Ledge Light Health District

2005-2006 Annual Report

A Beacon for Public Health
Leadership and Partnerships
The Ledge Light Health District dedicates this 2005-2006 Annual Report to honor Adriana Grassi Vail for her contributions as Ledge Light Health District’s first chairperson and served in that position for five years. This recognition approved by Ledge Light Health District’s Board of Directors on May 11, 2006.
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A Message from the Director~

As my last annual message, I first wish to thank the District Board of Directors for their support and advice and the energetic and dedicated professional District staff. We have had many accomplishments and challenges since 1997 when I assumed the Directorship. FY05/06 was another “banner” year of achievements which included: (i) Addition of the Town of East Lyme (increasing the District to 6 municipal members with a service population of 120,000; (ii) Completion of a comprehensive strategic plan (copies available); (iii) Authorization and development of a New London County Health Status Assessment; (iv) Award of a regional public health emergency response contract for planning and assessment; (v) Leadership of a comprehensive real time drill for a regional prophylaxis clinic; (vi) Established a paid competitive summer internship to encourage high school junior/seniors to explore a career in public health.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the support of our member chief officials and their staff and our public health partners. Again, my appreciation to all for the opportunity and privilege to serve the District.

Sincerely,

Francis ‘Sam’ Crowley

Sam Crowley
Director of Health

Our Mission

To provide qualified full time professional public health services to protect the citizens of the Towns of East Lyme, Groton, Ledyard, Waterford, and the Cities of Groton and New London.

We welcome citizen’s comments and questions and invite your perusal of our upgraded website www.ledgelighthd.org for public announcements.
The History-
The Ledge Light Health District was formed in 1993 to improve public health services for the City and Town of Groton and to provide an organizational structure for a regional approach to public health services. In 2001, the Town of Ledyard joined the District, followed by the Town of Waterford in 2002, the City of New London in July of 2005, and the Town of East Lyme in June 2006. While protecting the health of its citizens, the District has adopted major preventative health initiatives and continues to build partnerships on a local, regional, and statewide level. The District also provides public health emergency response to four additional Towns for a total public health response population of 152,000.

The Organization-
The District is governed by a fourteen member Board of Directors as prescribed by CT State statutes. Board Members represent the Cities of Groton and New London, and the Towns of East Lyme, Groton, Ledyard, and Waterford. Ledge Light Health District serves approximately 120,000 citizens and provides all 10 Essential Public Health Functions required by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health and enforces the Public Health Codes of the State of Connecticut. Ledge Light Health District employs a staff of 28 public health professionals to provide Community Health Education, Environmental Health Services, and Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and Public Health Emergency Planning/Response.

Our Office Locations
Groton -Main Office
943 North Road (Route 117)
P.O. Box 909
Groton, CT 06340
448-4882

New London
120 Broad Street
New London, CT 06320
447-2060

East Lyme
108 Pennsylvanian Avenue
Niantic, CT 06357
448-4882 Ext. 330

Or visit our website
www.ledgelighthd.org
1st Row (L-R): Cindy Barry-Assistant Director for Health Education; Yolanda Bows CHAMP Project Assistant; George Calkins– Senior Sanitarian; Kathy Cooper-McDermott-AIRS Program Coordinator; Janice Costin- Administrative Assistant; Sam Crowley– Director of Ledge Light Health District; Kimberly Diotte-Environmental Health Technician; 2nd row (L-R) Catherine Dragoo– Financial Assistant; Monica Farina-Emergency Preparedness Coordinator; Michelle Hamilton-GASP Coalition Coordinator; Virginia Imbimbo– Sanitarian I; Alisha Jarvis-CHAMP Access to Care Specialist; Kerensa Knowles-Community Health Coordinator; Jan Loomis-Immunization Action Program Coordinator; 3rd Row (L-R) Elizabeth Lopez-Pharmacy Assistant Specialist; Jessica Lyman-Pharmacy Assistance Specialist; Stephen Mansfield– Assistant Director for Environmental Health; Ryan McCammon-Sanitarian II; Jennifer Muggeo-Assistant Director, Administration and Finance; Sue Peters-Project Director; Megan Perrone-CHAMP Assistant; 4th row (L-R) Felix Prokop III-Sanitarian II; Brian Sauvageau-Senior Sanitarian; Kristen Semancik– CHAMP Assistant; Janeese Watson-Project Assistant; Kimberly White- Sanitarian I
The Ledge Light Health District is governed by a Board of Directors who are community appointed for three year terms by our member municipalities. Board of Director officers are elected annually in September and meet monthly on the second Thursday at 5:30PM at the Groton office.

As determined by Connecticut State Statute, each member municipality appoints one director for each 10,000 population, and one additional member for each 10,000 population or part thereof.

**Our current Board Members**

**Town of East Lyme**
- F. Kent Sistare, Jr, Esq
- Phyllis Wienski, RN

**City of Groton**
- Shirleyann Dunbar-Rose – Chair

**Town of Groton**
- Steven Carlow, MD
- Catherine Kolnaski
- Jackie Massett
- Howard Root, MD - Vice-Chair

**Town of Ledyard**
- Marilyn Richard, EdD, APRN-Treasurer
- Dennis Sindel, DDS – Secretary

**City of New London**
- Sherry Bassi, EdD, APRN
- Martin Berliner
- Vacant

**Town of Waterford**
- Bruce Kruszewski
- Bruce Shewbrooks

**Thank you to all of our community & collaborative partners**

- Animal Control Officers
- Child and Family Agency
- City/Town Building, Housing, and Public Works
- Community Health Centers
- Community Partnerships/ L & M Hospital
- Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH)
- CT Department of Agriculture
- CT State Department of Public Health
- General Dynamics-Electric Boat
- Groton Public Library
- Ledyard Public Health Nursing
- Naval Submarine Base
- New London County HIV/AIDS Committee
- New London Safe Kids Coalition
- Park and Recreation Departments
- Pfizer
- Police and Fire Departments
- Public Schools/School Administration
- Region X Asthma Shoreline Action Partnership
- Regional Healthy School Collaborative
- Ryan White Consortium
- SE CT Chamber of Commerce
- Senior Centers
- Shellfish Commission
- Town and City Fire and Police Departments
- TVCCA
- UNCAS Health District
- VNA of SE CT
- Waterford Substance Abuse Task Force
District Highlights

- Addition of the City of New London and the Town of East Lyme; increasing the District to 6 municipal members with a service population of nearly 120,000
- Approval of a comprehensive Strategic Plan
- Completion of a 2006 youth survey on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- Award of a regional public health emergency response contract for planning and assessment
- Leadership of a comprehensive real time drill for a regional prophylaxis clinic
- Coordinated 1st annual *Give Kids A Smile Day* in which 15 volunteer dentists treated 82 children throughout New London County.
- Participated in a statewide assessment of response capability to an influenza pandemic
- Established Regional Healthy Schools Collaborative
- Hosted 2nd annual Summer Public Health Internship

Environmental Activity Report

This year the environmental team has had increased work load with the Town of East Lyme coming on board. Below is a representation of the amount of activity that occurred from July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006

- Food Service Inspections: 888
- Food borne Illness Investigations: 6
- Food Service Plan Reviews: 40
- Individual Food Service Trainings: 141
- New Installations/Permits: 76
- Repair Installations/permits: 42
- Field Inspections: 218
- Deep Test Holes: 614
- Percolation Tests: 140
- B 100 A: 150
- Septic Plan Reviews: 298
- Bathing Beach Samples: 577
- Swimming Pool Inspections: 40
- Shellfish Opening/Closures: 21
- Lead Inspections: 6
- *Putting on Airs* Inspections: 57
- Rabies Public Health Notifications: 10
- Nuisance Complaints/other: 358

Health Education Activity Report

The Health Education staff has been very busy writing grants to continue current programs as well as to implement new programs. The staff also participated in several community presentations, door to door outreach, health fairs, community events, and fulfilled community requests for health and education information.

From July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006, the health education staff provided 48 presentations on topics such as:

- Public Health Issues/District Services
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Breast Health
- Asthma/AIRS visits
- Obesity Prevention

In addition, the health education staff has provided information and spoke with 5,300 District members including: children, nurses, employees, elected officials, librarians, parish nurses, parents, principals, health care providers, seniors, chamber members, principals, and individuals.
Harry A. Watson Jr.— Paid Summer Public Health Internship

Background: In the fall of 2004, Harry A. Watson, Jr., founding member of the Ledge Light Health District and past BOD Chairman, resigned to undertake his community responsibility as Mayor of the Town of Groton. In searching for a way to honor Harry’s services to the District and to address a shortage in the public health workforce, a paid Harry A. Watson summer internship program was established for juniors/seniors attending high schools* in the Districts service area. (*Also included students attending Ella T. Grasso Regional Tech School).

Competitive Process: A formal application was established with high ranking candidates interviewed by a selection panel including external public health professionals. For the 2005 Internship Ms. Chelsea Smith, a junior attending Waterford High School, was selected as the first Harry A. Watson Public Health Intern. In 2006 Elise Hanks, a junior attending Ledyard High School, was the 2006 Harry A. Watson Public Health Intern.

Intern Program: The intern program is for a 6 – 8* week period at 25-30* hours per week (*as requested by the intern). Stephen Mansfield (Environmental Health) and Cindy Barry (Health Education) are co-mentors with the interns approximately half time in each function, plus a scheduled full day at the State Department of Public Health including an interview with Commissioner J. Robert Galvin. Selected activities include:

- Environmental Health:
  - Beach water sampling,
  - Septic system field work,
  - Observation of food inspections
  - Shadowing District sanitarians in other functions.

- Health Education:
  - Prepare for and staff health fairs,
  - Attend and support regional coalitions,
  - Brochure and health education material design.
  - Shadowing District health educators in other

In each functional area the intern is usually assigned a project to complete and report upon. At the end of the program, the intern completes an evaluation (for improvement next year).

The intern is also requested to be an “ambassador” for the Program in encouraging fellow students to consider a public health career.

2004-2005 Intern, Chelsea Smith meets Public Health Commissioner Dr. J. Robert Galvin at a meeting in Hartford

2005-2006 Intern, Elise Hanks receives a certificate of completion from Mayor Harry Watson and Stephen Mansfield at a Town Council Meeting.
Community Health Needs Assessment

CHAMP and its 17 partners is conducting a community health assessment of New London County residents. An independent nationally recognized health research firm that specializes in community health studies has been contracted by CHAMP to conduct a comprehensive study of health services in the county. The study will identify the most important health care services issues in New London County utilizing scientifically valid current data, comparative information and input from current residents, providers, and leaders. The study will focus on assessing the essential public health services and identify services where better integration of public health and health care can improve access, quality, and cost effectiveness of services to County residents.

A critical part of the study is interviews with 1,300 randomly selected households across the county to inquire about health status, household preparedness for a large scale emergency, use of medical care, and people’s perceptions of needed health services.

The Center for Health Policy, Planning and Research (CHPPR) at University of New England is conducting the study. Led by Dr. Ronald Deprez, CHPPR has extensive experience in conducting health need studies, having conducted many similar studies throughout the U.S. and abroad.

The study will measure the prevalence of chronic health conditions in the County and the availability and access of healthcare services. However, other trends that may be less recognized, but are growing concerns, may be uncovered. Findings from the study are expected to be a catalyst in stimulating new initiatives and decision making on healthcare development in the region as well as enhancing community education. The final report to be released in early 2007 will be made available to organizations, civic groups, municipalities and interested residents.

Ledge Light Health Watch

Once a month, in collaboration with Groton Public Municipal Channel 2, Cindy Barry hosts the Ledge Light Health Watch, a health program that features Public Health issues and health-related topics. Over the past few years, Ledge Light Health Watch Programs include: Oral Health, Lyme Disease, Roll of the School Nurse, Alzheimers, Hospice, World AIDS Day, Chiropractic Care, Epidemiology, Harry A. Watson Public Health Internship Program, Asthma, Breast Health Substance Abuse, West Nile Virus, Safe Food Handling, Hepatitis C, Obesity, Skin Cancer and Bioterrorism. Ledge Light Health Watch airs on Saturday at 9pm, Sundays at 9pm, and Monday at 7:30pm. If you would like to view a video-copy of a show or would like to suggest a future topic, please contact Cindy Barry at 448-4882.
Environmental Health

Ledge Light Health District has a staff of five full time sanitarians charged with maintaining the environmental conditions that allow our residents to remain healthy. District Sanitarians hold certificates and licenses from the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health that qualify them to permit and inspect foodservice establishments, subsurface sewage disposal systems, daycare facilities, public pools, etc. District Sanitarians also investigate a wide variety of public health complaints, enforce Connecticut lead poisoning regulations and respond to an ever changing array of public health concerns including mosquito related disease, flu vaccine shortages, rabies outbreaks, etc. The following is a brief description of our major activities:

**Food Service Establishments**

*Inspection, Investigation and Training*

Ledge Light Health District is responsible for licensing and regulating activities involving the preparation and service of food that is sold or given to the public within the District. This includes traditional food service establishments, temporary events, and vendors and caterers. Although the codes and regulations regarding food service inspection are complex, you can get a better understanding of the inspection criteria from the Compliance Guide for Food Service Inspections and by reviewing our inspection form. The frequency of food establishment inspections is based on an establishment’s classification. The more complex the food preparation procedures are, the more frequently an establishment must be inspected.

The following activities are performed by the District Sanitarians:

- Periodically inspect all establishments that prepare and serve food that is sold or given to the public.
- Review plans for new food service establishments to assure compliance with the CT Public Code.
- Investigate all complaints associated with food service establishments.
- Identify and investigate all reports of food borne illness (food poisoning).

**Beaches**

Beach or bathing water quality is measured by the presence of enterococcal organisms (a group of organisms that may indicate the presence of potentially harmful bacteria). The State of Connecticut has issued guidelines for bathing water quality – generally a concentration of enterococcal organisms exceeding 61 per 100ml of marine water is considered unsatisfactory for bathing. Ledge Light Health District wants to ensure that your day at the beach doesn’t result in illness related to poor water quality. At least once a week from mid May to mid-September, one of our Sanitarians collects water samples from different bathing areas in the District. The water sample is sent to the state laboratory for analysis. When we receive the test results we compare them with the guidelines – if the sample result is greater than 61 per 100ml, we resample the water to double check the result. If the second test confirms the level, a bathing advisory is posted at that location. We will continue to monitor the site, and remove the posting as soon as the levels are safe.

Ledge Light Health District environmental sanitarians collect a total of 47 samples throughout the District.
Shellfish Beds
The waters of Long Island and Fishers Island Sounds provide access to some of the best shell fishing grounds on the Connecticut coast. Ledge Light Health District, in cooperation with our member municipalities’ shellfish commissions and the State of Connecticut Department of Aquaculture, works to assure that the recreational and commercial shell fishing areas remain open and sanitary.
District Sanitarian responsibilities include:

- Opening and closing shellfish beds as needed (in case of heavy rainfall, sewage spills, high bacteria counts).
- Conducting periodic shoreline surveys to investigate complaints of possible point source pollution (point source pollutants are those that flow directly, usually out of a pipe or specified trench/ditch, into a surface water source).
- Monitoring rainfall data.
- Notifying associated agencies of shellfish area openings/closings.
- Issuing press releases regarding the closure or reopening of shellfish beds.

The District is a member of the Groton Shellfish Task Force. The aim of the Task Force is to identify and mitigate pollution sources that may contribute to elevated bacteria levels in the Poquonnock River.

Septic Systems/Plan Reviews
In the Town of East Lyme, Town/City of Groton, Town of Ledyard, City of New London and Town of Waterford, many homes rely on on-site sewage disposal systems to treat their waste-water. These systems are comprised of a septic tank used in conjunction with a leaching structure. The waste flows from the house to the septic tank, where settling occurs. The solids then accumulate in the bottom of the septic tank (and should be periodically pumped out) and the liquid is dispersed over a large area of soil, where biological filtration takes place.

The Ledge Light Health District is responsible for:

- Permitting all activities related to the construction or repair of any subsurface sewage disposal system.
- Investigating any complaints related to failing septic systems.
- Reviewing and approving plans for septic systems.
- Conducting soil evaluations and percolation tests to assure site suitability.
- Retaining records for all new and repaired septic systems including as-built drawings.
- Assuring that any construction activities, or change in use of the property, do not adversely impact the on-site septic system or reduce potential repair area.
- Homeowners, or their representatives (contractors), who rely on subsurface sewage disposal are required to contact the Ledge Light Health District to obtain a permit if they are:
  - Altering or repairing any part of a subsurface sewage disposal system.
  - Constructing a new system.
Environmental Health

Mosquito-Borne Diseases
In recent years, there has been much focus on the incidents of mosquito borne diseases, particularly West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. There are steps you can take to reduce the presence of mosquitoes on your property – mainly reducing standing water. Even a little bit of standing water – what might accumulate in the saucer of a plant pot after a rainstorm – can be an active breeding ground for mosquitoes. Other places that could be good mosquito breeding grounds include:
- Discarded tires
- Rain barrels, buckets, empty cans
- Abandoned boats
- Clogged roof gutters
- Bird baths
- Abandoned or untreated swimming pools

West Nile Virus
West Nile Virus is a mosquito borne viral infection that is transmitted by the culex species of mosquito. Most people infected with the virus experience no symptoms; however, the disease may be serious or even fatal. Certain populations such as the very young, the elderly and the immune-compromised may be a special risk.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis
Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is a rare but serious disease caused by a virus that is transmitted by mosquitoes. To date, there has never been a documented human case of EEE in Connecticut, although the virus has been found in trapped mosquitoes.

Rabies
Rabies is an infectious disease that affects the nervous system of mammals. It is usually transmitted through the bite of an infected animal, although disease transmission is possible if saliva from an infected animal comes in contact with an open wound or mucous membrane. Raccoons, bats, foxes and skunks are the animals most commonly associated with rabies.

Preventing Rabies
- Avoid all contact with wild animals
- Refrain from feeding pets outside
- Keep all pets confined to your property
- Keep all pets properly vaccinated
- Seek immediate medical attention in the event of an animal bite or suspected contact with a bat
- Notify your Town or City’s animal control officer or Ledge Light Health District if you see an animal exhibiting abnormal behavior

Lead

Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning
Lead can be a dangerous contaminant, with especially severe effects in children. Exposure to lead may affect your child’s behavior and development. Even in recent years, lead has been used in products you or your child may come in contact with – including things in your home like paint and mini-blinds. District Sanitarians enforce the State of Connecticut Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Regulations. When the District receives a report of elevated blood lead levels, we initiate an investigation to determine how and why the individual is being lead poisoned. Specific attention is given to children, who are affected more severely by elevated blood lead levels than adults.
Pools
All pools that are open for public use must comply with Section 19-13b33b of the Connecticut Public Health Code. District Sanitarians conduct a comprehensive pool inspection at least once annually. This comprehensive inspection ensures that the pool is equipped with all the necessary safety equipment, including:
- first-aid kits
- safety signage
- emergency phone numbers
- depth markers on pool deck
- life-saving equipment
- water quality testing logs

In addition, chemical analysis of pool water is conducted on a more frequent basis, especially during the hot summer months when chlorine levels dissipate more quickly. Chemical analysis of pool water includes the following: clarity, disinfectant levels, pH, and total alkalinity.

Any deficiencies in pool structure or water quality are discussed with the pool operator and addressed in a timely manner. In the event that unsafe or unsanitary conditions pose a public health risk, the District Sanitarian takes immediate steps to close the pool until the pool is brought up to code.

Salons
The State of Connecticut has passed legislation concerning licensing and inspection oversight of Barbershops, Hairdressing, Cosmetology Shops and Nail Salons. The District Regulations provide specific criteria for inspections and licensing. These Regulations are authorized pursuant to Sec. 19a-231 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The District licenses and inspects over 90 establishments in our jurisdiction. Inspections are conducted on an annual basis, and in the event of a complaint. The focus of these inspections is to ensure that sanitary conditions are being met and to reduce the likelihood of disease transmission.

Lodging
Ledge Light Health District licenses and inspects all lodging establishments to ensure that sanitary conditions are being maintained at all hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts and other lodging establishments in our jurisdiction on an annual basis, and in the event of a complaint. In the event that unsanitary conditions are discovered, the District uses the Connecticut Public Health Code as a regulatory tool to bring the establishment into compliance. District Sanitarians maintain historical records of all lodging inspections and licenses. If you would like to obtain information regarding any particular lodging establishment within the Ledge Light Health District, please call: 860.448.4882

Mold
Molds are types of fungi that live on plants, foods, dry leaves, wood and other organic materials. Mold spores are the reproductive parts of the microorganism – you can see a group of mold spores with the naked eye. Mold is present virtually everywhere. When present in large amounts, mold can have effects on your health by causing allergic reactions, triggering asthma episodes and other respiratory problems. Mold needs water to survive and grow. When you find mold in your home, you should identify the source of the moisture. You may have to improve ventilation, use a dehumidifier or repair a leak. You should also remove the existing mold. Discard mold-contaminated materials that cannot be dried out and cleaned. Hard, non-porous materials may be cleaned with a bleach and water solution. Always wear gloves and ventilate the area well when using bleach. Wear gloves and a respirator with a HEPA filter when cleaning or handling moldy materials.

When mold is found on a ceiling tile there’s usually more mold behind it.
The Ledge Light Health District’s Health Education and Promotion staff is committed to providing health promotion and community outreach that incorporates multiple prevention strategies to address the needs of the community/District. The Health Education staff continually seeks funding opportunities from State, local, and private sources to implement health education and promotion programs as well as facilitating community initiatives to implement policy changes.

**Responsibilities of the health education staff include:**

- Collect and provide public health data
- Conduct public health needs assessment
- Adopt evidence based public health programs
- Convene and collaborate with local agencies and interested parties
- Participate on town, regional, and statewide coalitions
- Utilize multi media to promote and protect community public health
- Evaluate effectiveness of health promotion programs
- Work with school based health initiatives
- Educational Presentations
- Participate in community events/health fairs
- District also provides a leadership role in advocating for health policy initiatives

**GASP-Groton Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition**

The GASP Coalition was established in 1999 to address the issue of youth substance abuse, by providing programs that strengthen families, build healthy communities and give children positive experiences. The Coalition works to prevent substance abuse through law enforcement, educational programs, and advocating for policy change. The Underage Drinking Subcommittee of GASP worked with the Connecticut Coalition To Stop Underage Drinking to pass a Social Host ordinance in Groton City and the Town of Groton. The CT Coalition To Stop Underage Drinking presented the GASP Coalition The Community Coalition of the Year Award in 2005 in honor of the work in the community. The Drug Free Communities Grant has funded over $40,000 in program activities to benefit the youth and families of Groton. In 2005 the GASP coalition received a mentoring grant from SAMHSA to mentor the communities of Norwich and Waterford to assist in the start their own coalitions. This year also marked the beginning of a Youth Advisory Council for students 12-18 years old who want to make a difference in their community. The students were successful in accomplishing a pizza box flyer campaign and a Sticker Shock Campaign as well as completing 3 PSA’s that are aired on Channel 19. The Coalition encourages new members from parents, business community, to the faith community to join our efforts.
Lyme Disease Prevention Project

Ledge Light Health District, in cooperation with the Community Lyme Disease Advisory Committee, received a 3rd year of funding from the CT Department of Public Health to continue a comprehensive project aimed at reducing Lyme Disease. In 2004/05 the District launched it’s “STOP THE BITE” campaign which gained national attention for the use of landscape demonstration sites and deer resistant landscaping as part of an integrated approach to reduce tick borne disease. Project activities included, newspaper inserts to 49,000 homes, activity books and other materials for children and schools, poster contests, library displays, physician and patient education and tick collection. In addition to the landscaping demonstration sites at West Side Middle School, the Waterford Library, Poquonnock Plains Park, Ledge Light Health District and Col. Ledyard Park this year we established a site at Toby May Field in New London. We thank all the members of the Lyme Disease Prevention Project Advisory Committee and the New London Rotary for their dedication and participation.

Healthy Kids are Happy Kids

This year the Ledge Light Health District was fortunate to obtain funding from the Connecticut Department of Public Health to implant a pilot obesity prevention program for elementary school children. The goal of the program is to increase awareness among elementary students about healthy food choices and to incorporate some form of physical activity into their daily routine.

Activities of the program include:
- Introducing a healthy tip of the week on morning announcements e.g. “Eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily”
- Introducing an exercise of the week during morning announcements on Monday and engage the entire school for up to 5 minutes everyday.
- Implement a walking club after or during school: Engage teachers and students to participate in a walking club during recess and/or after school and provide them with pedometers.
- Provide opportunity to participate in a healthy poster contest. A winner will be selected from each grade. The overall school winner will be presented at Family Night.
- Collaborate with the UCONN Family Nutrition Program to provide a healthy food cooking demonstration & exercise demonstration at 2 Family Nights
Breaking the Silence-Breast Health Awareness Program

With support of the Susan G. Komen Foundation CT Affiliate and the CT Breast Health Initiative, the Ledge Light Health District in collaboration with the New London Shoreline Breast Health Task Force continued a multi-cultural, breast cancer awareness campaign called *Breaking the Silence*. After hearing from hundreds of women and men it was clear the breast cancer is not something people talk about. With the help of well-known women in our community who have survived breast cancer, the Breaking the Silence Campaign has been seen and heard by thousands of men and women encouraging them to start talking.

Initiatives of the Breast Health Task Force include:

- Mother’s Day Postcard Campaign, in which a member goes to the District’s high schools and provides mother’s day reminder cards to get a mammogram. The card is then mailed by Ledge Light Health District.
- Collaborate with the VNA of SE CT to attend yearly flu clinics to distribute information and to talk about breast health.
- Media Campaign including radio, newspaper and posters.
- Annual “In the Pink: A Celebration of Women’s Strength, Beauty and Healing” Breast Health October Kick off Event.
- Target senior centers, elderly housing, assisted living housing, and navy housing to educate women on breast health through door to door outreach.

Putting on AIRS-Asthma Indoor Risk Strategies for Residents of New London County

The PUTTING ON AIRS (AIRS) Program was developed by the Asthma Shoreline Action Partnership, a project of the Ledge Light Health District and the New London Department of Health & Social Services funded by the Connecticut Department of Public Health. The goal of the program is to reduce acute asthma episodes and improve asthma control through recognition and elimination and reduction of environmental and other asthma triggers. The Program grew out of a pilot project that illustrated the need for formalized documentation and procedures/protocols. The AIRS Program provides the patient/family/caregiver with one-on-one, interactive health education session(s) focusing on patient education and asthma self-management. A registered nurse conducts the education session, reviews medications, and provides ongoing asthma case management. A registered sanitarian conducts an environmental assessment of the home and/or caregiver location(s). Follow-up is conducted with the patient/family/caregiver at two-week and three-month intervals. Referrals to the program are received from the emergency department, health care providers, school health services, or self-referral. The AIRS Program follows the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma. The Program has been shown to decrease asthma-related adverse events by 62 - 85%. The events monitored included asthma-related visits to the emergency department, visits to a physician, and missed days of school due to asthma.

AIRS Program Coordinator, Kathy Cooper Mc-Dermott meets with patients to discuss household asthma triggers and to develop an asthma action plan.
CHAMP-Community Health Access Management Program

Overview

In September 2004 seventeen health and social service providers in New London County, with LLHD as fiduciary agent, were awarded a 3 year, $1.9 million dollar grant to create a county-wide healthcare access network. The collaborative partners named their effort CHAMP (Community Health Access Management Project) and set forth, under the guidance of Project Director, Sue Peters, to develop a system of care to improve access, affordability and coordination of healthcare and other services, and increase efficiency in the healthcare delivery system through a reduction in duplication of services and increase in information sharing.

Nearing the end of its second year, CHAMP (Community Health Access Management Program) has reached out to 1,653 residents of New London County through its two programs, the Pharmacy Assistance Program and the Access to Care Program. Federal budget cuts resulted in a revocation of the third year of funding for the project, however a successful application for extension of time means residents of New London County will have access CHAMP’s programs through February, 2007. Many people have been referred to the program through word of mouth, their doctor or other health professional, social services agencies or through the numerous articles and advertisements that have appeared in local papers to promote the programs during the past year.

Pharmacy Assistance Program - implemented January 2005

CHAMP’s Pharmacy Assistance Specialists have kept abreast of the transition of Medicare recipients to the new Medicare Part D drug program through training provided by Senior Resources, Southeastern Connecticut’s Area Agency on Aging. Pharmacy Assistance Specialists, stationed at convenient locations throughout the county, have continued to help uninsured residents complete applications to receive their daily medications free or at reduced cost directly from drug companies.

CHAMP’s Pharmacy Assistance Specialists provide a free eligibility screening and help with the application process. Individuals who take medication on a regular basis, and have trouble paying for the medications can call the Pharmacy Assistance Specialists at CHAMP for help.

CHAMP Project Partners

- Child and Family Agency of SE CT
- Community Health Center, Inc.
- Generations Family Health Center, Inc.
- Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc
- United Community & Family Services, Inc.
- Lawrence & Memorial Hospital
- William W. Backus Hospital
- Groton Human Services
- Norwich Human Services
- Visiting Nurse Association of SE CT
- Ledge Light Health District
- Uncas Health District
- 2-1-1 Infoline
- Community Partnerships
- American Cancer Society
Expansion, Enhancements and Excitement

SMILES’ collaborative partners, Community Health Center, Inc. and United Community and Family Services, Inc. continued to expand their In School Dental Programs during the past year. The In School Dental Programs, which bring preventive dental services to school children during the school day, visited 53 schools and six TVCCA Head Start and Early Care & Education sites in 9 towns during the 2005/2006 school year. Colorful new enrollment forms were developed to streamline the enrollment process for parents.

February brought excitement to the SMILES Collaborative as it celebrated National Children’s Dental Health Month with New London County’s first ever Give Kids A Smile® Day event. Fourteen area dentists volunteered their time to treat 82 children on February 3, 2006. Celebrations were held throughout the county as dentists from East Lyme to Colchester opened their offices to children identified with treatment needs through the In School Dental Programs. The children left with healthier smiles and a bag full of goodies like movie passes, toothbrushes and sugarless gum provided by SMILES.
Emergency Response Preparedness

Ledge Light Health District has been busy participating with local, regional, and State public health emergency preparedness partners. Ledge Light is the lead planner for a 155,000 population area to distribute mass prophylaxis, and coordinate local public health pandemic flu responses. As lead agency, Ledge Light is in its first of a two year DPH planning grant to explore local public health emergency preparedness in Area 4: Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security, covering areas of Southeast, Northeast, & parts of Windam County.

Ledge Light coordinated the first public health full scale exercise to test plans to distribute antibiotics in an emergency in New London County. Participation included 160 volunteers, representing over 50 agencies, and involved 100 mock volunteer patients. Developing partner relationships and response coordination will continue to be a high priority for the District to assure it can quickly collect, data, provide health alerts and notifications, and determine a response with emergency planning partners.

Ledge Light participates on a number of planning and coordination groups within its member towns, regionally, while serving on Statewide planning committees.

Communicable Disease Control

An important part of Ledge Light Health District's responsibility is the monitoring and control of communicable disease. Area physicians, hospitals, and laboratories are required, by state law, to report certain infectious diseases to the local Director of Health. The District is then required to investigate the extent of these illnesses, and apply control measures when necessary. This involves interviewing the affected persons and, in some cases, friends, family members and associates. Ledge Light Health District maintains statistics on diseases.

Ledge Light Health District works closely with the Infectious Disease Clinic at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital, William Backus Hospital, the VNA of Southeastern CT, Ledyard Public Health Nursing, local Schools and our Medical Advisor, Peter Gates M.D. in control of communicable diseases.

Ledge Light has conducted several case investigations, including a large contact investigation of 250 persons for tuberculosis. Coordination and educational outreach efforts were coordinated amongst community providers, businesses, hospitals, primary care providers, State officials, and the media.

The immunization action project, funded by DPH, has fully transitioned to Ledge Light Health District providing immunization tracking of birth to 2 year old children. Underserved and at risk populations are targeted through data base management, education, and outreach to assure timely immunizations.
**Administration**

FY05-06 was a year of transformation for the systems and processes that support the program efforts of the District. In the areas of human resources, accounting and technology, we made significant improvements to the effectiveness and efficiency of the structures that provide the framework for the delivery of outstanding public health services.

Working with the Director and the Board of Directors, we issued revised personnel policies that clarify the policies our staff members work under. We tightened accounting procedures to make it easier to deliver grant reports and track expenditures. These have had a positive effect on the efficiency of the District, as it now takes less staff time to fulfill our obligations to our funders.

We transformed our administrative assistant position to have more of a focus on delivering customer service. We rearranged the Groton office so that she is more easily accessible to visitors to this office. Having a person in our lobby area to greet visitors and channel inquiries has had a positive effect on our customer service efforts.

Our efforts to improve customer service also focused on the technology that supports our operations and, specifically, how we could use technology to improve service in our remote offices. We upgraded the District’s data connection to support VoIP (voice-over-internet protocol) and connected the New London and East Lyme offices to our phone system. This enables callers to reach a ‘live person’ during business hours, even if the staff in the remote office is out doing fieldwork. It also enables us to move staff between offices to cover absences without communications suffering, as staff members can forward their phone calls to extensions in the remote offices.

Our technology improvements also focused on the data we collect and share, and taking efforts to streamline those processes and protect against data loss. All staff members, in all offices, have a connection to our server in the Groton office – which allows us to share data more easily, eliminate duplication of data entry, and provide the opportunity to ‘back up’ all the important data each night. In the case of a disaster at our facility, we would be able to reestablish our data shares from off-site copies without spending many staff hours reentering and recreating information from paper files.

Finally, we began the process of redesigning our web site (the new version launched in October 2006). Our new site is easy to navigate and is filled with lots of helpful information about the District and public health. You can find tips on healthy living, download the forms needed to apply for permits, register a complaint or request and find out about our programs - all from the comfort of your home or office. Check us out on the web at: www.ledgelighthd.org. The next phase of our site redesign will include more interactive features, including access to property records and email alerts – stay tuned!
Financial Information

**FY05/06 Expense Categories**

Core Non-Personnel, 19.97%
Grant Personnel, 31.59%
Core Personnel, 24.71%
Grant Non-Personnel, 24.74%

**FY05/06 Sources of Income**

Grants and Contracts, 53.74%
State Per Capita, 6.71%
City of Groton, 2.69%
Other Income, 2.71%
Town of Groton, 9.19%
Town of Ledyard, 3.62%
City of New London, 7.96%
Town of Waterford, 5.34%
Fees and Permits, 0.55%