Dear Meriden Community,

This report is focused on activities conducted throughout the year related to the 10 Essential Public Health Services (see page 3 for the full list). The 10 Essential Public Health Services describe the public health activities that all communities should undertake.

This annual report is not all-inclusive of the work we do to protect the public health in Meriden. For a complete list of roles and responsibilities of each office, please visit our website at www.meridenhealth.com. Or, please feel free to call or email our staff. A contact list is located on page 23 of this report.

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message from the Director</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Assessment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate Health Problems</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform and Educate</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Policies and Plans</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Laws</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Health Care</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain a Competent Workforce</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence Based</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 (Coronavirus)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Contact Information</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Message from the Director

Dear Meriden Community,

I am pleased to present to you the 2021-2022 Meriden Department of Health and Human Services annual report.

This report provides a summary of the many ways in which our Department touches the lives of Meriden residents each and every day to achieve healthy people in healthy communities. This past fiscal year we continued to address the COVID-19 pandemic, directly providing vaccinations, coordinating pop-up clinics in our community, contact tracing and providing isolation and quarantine guidance, and consulting with local businesses on mitigation strategies. This was done while continuing to provide essential public health and human services to our community.

From July 2021 to February 2022 we were displaced from 165 Miller Street due to flooding. Thank you to our seniors for welcoming staff at the Senior Center!

Whether protecting the health of our residents through immunizations and disease investigation, reducing the incidence of foodborne illness through our inspection and licensing of food service establishments, or providing maternal and child health services through WIC, we actively identify and respond to a wide variety of public health problems and issues. We also are proud of the human services work we do, which ranges from providing early childhood education experiences, social services support, and opportunities for residents in their golden years. These efforts would not be possible without the talent and dedication of our professional staff.

I would like to thank our staff, the City Manager, City Council and Mayor, our community partners, and the residents of Meriden for continuing to provide us with the support and collaboration we need to support the public health of our community.

In good health,

Lea Crown
Lea Crown, MPH
Director of Health and Human Services

Ten Essential Public Health Services

1. Assess and monitor population health status, factors that influence health, and community needs and assets.
2. Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population.
3. Communicate effectively to inform and educate people about health, factors that influence it, and how to improve it.
4. Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health.
5. Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws that impact health.
6. Utilize legal and regulatory actions designed to improve and protect the public’s health.
7. Assure an effective system that enables equitable access to the individual services and care needed to be healthy.
8. Build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce.
9. Improve and innovate public health functions through ongoing evaluation, research, and continuous quality improvement.
10. Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health.
1. Community Assessment

Assess and monitor population health status, factors that influence health, and community needs and assets.

Our programs and services strive to reflect the current needs of the community. One way we determine which programs to provide is to conduct and/or participate in community assessments in Meriden. Our most recent resources include local assessments conducted by Hartford Healthcare, Data Haven, the United Way, and Health Equity Solutions.

This past year we used several surveillance systems, information systems, and community reports to monitor the health of our community and help us make data-driven decisions in program planning and implementation. Below is a selection of these items.

CT DATA

CT Data is an extensive website that provides data on a variety of topics, including housing and development, environment and natural resources public safety, and health and human services, to name a few. We primarily used this website over the past year for COVID-19 related data—overall vaccination rates, vaccination rates by age and by race/ethnicity, and school case rates. This open data portal supplemented information available on the state's COVID-19 portal. Data can be viewed at https://data.ct.gov/.

ODMAP

The Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) is an online application used to collect and map near real-time suspected overdose surveillance data across jurisdictions. It is a tool to support first responders and public health efforts to mobilize an immediate response to a sudden increase or spike in overdose events. This tool is only available to government (state, local, federal, or tribal) agencies serving the interests of public safety and health. Our Director of Health has access, regularly monitors the site, and reports out findings to first responders and community partners working on our 2 federal opioid and substance use prevention and treatment grants. We also get reports from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner monthly on overdose deaths.

CT WiZ

CT WiZ is the statewide Immunization Information System (IIS) designed to meet national standard requirements for effectively tracking and administrating immunizations in a public health setting. It is a web-based database that maintains complete, accurate, and secure immunization records for all Connecticut children. Our Clinic staff have access to this database to track immunization records for our residents, including COVID-19 vaccination. This past year a public portal was created for Connecticut residents to be able to create an account and download their vaccine records. Persons can sign up for an account here: https://ctwiz.dph.ct.gov/ctwiz_public/Application/PublicPortal
Census Tract Data

Meriden is divided into seventeen “tracts” or subdivisions used to collect and report data. If data is available we will use it to make informed decisions on where to directly provide or refer our community partners as to where services or outreach may be needed. For example, over the summer of 2021, through funding provided by CT DPH, we worked with community partners to coordinate several COVID-19 vaccination clinics and outreach efforts in areas where vaccination rates were low. We were able to pinpoint where theses clinics should be done based on census tract data in relation to vaccination rates. Other types of data available include demographics, education, housing, and more. Maps can be found on the United States Census Bureau website at www.census.gov.

Reports:

1. Connecticut’s Path to Equity: This document was created by Health Equity Solutions with input from many partners to lay out concrete, feasible state policies to advance health equity. This guide outlines the steps towards equity so policymakers, candidates, advocates, and voters have a clear understanding of how equity can become a reality. The report addresses anti-racist structures; diversity and inclusion; access; affordability; economic stability, and lastly; opportunities to be healthy.

2. Youth Voices Count: This report is a summary of data that was gathered during the spring semester of 2021 at Meriden Public Schools grades 6-12. Data collected from this year’s student survey can be used in the planning and development of strategies, policies, and practices for the sponsoring organization Meriden Youth Healthy Youth Coalition (MHYC) as well as other educational and social service organizations.

3. The MidState Medical Center HAS 2022 Equity Profile: Throughout most of the measures in this report, there are important differences by race/ethnicity and neighborhood that reflect differences in access to resources and other health-related social needs. Data in this report includes demographics, housing, education, economy, health, civic life, and more.

4. Hartford Healthcare Community Needs Assessment 2021 (COVID): As determined by analyses of secondary community health data and input provided by community stakeholders, this report identified significant health needs in the community served by MidState Medical Center.

These reports and more can be found on our website:
2. Investigate Health Problems

Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population.

Communicable Disease Surveillance

The following is a sample of communicable diseases and conditions that have been reported to our health department in the last few years. These cases and more are required to be reported to us per Connecticut General Statute 19a-215. We receive mailed paper reports and monitor electronic reports through the Connecticut Electronic Disease Surveillance System (CTEDSS). Please note that this chart is for reports reviewed only and should not be interpreted as rate of illness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reports Reviewed</th>
<th>2020-2021</th>
<th>2021-2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyme/Tickborne Illness</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foodborne Illness</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually Transmitted Diseases</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group A/B Streptococcus &amp; MSRA</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis (B and C)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influenza</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 (lab confirmed)</td>
<td>7,346**</td>
<td>9,229***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* CTEDSS was reporting positive and negative Influenza tests in the system

**This number reflects the number of cases reported July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

*** This number reflects the number of cases reported July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

In Meriden, children with a lead level of 5 mg/dL or more are provided with follow-up and consultation by our Environmental Health staff. Follow-up may include phone calls, home visits, consultation with the primary health care provider and a home lead risk assessment. The ultimate goal is to reduce environmental lead exposure and lead poisoning.

In 2021-2022 our office:
→ Conducted 28 lead screenings in our Clinic, none of which were over 10mg/dL.
   Please note this is a decrease from prior years due to the lead screening machine being recalled for most of last fiscal year.
To the right is a summary of the most common environmental public health complaints received by our office. The most common is garbage/bulky waste. Additionally, staff conducted 388 proactive sweeps, which are issues observed by sanitarians while they are out in the field.

Our office investigates all complaints and may issue orders to correct according to local and state public health codes.

3. Inform and Educate

*Communicate effectively to inform and educate people about health, factors that influence it, and how to improve it.*

**Mosquito Bite Prevention**

Annually, our office strives to educate the public on preventing mosquito-borne illnesses. Messaging is posted on social media, our website, articles are submitted to local newsletters, and press releases are sent to the local paper. Actionable steps for both personal prevention and how to reduce standing water and breeding areas for mosquitoes are included. The State of Connecticut Mosquito Trapping Arbovirus Testing Program provides weekly updates on the mosquitoes trapped and tested in Meriden (Falcon Field). On August 16, 2021 mosquitoes trapped in Meriden did test positive for West Nile Virus and we provided additional information to the community on the importance of preventing mosquito-borne illnesses on our social media pages.

**Importance of Messaging**

Public Health messaging is used to effectively communicate with our community on various health topics and concerns. We focus on creating clear, concise and inclusive messaging to educate, engage, and inspire our community to improve and protect their health. Using social media—Facebook (both our site and the City of Meriden) and the City of Meriden Instagram page we are able to disseminate important information and updates in real time. Our weekly COVID-19 updates are sent out via email to our community partners and agencies, and we also submit monthly updates to newsletters in Meriden like the Council of Neighborhoods and the MidState Chamber of Commerce.

We strive to provide bi-lingual materials and messaging to our community. We use a professional translation company for our forms, brochures, and other print materials. This ensures our messages are inclusive and reached by everyone in Meriden.
Community Narcan™ Trainings

Narcan™ training is an essential part of overdose prevention education. Members of the Meriden community can learn what an overdose looks like and what to do to reverse them.

Staff provided these trainings with the intent of empowering community members, opiate drug users, family, and friends to save lives. Participants learned about rescue breathing, what Narcan™ is and how to administer it, Good Samaritan laws, and local resources. At the end of this training, participants also received a Narcan™ kit with two doses of Narcan™ in a carrying case. This past fiscal year we had 56 people complete our trainings.

Trainings were offered in the morning and evening to try and accommodate schedules. After completing the online training, our office delivered Narcan™ kits, educational materials, and medication disposal bags to participant’s homes. We encourage everyone to get training in the use of Narcan™!
Narcan and Fentanyl: Prevention in Our Schools and Community

In late 2021/early 2022, there was an uptick in opioid overdoses in schools around the state. In an effort to educate our community, we partnered with Rushford and the Meriden Healthy Youth Coalition to host a panel discussion about opioids and how to prevent overdoses in our schools. Topics discussed included how opioids affect the body and mind of adolescents, the current trends within our school system, and what Narcan™ is and how to access it in Meriden.

Panel speakers included our Director of Health and Human Services, Dr. J. Craig Allen and Allison Burch from Rushford, and Detective Lieutenant George Clements from the Meriden Police Department.

QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Training

The QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention is a brief educational program designed to teach “gatekeepers” - those who are strategically positioned to recognize and refer someone at risk of suicide (i.e. parents, educators, health professionals, etc.) the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond by questioning, persuading, and referring the person to appropriate resources.

In partnership with Rushford, our Public Health Educator held a virtual QPR Suicide Prevention Training on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 and had 3 participants. Our goal for the next fiscal year is to provide more of these trainings in our community.

MORR—Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery

MORR — funded by a four-year, $2 million federal grant from the Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) — provides first responders with Narcan to reverse the effects of opioid overdose.

A public service announcement video about the program was filmed featuring MORR clinicians and first responders. The video can be viewed here: https://rushford.org/addiction/morr

In March of 2022 members of the MORR grant team were interviewed by AFL Enterprises, LLC to give insights on best practices and innovations in Naloxone training and distribution. The MORR program was one of twenty-five programs in the country selected to participate in these interviews that will be used by SAMHSA to create a “Best Practice and Innovations in Naloxone Training and Distribution Guide”. The guide will be released this fall.

Year 3 of the program saw 74 referrals to the program, over 60 persons trained in Narcan™ and over 500 medication disposal bags distributed to our community. In 2021, 24 Meriden residents (1,531 total residents in Connecticut) died of accidental opioid overdoses (Office of the Chief Medical Examiner).
MERR—Meriden Early Diversion, Referral, and Retention Project (MERR)

We entered Year 2 of our MERR program in fiscal year 2022. MERR is a 5 year grant from SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration). Similar to MORR in structure, MERR allows for the more intensive treatment and referral of mental health, domestic violence, veteran’s issues, and reduction of recidivism. The Director of Health serves as the Project Director.

MERR encourages increase in collaboration with the Rushford crisis team, either referring calls to crisis or handing off to crisis team after evaluation of situation. For example, Meriden Police respond to a call, identify that there is a chronic mental health need, then contact the MERR team to respond out to finish working with the individual(s) and continue to provide ongoing support with the hopes of reducing unnecessary calls to 911/police.

The program has served 34 clients to date. In Year 2, staff continued to perform ride-alongs with members of the Meriden Police Department (Meriden PD). During some of these ride-alongs, staff were able to encounter program eligible participants as well as some non-eligible program participants. Staff was able to engage these individuals in clinical services at Rushford by either enrolling them in MERR or connecting them to Rushford Admissions for clinical services. MERR clients have also demonstrated positive engagement with program staff. Also in Year 2, MERR staff now have office space at the Meriden PD. The MERR Program Manager has been on-site to help with behavioral health crisis calls, provide behavioral health consultation for the Meriden PD, attend second shift roll calls, and to perform ride-alongs.

4. Community Engagement

*Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health.*

Our Public Health Educator and COVID-19 Contact Tracers attended several events over the summer of 2021. They promoted COVID-19 vaccination with our partners from Community Health Center, Inc. We also provided the community with hand sanitizer, masks, medication disposal bags, timer caps, and community resources. Some of the events we attended included:

- Meriden Teen Night
- Meriden Farmers Market
- Meriden Green Pop-Up Market
- National Night Out
- Colony Street Pop-Up Market

Staff are active in several community networking and advocacy groups, including:

- MidState Chamber of Commerce Health and Wellness Council
- Meriden Wallingford Community Collaborative
- Meriden/Middletown/Wallingford Coordinated Access Network
- Meriden Provider Network
International Overdose Awareness Day

Rally for Hope & International Overdose Remembrance and Awareness Day was held at Hubbard Park on August 28, 2021. Community members and local agencies honored the lives of those we have lost, those in recovery, and helped spread awareness to fight the opioid crisis. Over 400 persons attended, gathering educational materials, participating in Narcan™ training, and more. Under the Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery (MORR) grant, as part of community outreach, our Department was able to give away medication lockboxes, medication disposal bags, and other educational materials and resources.

National Drug Take Back Day—October 22, 2021

Our Department encourages everyone to safely dispose of unwanted medications. This year 47 pounds of medication was collected at this event. In addition to the collection, our Public Health Educator took senior center members to the medication drop box located at the Meriden Police Department to show them how they can safely dispose of unwanted or expired medications. Residents can utilize this box, located in the lobby of the Police Department, 24/7/365, no questions asked. Visit www.meridenhealthyouthcoalition.com/medication-drop-box/ for more information.

MidState Chamber of Commerce Health & Wellness Expo

On February 19, 2022 staff attended the MidState Chamber of Commerce’s Health and Wellness Expo at the Meriden Mall. We offered Narcan™ training for Meriden residents and each participant left with a Narcan™ kit at no cost. We also distributed masks, medication disposal bags, and community resources.

Meriden Daffodil Festival

On April 30, 2022 our COVID-19 Contact Tracers attended the annual Daffodil Festival at Hubbard Park. We distributed COVID-19 home test kits, Change the Script bags and information, medication disposal bags, timer caps, and community resources. Our partners at Rushford offered community Narcan™ training to Meriden residents and each participant received a free Narcan™ kit.

Juvenile Assistance and Diversion (JAD)

Funding from the Connecticut Youth Services Association provided the opportunity to partner with Child Guidance Clinic to offer youth in our JAD Program group and individual counseling, education, and support groups. We had 100% positive feedback from youth and families regarding the groups. Additionally, many youth have continued with services at Child Guidance Clinic after their Juvenile Review Board requirements were met, engaging them in much needed services. Youth were also offered positive youth development activities to help keep them out of the juvenile justice system.

Over the last fiscal year the JAD program had 102 referrals and took in 99 cases. Disorderly conduct, breach of peace, and drug possession were the most common types of offenses. One hundred and fifteen (115) JAD meetings were held.
Community Action Team
Our staff often get referrals from Meriden Police, Fire, and Housing Departments and Hunters Ambulance about the living conditions of residents in our community. Staff will make home visits to assess the conditions and make referrals to Department of Children and Families, Protective Services for the Elderly Program, Department of Elderly Services, or Rushford Behavioral Care for assistance. Family members are also contacted if appropriate.

Multiple visits are often needed. This fiscal year staff completed 40 inspections(visits) on the open cases and closed 41 cases.

In addition, staff made 4 presentations to community agencies on the public health response to hoarding-like conditions in our community, providing information on laws, regulations, and case examples.

Senior Center
After being closed during much of 2020 and early 2021, the Meriden Senior Center reopened in the summer of 2021. Staff transitioned from distance services back to in-person programming. Congregate meal service started up again in August 2022.

Over the past year:
- 279 persons joined the Senior Center
- We had 13,633 visits to the Center
- We served 5,593 meals
- Our volunteers provided 2,922 hours of service, and we honored 44 volunteers at our annual volunteer appreciation lunch.
- Processed 1,146 Renter Rebate applications (April—October 2021)
- Hosted a health-fair with 43 vendors in May 2022, serving 100 guests with a boxed lunch sponsored by Hartford Healthcare Senior Services.
- Hosted the 50th Special Day for Special People Picnic at Hubbard Park.
- Hosted the 7th annual 'Tis the Season for a Senior, held in December 2021. Organized by Social Services Worker Natalie Gill, we were able to provide 93 seniors with a gift during the holiday season. We thank Noel Aube, a retired mini-bus driver, for dressing up as Santa. Thank you to our community for donating gifts.

Senior Center—Community Engagement
Staff at the Senior Center are part of many local advisory boards and committees, and actively participate in meetings to promote Senior Center activities and needs of seniors. These groups include (but are not limited to) MidState Chamber of Commerce HOLA, Interagency Council on Aging of South Central CT, MTeam, CHOICES, South Central Area Agency on Aging, and CT Association of Senior Center Personnel.

The Center also publishes and distributes a monthly newsletter, posts programming on the Record Journal website, and utilizes social media.
Meriden School Readiness
School Readiness programs provide affordable, high quality early care and education services in the Meriden community to help young children prepare for kindergarten. This past year School Readiness:

- Welcomed a new Coordinator—Rhonda Knight—who started in April 2022.
- Coordinated the bi-annual Office of Early Childhood community grant proposal for school readiness and quality enhancement funding. Five locations in Meriden received funding: Catholic Charities, Center Preschool, Easter Seals, First Congregational, and YMCA (multiple sites).
- Coordinated a 10-week marketing campaign with the Record Journal to increase awareness of the School Readiness program and the importance of an early childhood education experience.
- Created a Google Form for the School Readiness webpage, to streamline resident inquiries about the program.
- Created a bi-lingual tri-fold brochure and bi-lingual handout to use during outreach events to promote School Readiness.
- Actively recruited new members to the School Readiness Council to meet new state requirements.
- Communicated COVID-19 information to sites.
- Contracted with Literacy HOW, Inc., Collaborative ABA Services, Inc. and Footsteps 2 Brilliance. The focus of services was centered on programs being intentional in the delivery of instruction with children around skills such as early language and literacy skills, as well as a strong social-emotional foundation. A healthy development of understanding such as and skills in these areas help to foster a successful kindergarten experience for young children.

Meriden WIC—National Nutrition Month
National Nutrition Month is recognized in March of each year. This campaign aims to raise awareness about making informed food choices and developing healthful eating and physical activity habits.

The theme for 2022 was “Celebrate a World of Flavors” to celebrate different cultures and the importance of diversity.

The Meriden WIC office invited clients to submit pictures and stories about their favorite foods. Everyone who participated was entered in a drawing to win an air fryer to promote healthier cooking.

This campaign was a huge success with 32 participants! Some of the foods submitted were:

- Herbed chicken with vegetables
- Steak and vegetables
- Italian sausage rigatoni
- Thai chicken lettuce wraps

Cristina Gutierrez was the winner of the air fryer.
5. Develop Policies and Plans

Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws that impact health.

Infectious Disease Response Plan
This past year, in addition to reviewing our Public Health Emergency Response Plan in full, our office developed a formal Infectious Disease Emergency Response Plan (IDER). It describes the roles and responsibilities of our Department in direct/supporting response operations, and will be activated when an infectious disease, including a pandemic, affects the public health and safety of the City of Meriden.

Hazard Mitigation Plan
Our Department was involved in the review of the City of Meriden Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of a Hazard Mitigation Plan is to identify natural hazards and risks, existing capabilities, and activities that can be undertaken by a community to prevent loss of life and reduce property damages associated with identified hazards. The terrain of Meriden makes it vulnerable to an array of hazards, including flooding; high winds associated with hurricanes, summer storms, tornadoes, and winter storms; hail and lightning during summer storms; ice and snow during winter storms; earthquakes; dam failure; and wildfires.

6. Public Health Laws

Utilize legal and regulatory actions designed to improve and protect the public’s health.

Licensing and Inspections
Our Environmental Health staff play an important role in preventing foodborne illness and ensuring a safe and healthy environment. Our Registered Sanitarians are responsible for licensing and inspecting food service establishments (including temporary vendors such as food trucks), public swimming pools, and barbershops/hair salons/nail salons. They also respond to public complaints and elevated child lead cases. Both local and state public health codes lay the foundation and guidance for much of their work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2020-2021</th>
<th>2021-2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Service Establishment Inspections</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbershop/Hair/Nail Salon Inspections</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuisance Complaints and Proactive Sweeps</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Lead Inspections</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Swimming Pool Inspections</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were several raised bills that had the potential to impact the public health of our community and our Department operations. Our office regularly reviews raised bills and has provided testimony through our professional organizations, such as the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health. Below are some of the raised bills we were following.

HB 5044—AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR’S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE USE OF OPIOID LITIGATION PROCEEDS (Passed)

This bill would establish an Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee comprised of state and local government experts, health care professionals, individuals and families with lived experience, and a leader in racial equity in public health. The Committee, in consultation with the Attorney General and relevant state agencies and stakeholders, will develop an investment plan and maintain transparency in the use of all settlement funds.

HB 5045 – AN ACT REDUCING LEAD POISONING (Passed)

This bill will lower the threshold for blood lead levels in individuals at which the Department of Public Health (DPH) and local health departments must take certain actions. Below is the change in action levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
<th>2025+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental Notice</td>
<td>10 µg/dL</td>
<td>3.5 µg/dL</td>
<td>3.5 µg/dL</td>
<td>3.5 µg/dL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onsite Inspection</td>
<td>15 µg/dL</td>
<td>10 µg/dL</td>
<td>5 µg/dL</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epidemiological Investigation</td>
<td>20 µg/dL</td>
<td>15 µg/dL</td>
<td>10 µg/dL</td>
<td>5 µg/dL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HB 5500—AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH’S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH STATUTES (Passed)

This bill makes various substantive, minor, and technical changes in Department of Public Health (DPH) - related statutes and programs.

Some of the topics covered include:
- Alcohol or Drug Treatment Facilities
- State Board of Examiners for Nursing
- Safe Harbor Legislation
- Community Health Needs Assessment
- Suicide Advisory Board

City of Meriden—Code Enforcement

Here is a list of some of the local codes our Department enforces:
- Chapter 58 Air Pollution
- Chapter 70 Barbershops, Hairdressing and Cosmetology Shops
- Chapter 112 Food and Food Services Establishments
- Chapter 144 Nuisances, Health
- Chapter 158 Swimming Pools

A complete list of the Meriden’s City Code can be found on the website at www.meridenct.gov under City Services.
7. Access to Health Care

Assure an effective system that enables equitable access to the individual services and care needed to be healthy.

Meriden Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program
WIC is a health and nutrition program that provides nutrition and health education, healthy foods, breastfeeding support and referrals to other services free of charge to Connecticut families who qualify. Our goal is to keep pregnant women, postpartum women, and breastfeeding women, and their children up to the age of 5 healthy.

Meriden WIC’s client numbers have continued to increase from 3,193 to 3,443. This is a 7.5% increase over the last June numbers. A marketing campaign done from October 2021-March 2022 contributed to the increase in enrollment.

In February 2022, the country experienced national infant formula shortages. The Meriden WIC staff fielded phone calls from clients and the public and was able to provide guidance to the public and the providers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CT Standard 2021</th>
<th>Meriden June 2021</th>
<th>Meriden June 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ever Initiated Breastfeeding</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfed Over 6 Months</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program
This past fiscal year WIC implemented a new Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program to support pregnant and breastfeeding families enrolled in the WIC program.

A peer counselor is a mom on WIC or who has a similar demographic background to clients, and who has breastfed one or more children for at least 6 months. The peer goes through standardized training from the state WIC office and will receive ongoing training to support her messaging and practices.

Meriden is pleased to welcome Yamayra Rivera as their first peer counselor. She is a WIC client, has breastfed all four of her children, and is bilingual, which is invaluable considering the demographics of the Meriden office. She currently has a client base of 47 families as of July. Yamayra supports our community by contacting families to discuss breastfeeding education and support, as well as complete an assessment of needs for referrals and resources. She also contacts postpartum moms within 48-72 after delivery and continues to contact them up until 12 months postpartum or until they no longer need her services.
Vaccines Given

Our Clinic Office provides adult and child vaccinations, including the seasonal flu shot. All vaccines are given by Registered Nurses. This past fiscal year we enlisted the support of the Meriden Fire Department and Hunters Ambulance to provide COVID-19 vaccinations at our large mass vaccination clinics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Adult Vaccines Given</th>
<th>Number of Child Vaccines Given</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td>12,408</td>
<td>2,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021-2022</td>
<td>1,898</td>
<td>2,958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tuberculosis Screenings

Clinic nurses conducted 236 tuberculosis screenings this fiscal year. This is a slight increase from the prior fiscal year (222 screenings). This tuberculosis screening is known as the Mantoux tuberculin skin test (TST), also referred to as a PPD test (purified protein derivative).

Community Health Center—Back to School Physicals Partnership

School physicals are required for entry into Kindergarten, 7th, and 10th grade. Over the summer of 2021, in order to increase access to school and sports physicals, our office partnered with the Community Health Center’s School Based Health Center program. Physicals were provided on-site at 165 Miller Street in our Clinic.

The service was extremely popular—we reached 60 students. We hope to continue this partnership in future school years to ensure that students are ready to start on the first day of school!

Flu Shot Clinics

This past year our office hosted flu shot clinics at the Meriden Senior Center for residents, Meriden Public School employees, and City Hall staff every Wednesday during the month of October. We also held a separate clinic at the Senior Center for seniors on September 29, 2021 and one for City Hall and Meriden Board of Education staff on October 7, 2021.

This season we offered Fluzone HD quadrivalent (for those 65 and older), Fluzone quadrivalent (0.5 mg for ages 36 months and older), Fluzone quadrivalent (0.25mg for those 6 to 35 months), Flublok (for those 19 and older), and FluLaval (0.5mg for those 6 months and older).

We provided 717 adults and child flu shots this past flu season.
School Health

Our School Health program provides comprehensive school health services in Meriden’s 8 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 2 high schools, and Venture Academy. The program has 16 full time 10-month Registered Nurses, 5 part time Registered Nurses, and 9 Health Aides. Our full time, 12 month Public Health Nurse II also assists in covering a school health office. We are fortunate to have a nurse in every school!

The 2021-2022 school year was back to 100% in-person learning. Our Public Health Nurses supported COVID-19 efforts by isolating symptomatic children in rooms set up in their school health offices, assisted in contact tracing by gathering classroom/bus/cafeteria seating charts, and information on sports or after-school programs. They also made calls Monday through Friday to parents of children that had to quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2020-2021</th>
<th>2021-2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sick care visits (students)</td>
<td>14,359</td>
<td>29,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick care visits (staff)</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psycho-Social visits</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>1,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized procedures (such as G-tube feedings, tracheotomy care)</td>
<td>2,219</td>
<td>6,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenings (such as vision/hearing/scoliosis)</td>
<td>3,382</td>
<td>4,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medications administered</td>
<td>6,897</td>
<td>14,763</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Senior Center—Mini-Bus Transportation

Our team of 3 full time and 1 part time Mini-Bus Drivers provide rides to in-town medical appointments for Meriden residents age 55 and over, and for people with disabilities under age 55. This service is provided at no cost and is vital to increasing access to health care for our seniors.

This past year we were awarded a state 5310 grant, which allowed us to purchase a wheelchair accessible bus at a significant discount. This is our second grant award.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2020-2021</th>
<th>2021-2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-Way Rides (not including medical rides)</td>
<td>366*</td>
<td>9,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical rides</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Center closed in March 2021 due to COVID.
**Social Services Worker**

Our Department’s Social Services Worker provides resources to Meriden residents who are in need of assistance and support services. Many services are promoted in the Senior Center monthly newsletter. Services offered to clients include:

- Medicare and medical insurance enrollment and counseling
- SNAP, Social Security, and SSI applications
- Low income housing information and applications
- Cash Assistance-TFA & SAGA information and applications
- DSS renewals
- Lifeline Cell Phone/Affordable Connectivity Program information and applications
- CT Homecare and Long Term Care applications
- Protective Services referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clients Served</th>
<th>2020-2021</th>
<th>2021-2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,278</td>
<td>1,270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Community Services Worker**

The Community Services Worker provides assistance to Meriden residents ages 18 and older. We are happy to report that as of July 1 this position is now full time!

Services and supports include:
- Coordinating the Renters Rebate program (April—October)
- Helping clients to manage their basic needs such as housing, food, medical, social, and wellness
- Making referrals to agencies and community partners based on necessity
- Advocate for clients to help them through situations of crisis and other support

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Clients Served</th>
<th>2020-2021</th>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**8. Maintain a Competent Workforce**

*Build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce.*

**Staff Training**

Our Department recognizes that regular staff training is needed to stay current in best practices related to public health and human services. Continuing education is also necessary to maintain certifications required to carry out services, such as nutrition counseling and lead testing. Over the past year, staff have participated in trainings on (not an inclusive list):

- Influenza and Vaccinations
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Workforce Development
- Early Childhood Education
- Gender Affirming Care
- Opioid Use Disorder
- Narcan Training (in-person)
- School Nursing Best Practices
- Health Equity
Senior Center Training Day

In November 2021 Senior Center staff held their annual staff training day. Sessions included bloodborne pathogens, workplace safety, and elder abuse/financial embezzlement.

Professional Organizations

Staff in our Department are members of many professional organizations. These organizations provide grant opportunities, continuing education, health alerts, research journals, best practices, data and advocacy.

9. Evaluation

*Improve and innovate public health functions through ongoing evaluation, research, and continuous quality improvement.*

Our Department actively uses performance data to improve the health of Meriden residents through the use of performance measures and standards, to establish performance targets and goals, to prioritize and allocate resources, to make needed changes in policy or program directions to meet goals, and to improve the quality of public health practice.

We use several types of evaluation:

- Formative evaluation ensures that a program or activity is feasible, appropriate, and acceptable before it is fully implemented.
- Process/implementation evaluation determines whether program activities have been implemented as intended.
- Outcome/effectiveness evaluation measures program effects in the target population by assessing the progress in the outcomes or outcome objectives that the program is to achieve.
- Impact evaluation assesses program effectiveness in achieving its ultimate goals.
10. Evidence Based

Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health.

Before starting any new program or activity we review best practices and data (local if possible) to determine program need, development, implementation, and evaluation.

Whenever possible, we involve our community in the development of new programming.

Some of the resources we use to evaluate best practices are the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, CT Department of Public Health, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the American Public Health Association (APHA), and the Community Toolbox.

We also consult with other local health departments and districts who are running similar evidence-based programs to learn about successes and challenges of implementation and evaluation.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

This section will highlight some of our larger COVID-19 activities, and how our programs and services adapted in order to continue to provide services to our community. Next year’s report will have any COVID-19 related response under the appropriate essential service.

Test Kit Distribution

In January 2022 the City of Meriden held a drive-through test kit distribution event at 2 schools. We also worked with community partners, faith based organizations, non-profits, and social services agencies in Meriden to distribute kits. Overall, nearly 5,000 test kits (or 10,000 tests) were distributed in January. Thank you to Meriden Police, Fire, and Public Works for helping us coordinate the distribution.

Throughout the spring we distributed test kits at community events and had the kits available in the lobby of our building. School health offices also distributed kits. This past fiscal year we distributed close to 10,000 test kits, or 20,000 tests, to residents.

In addition to test kits we also distributed N95 masks, surgical masks, gowns, face shields, hand sanitizer, and gloves to residents, community agencies, healthcare workers, and daycares. Thank you to the Connecticut Department of Public Heath for providing these items to us for distribution.
Health Education Activities

Messaging during the ongoing pandemic was key to encourage vaccinations and booster shots, mask wearing, social distancing, handwashing, and other mitigation strategies. Some of the health education activities done over the past year include:

- Partnering with the Record Journal on several media campaigns, including the Latino Community Reporting Lab, social media, print media, Facebook lives, and paid ads. The RJ was able to provide us metrics for all electronic advertising.
- A vaccine hesitancy social media campaign, to encourage vaccination among children ages 12 to 17 (when they became eligible for vaccination). This campaign was “Spotlight Sunday”.
- A weekly COVID-19 report that was distributed via email to our community and posted on the city COVID-19 website.
- Regular social media posts on vaccine/booster opportunities, test kit giveaways, dispelling myths and misinformation; some social media posts had over 4,000 post impressions.
- Newsletter articles to the Chamber of Commerce and Council of Neighborhoods.
- Consulting with daycares and child care facilities, youth serving organizations, and sports teams on COVID cases and contacts, providing isolation and quarantine guidance, and answering questions about current CDC or CT DPH guidance.
- Fulfilling requests for home tests and masks from homebound individuals.
- Passing out COVID information at community events and during community meetings.
- Contact tracing—our office has 3 part time COVID-19 contact tracers on staff, who reach out to lab-confirmed positive cases Monday through Friday to provide isolation guidance and quarantine information for close contacts. We were also able to drop off thermometers and COVID test kits if needed. Contact tracing is an important tool not only to slow the spread of COVID in our community but to connect with residents.
## Department Contact Information

### Meriden Health & Human Services Department

165 Miller Street  
Meriden, CT 06450  
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Fax: (203) 639-0039  
Website: www.meridenhealth.com

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Director of Health and Human Services  
(203) 630-4221  
lcrown@meridenct.gov

Stephanie Denya, RN, BSN, MPH  
Associate Director of Health  
(203) 630-4223  
sdenya@meridenct.gov

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Health</td>
<td>Scott Bryden</td>
<td>(203) 630-4282</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sbryden@meridenct.gov">sbryden@meridenct.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Emergency Preparedness</td>
<td>Lea Crown</td>
<td>(203) 630-4221</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lcrown@meridenct.gov">lcrown@meridenct.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Education/Youth Services</td>
<td>Elizabeth DeMerchant</td>
<td>(203) 630-4288</td>
<td><a href="mailto:edemerchant@meridenct.gov">edemerchant@meridenct.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Health and Clinic Services</td>
<td>Stephanie Denya</td>
<td>(203) 630-4223</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sdenya@meridenct.gov">sdenya@meridenct.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Readiness</td>
<td>Rhonda Knight</td>
<td>(203) 630-4222</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rknight@meridenct.gov">rknight@meridenct.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Affairs</td>
<td>Rick Liegl</td>
<td>(203) 237-0066</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rliegl@meridenct.gov">rliegl@meridenct.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services Worker</td>
<td>Natalie Gill</td>
<td>(203) 630-4273</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ngill@meridenct.gov">ngill@meridenct.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women, Infants, and Children</td>
<td>Shelley Carpenter</td>
<td>(203) 630-4248</td>
<td><a href="mailto:scarpenter@meridenct.gov">scarpenter@meridenct.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Services—JAD</td>
<td>Tammy Kudla</td>
<td>(203) 639-5058</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tkudla@meridenct.gov">tkudla@meridenct.gov</a></td>
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