, marked by public health departments across Connecticut offering free Narcan training to help reduce the incidence of opioid overdose in the state. Austin Telford, MPH, CCHW, NVHD's Prevention Coordinator, facilitated two trainings: one in the morning at Howard Whittemore Memorial Library in Naugatuck and one in the afternoon at Derby Public Library in Derby. The trainings were well received, with





**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**Naugatuck Valley  
Health District**

## Board of Directors Monthly Public Health Report: April 2025

participants learning the signs of an opioid overdose, and how to administer Narcan and care for someone until help arrives.

Austin joined the Derby Police and Fire Departments at the DEA National Take Back Day event at Bradley School in Derby. The event was a success, with the town collecting 70 lbs. of unused or unwanted prescription medications. In addition, grab bags containing rain ponchos, umbrellas, hand sanitizer, and other spring essentials were available for participants. We helped promote the Naugatuck event, which collected 15.13 lbs.

If you missed the event, NVHD has medication disposal pouches available for discarding medication at home safely. For more information, contact Austin at 203-881-3255, ext. 128.



Austin has also become active with the Regional Suicide Advisory Boards, which Lisa also participates on.

### **Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)**

I am currently supervising a remote intern, Walid Ourdane, who is a graduate student in the Master of Public Health (MPH) program at University of Bridgeport. Walid has extended his internship to run through the end of May.

#### **ESF 8: Public Health & Medical Services, Chair**

The Region 5 ESF #8 meeting was cancelled in April due to many colleagues attending the Preparedness Summit in San Antonio. Lisa attended the Region 2 ESF #8 meeting as my proxy on April 16<sup>th</sup> because I had a conflicting meeting (thank you, Lisa!). I attended the virtual REPT Steering Committee meetings for Region 5 on April 14<sup>th</sup> and Region 2 on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

During April, Region 5 completed a firmware upgrade and uploaded the latest zone and channel template into the Region 5 Kenwood Interop radios (I am the keeper of the ESF #8 radio for the region). This included 16 new Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN) talk groups created for use within Region 5 and surrounding areas. It also included the new LCD channels as well as the updated channels from the other DEMHS Regions along with state and federal interop channels. Having specific talk groups for our region, and for our support functions, is a critical asset during emergency events or if phones were to go down.

I attended the Statewide ESF #8 Workgroup meeting facilitated by CT DPH on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Statewide Training and Exercise Workgroup (STEW)**

The April STEW meeting was held on April 9<sup>th</sup>. We provided updates from the 5 emergency planning regions, reviewed the Operations Team ICS (OPTICS) Training, heard from DPH about their H5N1 Tabletop Exercise, discussed planning for the next five years training and exercises, and started planning an Administrative Preparedness Discussion-based Exercise.





### CT Healthcare Coalition (HCC)

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

The 2025 CT Health Care Coalition Conference brought together healthcare providers, public health professionals, first responders, emergency management professionals, and other stakeholders in healthcare emergency management on April 22<sup>nd</sup> in Rocky Hill.

We got to hear from local and out-of-state colleagues that included real lessons learned responding to the mass casualty incident at the Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl parade, cybersecurity, resiliency and how we can strengthen our coalition to be action oriented, combatting violence in public health & healthcare situations, and disaster behavioral health response.



I'm proud to serve as a member of the CT HCC Executive Committee and always enjoy getting together with like-minded individuals from different professions to help advance the field of emergency preparedness and response.

As Paul Rabeuf's (pictured with me) term as Chair of the Coalition comes to an end, I am happy we will continue collaborating and accomplishing goals together as he joins me as Co-Chair of CT Region 5 ESF 8! Learn more about our CT Health Care Coalition at <https://cthcc.org>!

### NACCHO Preparedness Policy Advisory Group (PPAG)

Connecticut Representative

The April PPAG was cancelled due to the national Preparedness Summit conference being held in San Antonio.

### Medical Reserve Corps

*ORA Grant Status: Contract Executed*

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. I have received the executed contract and expect payment in May.

The Region 5 MRC BLS Training that is being funded through a CT HCC grant will be held at NVHD in the Annex in May.

I attended and provided updates at the Region 5 CERT/MRC Leads meeting on April 30<sup>th</sup>.



ELC2 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: Monitoring
- Flu, RSV, and Pertussis – Monitoring
- H5N1 Bird Flu –Monitoring
- Measles– Monitoring and education

Effective March 24, 2025, the funding stream supporting the ELC2 Grant is canceled by the federal government. In response, CT DPH issued an immediate stop work order, ceasing all services and expenditures authorized under this contract while CT DPH assesses whether this contract can continue to be supported. On April 22, 2025, I received notice that because of the lawsuit brought by several States including Connecticut, a federal court issued a temporary restraining order allowing DPH to receive funding under the grants until April 17th or until the court rules on the States' motion for a preliminary injunction. On Thursday, April 17, 2025, the Court held a hearing on the preliminary injunction motion and extended the temporary restraining order until the injunction order is issued. The Court has not ruled on the preliminary injunction motion pending additional briefing due on April 29th. A decision is anticipated shortly after briefs are filed. After issuance of the first temporary restraining order, DPH provided local health departments/districts with the opportunity to submit costs we may have incurred after the March 24th federal cutoff date until April 17th. In light of the extension of the temporary restraining order, DPH extended the cutoff date to April 29th.

The following update is provided by Paulina:

The team spent the month of April closing out activities. Beatriz created PowerPoint of the Long COVID community presentations that were slated to begin in April, leaving a blueprint for Community Health staff in the event that they utilize it in the future. Paulina wrote an After-Action Report for NVHD's COVID-19 pandemic response, as well as a grant summary highlighting the successes of the grant work done by the team since 2020.

Table 1. Adult Case Statistics (18+)

	March	April
Total Cases & Contacts Managed	41	66
Attempted Contact: Letters Mailed	32	0
Consultations with Residents	2	0

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

	March	April
Total Cases & Contacts Managed	8	8
Attempted Contact: Letters Mailed	8	0
Consultations with Residents	0	0

\*Please note that "Total Cases & Contacts Managed" also includes reports of self-tests originating from various sources such as schools, childcare centers, congregate 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.

I wish nothing but the best to both Paulina and Beatriz. It is extremely unfortunate that their contract has been cancelled by the Federal Administration (it was set to expire March 31, 2026). Both individuals have shown dedication to advancing public health through community connections, education, and reducing the spread of disease. Both have grown so much professionally over the last few years, and this is a loss for the district.



**COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES**  
**Carissa Caserta, MPH**  
**April 2025**

---

---

**Community Health Assessment: The Valley Index (CHA)**

Lisa and I have been very active in the new Valley Community Index process and Jess has also started attending the Coordinating Committee meetings again. The Valley Index process is moving along and will be “unveiled” at the end of June. Each of the four sections of the Index have working groups that have met and continue to review data to create the story that will be written to shape the health of the Valley. They include the Health and Mental Health Committee (which Jess, Lisa, Austin, and I are on), Children, Youth & Education, Seniors & Aging, and Economic Stability & Basic Needs. Lisa has also worked tirelessly to analyze the data for this Index and has been ensuring the data, which comes from multiple sources, is accurate and current.

**Community Health Programs**

**Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP)**

Kristie and Lisa T. started a DSMP program at Seymour Community Center that had 15 registrants!

**Chronic Disease Self-Management (CDSMP)**

Kristie and Lisa will be hosting a Chronic Disease workshop at the Naugatuck Senior Center this Summer.

**Matter of Balance (MOB)**

A new Matter of Balance class started at the Ansonia Armory with 12 participants and will go through the end of May.

**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. In April, there were 6 new lead cases and 5 of those required a comprehensive lead inspection. We are currently monitoring 52 active cases.

Lisa also attended the annual Lead Inspector/Risk Assessor refresher to maintain certification for another year. Vanessa will be attending this training in June to become certified to further our assistance in our lead program.

**Immunization Grants & Clinical Services**

**Clinical Services**

In April, Kristie provided 5 vaccines to children in the Valley.

**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 meeting on April 15<sup>th</sup> which focused on respiratory illness activity and an update on the 2025 measles outbreaks. As of April 10, a total of 712 measles cases had been reported by 25 states. Since January 1<sup>st</sup>, there have been 7 outbreaks (defined as 3 or more related cases), and 93% of the confirmed cases (660 of 712) were outbreak-associated. There have been no cases reported in CT as of this report.

**Tuberculosis (TB)**


Kristie is actively monitoring 2 cases of TB.

### Immunization Action Plan (IAP) Grant Program

Elizabeth had 3 IQIP check-in visit with providers in person. She also attended the Annual Griffin Baby Fair where she gave information to families about vaccines and other NVHD programs.


### CDC Immunization Grant Outreach Events Summary

Effective March 24, 2025, the funding stream supporting the CDC Immunization Grant is canceled by the federal government. In response, CT DPH issued an immediate stop work order, ceasing all services and expenditures authorized under this contract while CT DPH assesses whether this contract can continue to be supported. On April 22, 2025, I received notice that because of the lawsuit brought by several States including Connecticut, a federal court issued a temporary restraining order allowing DPH to receive funding under the grants until April 17th or until the court rules on the States' motion for a preliminary injunction. On Thursday, April 17, 2025, the Court held a hearing on the preliminary injunction motion and extended the temporary restraining order until the injunction order is issued. The Court has not ruled on the preliminary injunction motion pending additional briefing due on April 29th. A decision is anticipated shortly after briefs are filed. After issuance of the first temporary restraining order, DPH provided local health departments/districts with the opportunity to submit costs we may have incurred after the March 24th federal cutoff date until April 17th. In light of the extension of the temporary restraining order, DPH extended the cutoff date to April 29th.

<b>Healthy Together: Collaborative Community Health Fair</b>	<p>Vanessa and Bea attended this great community health fair, which was set up by the Life Health and Wellness Center, Inc., located in Ansonia. The event had over 200 attendees who had access to free health screenings (such as mammograms), groceries, bikes, and safety education. Bea and Vanessa had a great time connecting community members with resources and providing immunization information.</p>	
<b>Salvation Army</b>	<p>Vanessa and Bea held an informational verbal presentation to the children ages 6-12 who attended the Salvation Army after school Kids Club. The topic discussed was how to stay healthy (from respiratory viruses), and the children were able to ask questions and then make their own custom masks (with a fabric mask and fabric markers). They loved showing off their unique mask designs.</p>	
<b>Outreach</b>	<p>Vanessa has continued to conduct outreach throughout the Valley to let community members know we are here to answer any questions they may have as far as immunizations or other health topics. This month's focus has continued to be on Measles and ensuring people keep their children up to date.</p>	





<b>Evidence Based Public Health Course</b>	In the month of March, Vanessa and Austin began a weekly 10-part course. It intends to build skills in applying evidence-based decision-making to improve population health and advance health equity. Through presentations, practice exercises, and case examples, the course takes a “hands-on” approach and emphasizes information that is readily available to practitioners.
<b>Teddy Bear Clinics</b> Huntington Branch Library	Going to the doctor can make anyone feel anxious—especially kids. To ease their fears, NVHD community health staff came together to cohost a Teddy Bear Clinic at the Derby Neck Library where children had a chance to play doctor with their favorite toy, providing it with the same care they would receive at the doctor’s. Carissa, Kristie, Vanessa, Bea, and Austin had a great time providing information to all the families who attended. The children also had the opportunity to craft a chalk hand X-ray. 
<b>Translation:</b> Vanessa assisted community health staff 8 times with translating from Spanish to English and vice-versa.	

### Miscellaneous

Kristie attended the Annual Vector Borne Disease Symposium seminar hosted by the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) in New Haven on April 9<sup>th</sup>. This event is always very informative about different types of ticks and vectors, especially those that we can have tested. At NVHD, we collect ticks from residents to have tested for tick-borne diseases such as Lyme disease, and we are already seeing an uptick in those numbers.

On Thursday, April 10th Nurse Kristie and Program Specialist, Bea attended the Naugatuck Senior Center Senior Health Fair! It was a well-attended event by seniors and community-based organizations!



**ENIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**  
**Melanie Dokla, BS, RS**  
**April 2025**

---

---

**Food Service Establishments**

Seasonal permit applications are being reviewed and scheduled for an inspection. Temporary events season is ramping up; we are utilizing our updated application, creating/posting social media content and handing out additional education.

Staff continue to conduct routine inspections, plan views and 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.

On April 4<sup>th</sup>, Laurel, John and I met with David Morgan and Lillian from TEAM to review requirements and provide some additional suggestion for the event “Men Who Cook”. Men Who Cook will be held on Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Laurel taught a Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) class at NVHD on April 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm and April 12<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am. Four (4) participants attended and passed their exams. NVHD will continue to provide courses/exams as needed throughout the year.

On April 8<sup>th</sup>, Amanda, Amy and I attended a virtual training session sponsored by the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) entitled “Sanitization for Food Safety: Using Sanitizer Test Strips”. This session was a good review of the difference of cleaning and sanitizing and their effectiveness in preventing the spread of pathogens.



**Public Pools**

We continue to process renewal applications for existing public pools/spas. Permits expired on April 30<sup>th</sup>, we have received all year-round pool applications and are awaiting four (4) seasonal pool applications.

Inspections for indoor pools have been completed, and outdoor pool inspections will begin at mid-May.

**Body Care**

Staff 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 have issued permits to discharge. With warmer weather septic work continues to increase.

There are four (4) active septic failures that are currently being repaired.

Laurel continues to train staff in the SSDS program.

On April 8<sup>th</sup>, Jess, Laurel, and I met with Mayor Hess' Assistant Jim McGrath, Bill Herzman (Building Inspector), and Jim Goggin (Tax Collector) regarding a property in Naugatuck that has a failing septic system. Colin McAlister, Chief of Police, also attended the meeting. This meeting was to determine each department's next steps to resolve the issue.

### **Housing Complaints**

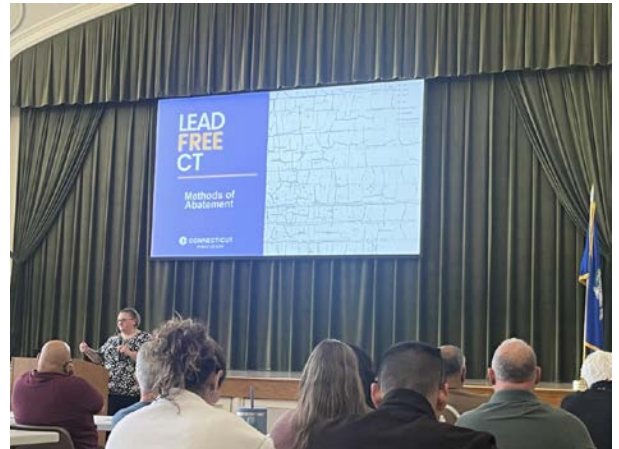
Environmental staff continue to investigate housing code violations and complaints.

### **Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (LPP)**

As expected, we have seen an increase in elevated blood lead (EBLL) cases, which require a comprehensive lead inspection. This inspection consists of X-ray fluorescent (XRF) readings of all components in each room and components on the exterior of the property, dust wipe samples in each room, 2 water samples and any bare soil on the exterior of the property. If the residence is a multifamily dwelling the other units are required to be tested if there is a child under the age of six.

Lead abatement plans submitted by lead abatement contractors are 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.

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, I attended DPH's Annual Lead Inspector/Risk Assessor refresher training at the West Hartford Town Hall in West Hartford. Laurel, John, Amanda and Amy are scheduled to attend the refresher training in May.



### **Lead Stats**

Open lead cases - 21

New - 5

### **Miscellaneous**

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, Laurel, Amanda and I attended the Vector-Borne Disease Symposium at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) in New Haven. This is the same symposium Kristie also attended. They provided up-to-date information on biology, epidemiology, surveillance and management of tick and mosquito-borne diseases.





**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**Naugatuck Valley**  
**Health District**

Board of Directors  
Monthly Public Health Report: April 2025

**After-Hours/Emergency Responses**

	Date/Time	Location	Description of Event
1.	4/16/2025	BJ's Wholesale, Derby	Complaint regarding improper food temperatures
2.	4/21/2025	Main Street, Seymour	Unlicensed tattoo shop

