

BOARD OF HEALTH

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Disease prevention and health promotion are the primary goals of the Health Department, and are overseen by a three member elected Board of Health. State and federal departments of health mandate certain activities and suggest others based on research and national statistics. The Guidebook for Boards of Health guides local officials in mandated and suggested activities, considering local conditions and available resources.

The Health Department staff spent the entire 2004 located in a modular building behind Belmont High School on Concord Avenue, along with the Recreation and School Administration Departments. The move back to the Town Hall Annex, newly named the Homer Municipal Building, will take place in the spring of 2005. A smooth transition from the temporary quarters to the permanent space is anticipated.

Food sanitation is one of the most important activities of the Health Department because of the potential for serious foodborne illness. Lt. Peter Hoerr, from the Police Department, and Jeffrey Wheeler, Planning Coordinator, were the guest speakers at the annual food service seminar this year speaking on security and zoning issues respectively. Health Department staff spent some time discussing non-compliances that occur frequently during food service inspections.

There are approximately 78 food service establishments in Town, including retail food stores, restaurants, catering establishments, bakeries and schools. Between one and three inspections are done at each of these establishments throughout the year depending on the relative risk of the operation and their level of compliance. Ice cream trucks, mobile food trucks, church halls and temporary food service events add approximately thirty additional inspections. Over 230 food service inspections are done each year. Two establishments closed; one was renovated and two changed ownership during this year.

The Health Department, under the authority of the State Sanitary Code, 105 CMR 410.000 Minimum Standards of Fitness for Human Habitation, responds to residents' complaints concerning possible health and safety violations in rental housing. After an inspection is done, an Order Letter is written to the property owner. The Health Department frequently facilitates negotiations between tenants and landlords, so that violations can be corrected as quickly as possible. Cases are occasionally resolved after court intervention. There were 22 housing complaints during this year.

In addition to housing complaints, the Department responded to approximately 130 additional complaints that included inappropriate garbage/rubbish storage and disposal, air quality concerns, electric sanding, rodent problems and general safety issues. The Department is also responsible for inspecting the 3 tanning salons, 7 day camps, 11 swimming pools at 6 sites, 5 muscular therapy establishments and the air quality at the municipal ice rink. Although the Board of Health promulgated Body Art regulations in 2001, there are no establishments in Town currently. There were two permits issued under the Biotechnology Regulations in 2004.

The Health Department continued its efforts to mitigate noise and odor complaints associated with a plating company in Town. The company completed the process of coming into compliance with the EPA, MWRA and DEP regulations this year. That process did seem to make a positive impact on both the noise and the odor complaints but did not eliminate either. In September, the Board of Health re-issued its original order to abate the odor nuisance. The company requested and received a hearing concerning that order, but the order was not changed. Three monthly reports were submitted to the Board of Health and by the end of the year, it appeared that perhaps a source of the odor had been located and remediation started. The Board of Health expects to be very diligent in 2005 to insure that these nuisance odors are eliminated.

The Board of Health is responsible for subsurface sewerage systems in the Town, under the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) regulations, commonly known as "Title 5." Soil testing was done on three properties in preparation for possible new septic systems. Another property was found to have a failing system and was requested to either connect to Town sewer or install a new septic system. As properties are renovated or replaced, a significant number of them are connecting to Town sewer.

Belmont is a "delegated community" of the Office of Child Care Services, and as such, licenses the group day care, nursery school and after-school programs in the Town. With the opening of a new toddler center, there are now 13 daycare and nursery school programs and six after-school programs located in the public schools. The Health Department is responsible for licensing these programs every two years and for complaint investigations. Family day care homes, both regular programs with no more than six children and large family day cares with no more than ten children, are licensed directly by the Office of Child Care Services.

The Board of Health contracts with CareGroup Home Care for nursing services at Town-sponsored clinics. A blood pressure clinic is offered on the first Wednesday of each month at the Belmont Library. The flu vaccine distribution this year was extremely challenging for all local health departments. Due to a manufacturing problem, it was expected that only half of the usual supply of vaccine would be available this flu season. A rationing of vaccine resulted, almost eliminating vaccine through private physicians and commercial clinics. This forced Health Departments to distribute the vaccine by appointments and plan many clinics at the last minute. Over 500 doses of vaccine were distributed through six clinics by appointment only at the Senior Center for those 75 years old and above or age 18 to 75 with a note from their doctor stating that they were high risk. Healthy adults 65 years of age were added in December and healthy adults 50 years of age and above were added after the New Year. The distribution of vaccine for this flu season will extend well into January of 2005. Health Departments were notified by fax and e-mail as the CDC and the State Department of Health determined the high risk groups to be included in the distribution. The silver lining was that the situation encouraged regional cooperation and several regional clinics were being planned for January, 2005. There were 47 cases of communicable disease followed up by the Public Health Nurse whose hours were increased to ten per week in September of this year.

Belmont also volunteered nursing and administrative staff to assist the Town of Arlington during an emergency clinic distributing immune globulin to customers exposed to a restaurant worker ill with Hepatitis A. There were at least three such situations in the Boston area in 2004 and it clearly illustrated the need for regional cooperation and planning.

Despite the lack of State funding for tobacco control, the Health Department has continued to support education and retail compliance checks. The Elementary School Nurses, the Health Department's Public Health Nurse and the D.A.R.E. Officer from the Police Department all collaborated to bring the tobacco prevention education program, "Breathing Easy," to all of the third grade students. Compliance Checks to insure that tobacco retailers are not selling tobacco products to individuals under the age of eighteen are also being carried out to the extent possible. There were two compliance checks this year with three tickets written during the first, and six tickets issued during the second. In November, grant funding became available for communities to create new collaboratives to assist with tobacco compliance checks. Belmont became the lead agency for a west suburban collaborative including Brookline, Needham, Newton, Milton, Waltham, Watertown and Wellesley. An individual was hired to carry out the tobacco compliance checks and this will insure that at least four of these will be done in 2005.

Animal Control Officer

This was the third year of having a full-time Animal Control Officer on duty and over 5,600 miles were logged as he patrolled the parks, streets and conservation areas of the Town. Approximately 20 dogs and cats were put on quarantine due to bites; eight animals because they did the biting and 12 because they received a bite. There was a significant decrease in bites to humans this year. 10 wild animals were rescued and 23 euthanized, usually due to extensive injury or obvious serious illness. The ACO made 169 home visits this year; was dispatched by the Police Department 84 different times and 64 times by Health Department staff. Forty-three cats and seven dogs were reported missing to the ACO or the Health Department. Most of the dogs are found and eventually returned to their owners; many of the cats return on their own without ACO involvement so the actual number of returned cats is very approximate. One bat was submitted to the State Lab for rabies testing and was negative. Belmont again participated in the statewide push to vaccinate pets by holding a rabies clinic for dogs and cats on the first Saturday in April. 49 residents participated in that clinic. With the help of Sandra Curro in the Selectmen's office, the ACO won an award for his animal control website.

The Health Department's Administrative Assistant again facilitated the elementary school dental program. The Kindergarten classrooms were supplied with materials for four units on dental health during a specific month

assigned to each school. Books, tooth models, plays, videos and other materials to be shared are delivered to each school at the beginning of its "Dental Health Month."

The Outreach Worker continued providing individual and family therapy, case management, and crisis intervention services to provide support to Belmont families. Basic necessities such as food and housing have become a high priority service in recent years. Collaborations with the Youth Services Coordinator, Police Department, the courts, the Senior Center and Belmont's Fair Housing Committee have expanded over 2004.

Belmont continues its participation in the Minuteman Hazardous Products Facility located in Lexington. Eight towns comprise the core group operating the facility, although many other towns are able to send residents with either the town or the resident paying the fee. It was also open to small businesses again this year, and the Health Department did send information to possible small quantity generators identified in the community. Belmont continues to pre-register through the Health Department office to insure that the program stays within its budget and approximately 300 families participate from this community. The site will be open a total of eight Saturdays, April through November, in 2005.

Belmont is one of 20 cities and towns that comprise the East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project. It has been in existence since 1946 with Belmont being one of the original five towns. Each city and town contributes funds towards the overall maintenance and administration of the District and then additional funds cover specific services provided to each community. Mosquito control specific to Belmont includes adult mosquito surveillance by trapping, helicopter Bti (*Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *israelensis*) application in a small area of Beaverbrook Reservation and catchbasin larval control. Because the land area of Belmont is quite small, one benefit of the Town's support of the District is the mosquito control activities actually carried out in adjacent towns with large areas of wetlands.

The threat of West Nile Virus, carried primarily by container-breeding mosquitoes, continues to affect the workload of the Health Department. Dead crows with no signs of trauma are still being sent to the State lab to be tested for the virus, although this year each community was asked to only send them until there were two positives. Belmont had no positive birds in 2004 and no reported cases of West Nile Virus. Approximately 1,600 catch basins were larvicided in early July with Altosid and again in August with primarily Vectolex by Health Department and Highway Department staff. Under the Nuisance Regulations commercial establishments with tire storage were checked a couple of times to insure that they were in compliance. No tickets for inappropriate tire storage were issued this year.

Emergency preparedness continues to be an important aspect of the Health Department's work. Through participation in the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), the facilitation of the Emergency Planning Group, and participation in the Region 4B group, emergency plans are being prepared to cover anticipated incidents involving bioterrorism, infectious disease, hazardous materials and weather-related emergencies. Grant funding was primarily used for training and equipment in 2004. Community education will be a focus for 2005.

Cable TV and the local newspaper continued to be used to share information concerning programs, clinics and health education. The Action for the Community Elderly (A.C.E.) Committee continues to provide opportunities for representatives of agencies serving the elderly in Belmont to network and offer support to each other. Participation in the Massachusetts Health Officers' Association (MHOA), the Massachusetts Environmental Health Association (MEHA) and the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards (MAHB) helps insure that the Department has the most current information for Belmont's residents.

Sealer of Weights and Measures

The Health Department's Sanitarian continued to carry out the duties of the Sealer of Weights and Measures in 2004 until his resignation at the end of October. The Sealer enforces all laws and regulations relating to the accuracy of weighing and measuring devices and the weight, measure and count of commodities offered for public sale. 293 devices were sealed this year including 102 gasoline meters at thirteen gas stations; 18 taxicabs; scales at pharmacies; scanners at various businesses and other miscellaneous measuring devices.

Youth Commission

The Health Director assists the Commission in daily administrative tasks while the program goals are created by members of the Youth Commission, whose members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Youth Services Coordinator is the major facilitator of the Youth Commission programs. The major accomplishment of this year was the opening of the Youth Center which has proven to be a huge hit with Middle School aged students. An average of 25 to 45 sixth through eighth graders attend the Center each Friday night and enjoy basketball, videos, ping pong and a relaxed atmosphere with friends. Special activities such as crafts and programs are planned at regular intervals. The first annual "Belmont Unplugged" was a tremendous community

success, especially the one “no homework” night. Family activities were planned throughout the month of March and everyone was encouraged to “unplug” and enjoy time with family. The Youth Services Coordinator sponsored a special week of community service during the summer of 2004 that was very well received by the community. Three students worked in the Youth Commission office as part of their community service this year. Movie nights and early release programs were also a part of the Youth Commission calendar.

Veterans Services

In 1946, the Massachusetts legislature created the Office of Veterans’ Services and formalized Chapter 115 of the *Massachusetts General Laws*. The mission of the Department of Veterans’ Services is to advocate on behalf of all Veterans, and to provide quality service and benefits to those Veterans and their dependents in need of emergency financial and/or medical assistance. The Town of Belmont, through the Board of Selectmen’s appointment of the Veterans’ Service Officer, continues to demonstrate its concern and compassion for those men and women who have served our Country with honor.

The Veterans’ Services Officer is normally the first individual a Veteran or dependent contacts for advice and assistance. Being a Veteran does not mean benefits are automatic. The eligibility to receive entitlements from the Department of Veterans’ Services and Veterans’ Affairs must be determined and proven in accordance with strict state and federal laws, rules and regulations. Benefits are intended to be temporary in nature and not full time permanent support.

The position of Veterans` Services Officer changed hands in late January 2004 and became a part of the Health Department. The transition went smoothly with the transfer and archiving of thousands of veterans records, preparation and execution of the Memorial Day parade, enrollment with the North East Veterans Service Officers Association, American Legion and VFW. One veteran was assisted with public housing forms and many calls and questions were answered. A program was launched to support veterans by asking local businesses to offer discounts to veterans. Over 17 Belmont businesses participated by offering up to 20% discounts from home heating oil to pizza! A broad survey of those businesses was conducted in mid December 2004 and showed that no veterans ever asked for a discount.

In addition to providing general support to those veterans who inquired during the course of 2004, this department also had the pleasure of participating in many events honoring our Veterans such as our Memorial Day Parade, Veterans’ Day and Flag Day ceremonies, and school visitations. 2004 also welcomed the Governor’s proclamation of VFW Day on September 29, 2004.

This office continues to be the liaison to the Belmont Allied Veterans Council, comprised of representatives of Waverley VFW Post 1272 and American Legion Post 165, insuring strong communication between all Veterans and this office.

Finally, the staff and Board of Health members would like to thank the other Town departments, boards and commissions for their support and assistance throughout the year. Special thanks go to the Highway Department staff for help with the larvaciding.

Respectfully submitted,
 Donna L. Moultrup, RN, CHO

- (1) Dr. Robert Eisendrath was re-elected to his sixth term in April.
- (2) Patrick McCormack resigned effective October 22nd.
- (3) John Maguranis was appointed the Veterans Services Officer in January, 2004.

2004 Permits and Licenses Issued

Animal Permits	1	Rubbish Disposal Permit	32
Bakery Registrations	1	School Age Programs	6
Burial Permits	77	Septage Hauler Permits	8
Child Care Licenses	7	Swimming Pool Licenses	6
Day Camp Licenses	7	Tanning Facilities	2
Dumpster Permits	83	Temp. Dumpster Permits	254
Food Establishment Permits	124	Installer’s Permit, Title 5	1
Funeral Director Licenses	5	Review, Septic Plan	2
Massage/Muscular Therapy	25	Disposal System Con. Permit	0
Milk Licenses	16	Tobacco Sales Permits	23
Mobile Canteen Licenses	8		

Health Department Receipts through 12/31/2004

Animal Permits	0.00
Animal Impoundment	459.00
Burial Permits	770.00
Citations, Animal	300.00
Citations, Dumpster.....	300.00
Citations, Abrasive Blasting	250.00
Citations, Nuisance	50.00
Citations, Food Service	125.00
Citations, Dumpster.....	300.00
Citations, Tobacco	1,400.00
Day Camp	775.00
Day Care Licenses	2,150.00
Dumpster Permits	3,895.00
Food Establishment Permits	10,920.00
Food Service Seminars	410.00
Milk Licenses.....	160.00
Mobile Food Trucks.....	130.00
Flu Clinic Receipts	1,824.00
Funeral Director Licenses	550.00
Massage/Muscular Therapy.....	1,350.00
Nonalcoholic Beverage	37.50
Rabies Clinic	490.00
Rubbish Haulers.....	1,150.00
Sealer of Weights & Measures Fees	2,314.00
Swimming Pools.....	575.00
Septic Plan Review	150.00
Percolation/deep Hole Observation	250.00
Disposal System Construction Permit.....	0.00
Septage Haulers Permits	350.00
Tanning Facilities	250.00
Tobacco Sales Permits	1,150.00
Totals.....	\$32,534.50

Cases of Reportable Diseases by Years 1996-2004

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Animal Bites	16	26	21	13	26	15	12	13	9
Campylobacter	18	10	3	5	4	8	10	12	6
Chicken Pox	78	12	5	65	5	1	1	7	2
Fifth's Disease*						32	0	0	0
Giardiasis	7	4	7	4	3	5	5	2	4
Hepatitis	4	3	8	5	0	0	0	0	0
Lyme	5	1	7	3	7	4	3	4	10
Pertussis	4	8	5	2	7	5	1	1	2
Salmonellosis	4	7	4	4	6	2	2	0	4
Shigella								5	1

*Fifth's Disease was recently added to the Communicable Disease List.

Cancer Deaths 2004

Breast	1	Prostate	2
Lung	7	Colon	3
Stomach	1	Pancreas	5
Ovary	4	Remaining Sites	15
		Total	38

Breakdown by age and gender available in the Health Department.

Deaths of Belmont Residents 2004*

Heart Disease	28	All Cancers	38
Cerebrovascular Disease	22	Pneumonia & Influenza	21
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	5	Diabetes Mellitis	3
Liver Disease/Cirrhosis	1	Atherosclerosis	7
Accidents, Suicides, Poisonings, Violence	7	Alzheimers/Dementia	18
Birth Injuries, Newborn Infections,	1	All Other Causes	23

Congenital Malformations

*Deaths recorded in the Town Clerk's office as of 1/26/05.

TOTAL DEATHS

174