



ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2022

Waterbury Department of Public Health

From the Director

This has been a year of restructure and rebuilding. Many seasoned nurses, our Health Educator, several long-term staff in the Prevention section, WIC, Lead Poisoning Case Management, the AHL Program Coordinator and our School Medical Advisor, Dr. Rokosky, left us this past year for retirement or other positions. Like the rest of the country we also faced a significant staffing crisis in the wake of COVID-19 and continued to struggle with staff missing work due to COVID quarantine for themselves or family members. Other challenges included the advent of new COVID variants, the arrival of Monkeypox in our city, the mass retirement of Connecticut Department of Public Health employees in June and the void that left in terms of experience and staff to carry on programmatic advisement and move pressing contracts along.

Yet, our staff stepped up and used these challenges as an opportunity to learn to do things differently and for that I am grateful. We made lemonade out of the lemons. Rather than hire another School Medical Advisor, we acknowledged the need for a greater breadth of medical and behavioral health expertise to serve the city and released a competitive application for a medical advising contract to serve the Health Department's school health and infectious disease management but also the occupational health needs of the City's Human Resources department and Education's Human Capital. We established contracts for school nursing temporary staff with four agencies to fill vacancies and by the last day of classes in June had a nurse in every school. The legislature's review of School-Based Health Centers released in February 2022 found that Waterbury is at the top of the list for needed expansion of these services so we released an ambitious call for proposals to deliver more services in schools.

This was also a year of recognizing the value of our partnerships across departments. We opened the Emergency Operations Center at the Department of Public Works building to respond to hurricanes in the late summer and blizzards in the winter. We kept the shopfront COVID vaccine clinic going until demand dropped off in February. We responded to unprecedented demand for testing around the winter holidays in collaboration with Public Works and the Police Department and the local business owner at the Brass Mill Mall who graciously allowed the parking lot to be used for a drive-through testing site. We supported weekly screening testing of unvaccinated Education staff in the schools in partnership with our Firefighter colleagues.

We also welcomed some tremendous talent to the Department this year. We were lucky to recruit a diligent and patient Accountant to help us manage our large grants budget. Our Prevention team expanded to include an expert in youth engagement who has breathed new vibrancy into our Local Prevention Council and drawn young people into shaping its future. We were joined by two new bilingual community health workers who are focused on COVID-19 vaccination among children. We welcomed a new School Nursing Supervisor who is utilizing her background as a teacher and school nurse to mentor nurses new to school nursing. Our dynamic Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinator led us through the dark days of the Omicron variant as our COVID-19 czar and kept the community informed of test kit distribution events, vaccinations and ran a weekly update call for partners across the City. We welcomed a data manager and workflow systems lead to help coordinate the efforts of the nine partners operating under the Advancing Health Literacy Grant, who both do their work with humility, compassion and grace. We had a new Overdose Response Technician join the team, allowing our efforts with Public Safety to extend to the second shift. We recruited a new administrative

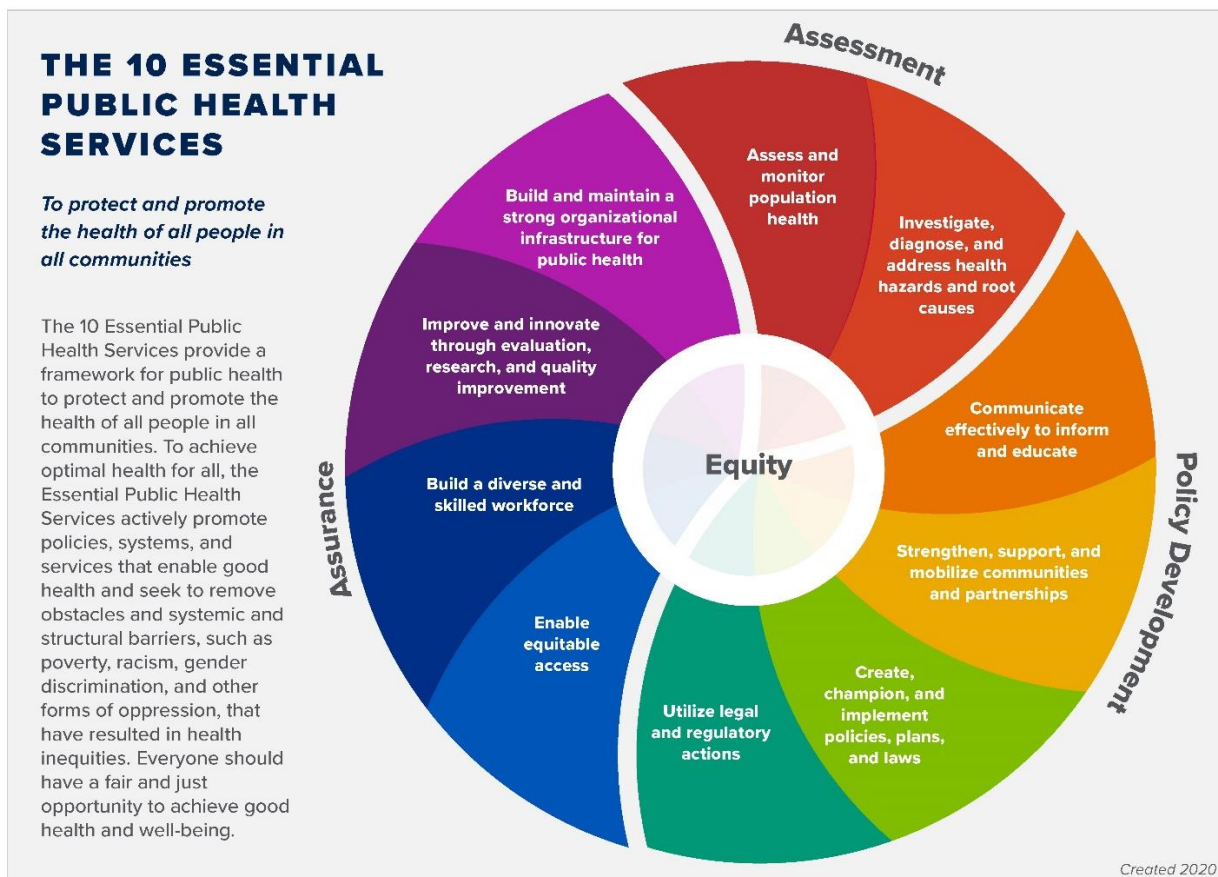
assistant who has welcomed every challenge we have thrown at her and have had several interns helping us wade through the tedious groundwork of preparing for Public Health Accreditation and collecting data for an asset mapping project.

As we continue to evolve as a department we are examining opportunities for growth and strategic collaborations. We encourage our partners to watch our progress on this journey:

<https://www.waterburyct.org/services/health>.

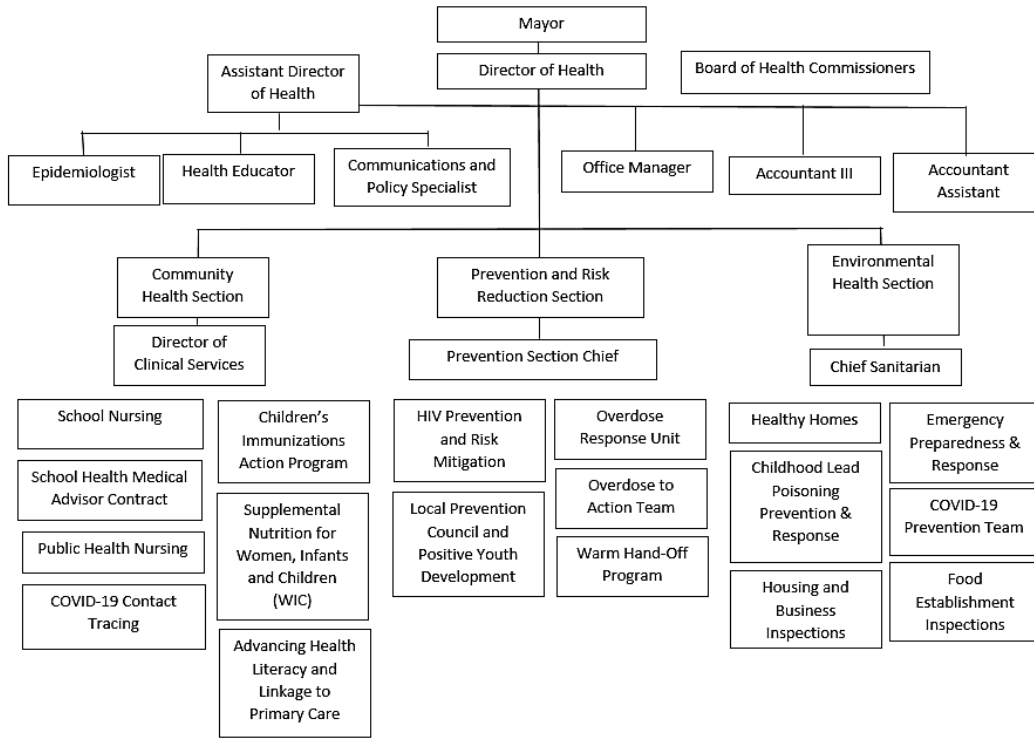
Aisling McGuckin RN, MSN-MPH
Director of Health

Figure I. The Ten Essential Public Health Services which guide our activities as a department



I. Organizational Chart

Figure II. FY 22 Organizational Chart



II. Budget

The WHD successfully administered 18 different budgets totaling more than \$20 Million in local, state and federal funding during FY 22 (Figure IV). All grant employees are funded through state and federal dollars, as well as private funding sources. All General Fund employees are hired through the Civil Service process and are strictly funded through the City of Waterbury General Fund (Figure V).

Figure IV. FY 22 Operating Budget Source Comparison

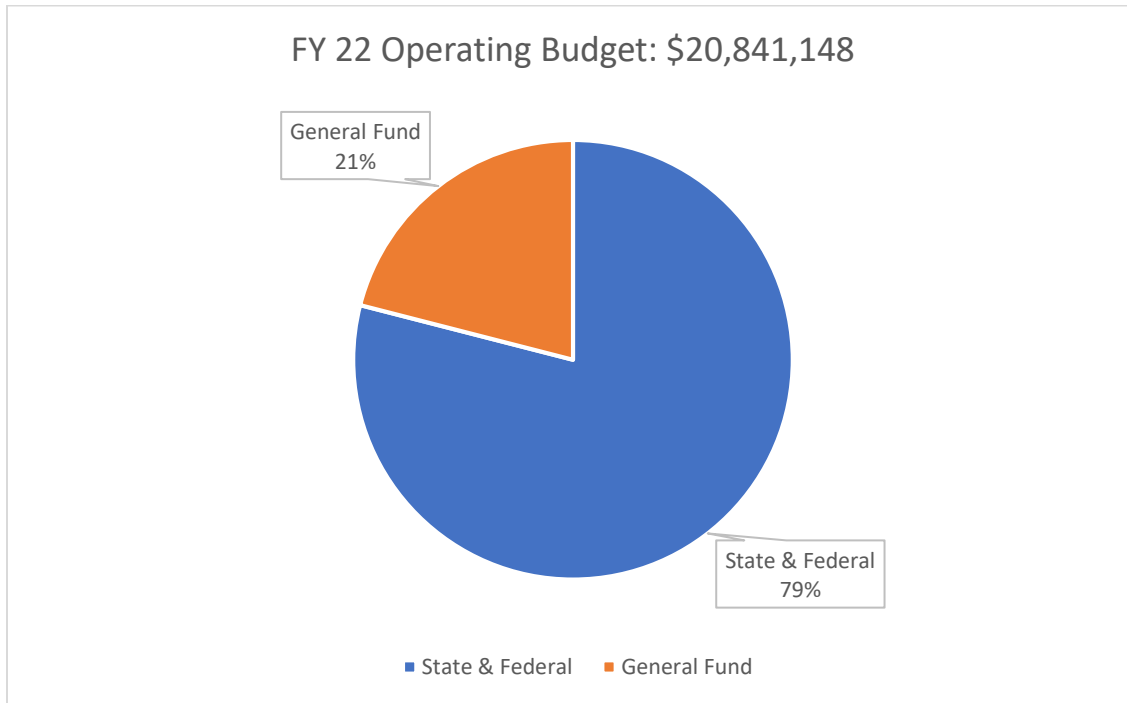
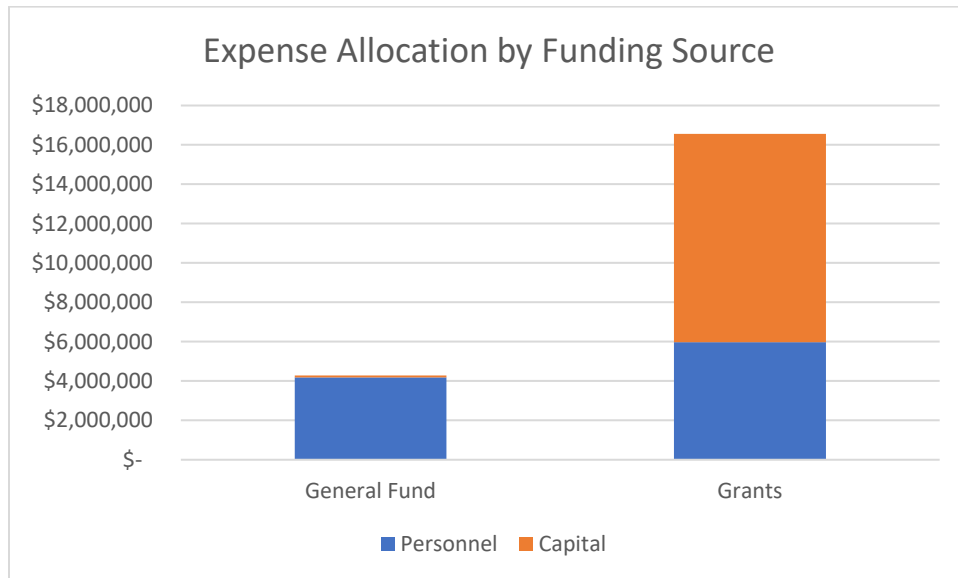


Figure V. FY 22 Expense Allocation by Funding Source



III. Waterbury Health Department Innovations in FY 22

The City of Waterbury Office of Emergency Preparedness coordinates continual surveillance and preparation for various public health emergencies. These emergencies may result from natural causes

such as hurricanes or tornadoes. They could result from man-made events such as a terrorist attack, or the emergency can result from a pandemic event, SARS-Cov-2, Ebola, or Anthrax. Our mission is to build a more resilient community prepared to deal with, promptly respond to and recover from any major emergencies arising from a disaster or man-made causes.

To help the City of Waterbury prepare for public health emergencies, the Emergency Preparedness Division continues to review and update the plans developed by the Health Department, which outline the steps to take when responding to a public health emergency. Periodically, portions or all of these plans are tested or practiced in as close to real-life situations as possible. This provides an opportunity to identify any weaknesses in the plans and to make the necessary changes to ensure they reflect current objectives and are still relevant.

In January, the office of Emergency Preparedness coordinated a mass distribution of At-Home COVID-19 Antigen test kits at Municipal Stadium and City Hall. A second mass distribution of At-Home COVID-19 Antigen test kits and masks was distributed to various organizations, including community organizations, elderly housing, and daycares. We continued to distribute Antigen test kits through a hotline where Vulnerable and At-Risk populations were able to call in and have test kits delivered to their homes. The Health Department distributed approximately 28,000 At-Home COVID-19 Antigen tests kits to the residents of Waterbury.

In April, the Emergency Preparedness Division conducted a Point of Dispensing Drill at Wilby High School. The purpose of the drill was to see how fast and efficiently our preparedness team would be able to set up a distribution site and work together to get the necessary medications to the Waterbury Community in the event of an emergency. Drills like this are conducted routinely to ensure the best response and protect the city's safety and wellbeing.

In July, the Emergency Preparedness Division participated in a Medical Counter Measures for Public Health Emergencies training at Post University. This course is a guide for local health officials and their partners to coordinate plans to provide mass distribution of medical countermeasures in response to a large-scale public health incident. The course focused on planning considerations, recommendation to achieve the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) 48-hour standard for Mass Prophylaxis, and the local community's Mass Prophylaxis and Point of Dispensing (POD) site preparedness. The course material applies to pandemic influenza, bioterrorism, and other public health emergencies.

As the transmission of COVID increased in May, along with the low vaccination rate among children ages five to seventeen in Waterbury, the Emergency Preparedness Division collaborated with the Community Health Center and Griffin Health to host a series of pop-up vaccination clinics in public and private schools in Waterbury to promote COVID-19 pediatric vaccination. The clinics were open to all ages. However, the aim was to increase the number of vaccinated children to prevent another spike as mask mandates ended in schools.

The Emergency Preparedness Department will continue to monitor the transmissibility of the COVID virus in Waterbury and will robustly implement mitigation processes as recommended by CT DPH and CDC guidelines. Our goal is to ensure the safety of our residents, protect the community and maintain business continuity.

The Department was awarded \$2.7 million in funding from the CTDPH Vaccine Equity Partnership Funding (VEPF) program, to promote and deliver COVID19 vaccinations among residents of the most

vulnerable census tracts of the community in May 2021. The funding was in the amount of \$2,712,628, for the 4-month performance period of May 1, 2021 – August 31, 2021. As a key feature of the Vaccine Equity program, the City of Waterbury and its nine community partners opened a new vaccination site in a former shoe store retail space located at 910 Wolcott Street. Located next to Walmart and in a large mall the location benefited from ease of parking, high visibility and heavy foot traffic, particularly as surges overtook the city throughout the winter.

Intensive programming was delivered in close collaboration with healthcare, social services and community partners to ensure rapid implementation of services. The VEPF partners included: City of Waterbury Health and Recreation Departments, the Mayor's Office, Community Health Center, Grace Baptist Church, Greater Waterbury Health Partnership, Hispanic Coalition of Greater Waterbury, Madre Latina, New Opportunities, Waterbury Police Activity League and the Greater Waterbury YMCA. VEPF funds supported intensive local outreach and education, phone banking, door knocking, health fairs and events linked to fixed site, pop up and homebound vaccination services, as well as transportation to and from vaccination appointments.

In June 2021 the Department was awarded a the Advancing Health Literacy Grant, a two-year, \$4 million grant from the US Department of Health & Human Services Office of Minority Health to promote health literacy and access to primary care services, including COVID-19 vaccination among the city's most vulnerable residents in the census tracts identified as highest need per CDC Socially Vulnerable Index (SVI) data. The programming and services build upon partnerships established by the Health Equity Grant over the summer of 2021 and have been delivered in close collaboration with those critical healthcare, equity and community partners who are trusted messengers in the communities most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. These efforts speak to WHD's strong commitment to Essential Public Health Service #4: Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health.

IV. The Ten Essential Services of Public Health

Waterbury Health Department continues to operate all essential services required of Public Health Departments by Connecticut law. The following section elucidates some of the new strategies staff implemented to respond to the ten essential services over the past year. Many of the staff involved were also responsible for additional duties required by COVID but continued to attend to the needs of the public with commitment and compassion.

Assessment

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

In June 2022, three Global Leadership Institute interns from Waterbury Public Schools collected data on multiple assets and risk factors across the city. They identified areas of the city where dumping takes place, areas of high sex work traffic, areas where drug paraphernalia is jettisoned, areas identified as brownfields. They also identified the locations of schools, local groceries and bodegas, local businesses, health and social service providers and transportation lines. They entered these risk factors and assets into a database which will be able to generate layered maps for use in strategic planning and collaborative partnerships across sectors.

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

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP)

This year the legislature passed House Bill 5045 which lower the threshold for blood lead levels in children under six in the following: (1) from 10 to 3.5 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) which requires licensed health care institutions and clinical laboratories to report lead poisoning cases to Department of Public Health; (2) from 5 to 3.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, the threshold at which local health directors must inform parents or guardians about a child's eligibility for the state's Birth-to-Three program and lead poisoning dangers, ways to reduce risk and lead abatement laws; (3) incrementally lowers from 20 to 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, the threshold for local health departments to conduct epidemiological investigations of the source of a person's lead poisoning; and (4) incrementally lowers from 20 to 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, the threshold at which local health directors must conduct on-site inspections and remediation for children with lead poisoning. The Director contributed testimony to the effect this bill would have on the children of Waterbury during the legislative session in February.

Housing Violations

The Environmental Health Division responds to housing complaints and enforces housing codes for all properties in the City of Waterbury. The Division receives over 100 complaints monthly and each complaint is handled in a timely fashion. Various types of complaints received include but are not limited to: no hot water, no heat, no water, no utility service, insect/rodent infestation, broken water and sewage lines, etc. Each complaint is investigated and evaluated to determine the proper action or solution. Once the Housing Inspectors identify violations, the Director of Health issues Notice of Violations to the property owners and requires the property owners to remediate the violations within a reasonable time frame. For property owners who fail or refuse to remediate the violations, warrants will be issued and cases will be forwarded to Housing Court.

Mayor's Nuisance Enforcement Team Force

The Environmental Health Division works in conjunction with numerous of City departments to contain and abate blight within the City. Division staff attend weekly meetings with all city departments to discuss new cases and progress of existing cases.

Policy Development

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

The Department's social media presence expanded over the past year to include the use of Tik Toc for development of educational videos and the use of additional media to convey key health promotion topics to the public. In addition, this year the Department availed of the use of movie theatre advertising, billboards and a television PSA featuring the Director to promote COVID vaccination. The Department also developed bus ads to recruit school nurses and more interactive videos on Facebook and other social media to boost attendance at the Advancing Health Literacy events.

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

The Waterbury Health Department Tuberculosis Program collaborates with the St. Mary's Hospital Pulmonary Department to provide medical services for the care and follow up of persons with active Tuberculosis (TB) Disease and Latent TB Infection (LTBI) in the Greater Waterbury area. Clinic services are provided twice monthly by appointment. Patients are monitored on a monthly basis until the completion of their therapy. At the end of June 2022 the Public Health Nurses had four active TB cases they were following and 41 LTBI cases. The Department is working with St. Mary's to get the Public Health Nurses access to the EPIC Electronic Medical Record system to allow them to follow patients more efficiently. The Department has also successfully billed the state for services delivered to TB patients which were unaccounted for heretofore.

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

The City of Waterbury will participate in the implementation of a new statewide initiative which allows the reciprocal licensing of itinerant food vending establishments. These entities will have been issued a valid permit from the Local Health District with jurisdiction over the town where the itinerant food vending establishment is located, and the operator of such itinerant food vending establishment seeks to conduct business in a town located in the jurisdiction of another Local Health Department of District. The law, Connecticut General Statutes Section 10a-36i, requires the Department of Public Health and the Local Director of Health to implement such process. The undersigned representatives of Local Health Departments and Districts and/ Board Chairs and Chief Elected Officials enter into this mutual Agreement to allow itinerant food vending establishments that are permitted by another party, to operate in its town or district without needing an additional permit. Waterbury Department of Public Health will participate this initiative.

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

The Environmental Health Division worked collaboratively in FY 22 with the City Water Pollution Department (WPD) and Jacobs Wastewater Systems and Maintenance to implement the Fats, Oils and Grease Abatement (FOG) Program. FOG refers collectively to the waste generated in most residential kitchens and commercial Food Service Establishments (FSE). The FOG Program will establish formal procedures for managing FOG waste from FSEs in the City and help limit the impact of FOG discharge on the wastewater collection system. CityView software will be utilized for FOG Program inspection. With the impact of COVID 19 Pandemic, the implementation of FOG program was postponed and re-initiated in June 2021. The city also worked with Jacobs to participate in Yale's Wastewater Study (June 2021-Oct 2021) and subsequently the CDC's Wastewater Surveillance Study beginning in Jan 2022 which allowed for regular testing of wastewater effluent for the presence of COVID-19.

Assurance:

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

Waterbury's Opioid Outreach and Overdose Response Team links persons affected by opioid use disorders to substance abuse treatment screening and assessment, housing referral services, and harm reduction resources for vulnerable populations. Visit [Opioid Resources \(waterburyct.org\)](https://www.waterburyct.org/health-services/opioid-resources) to learn more.

In 1986, the Waterbury Department of Public Health began HIV Prevention Education services throughout the Waterbury area and city of Meriden. The Waterbury Department of Public Health HIV

Prevention Program offers free anonymous and confidential HIV Outreach, Testing and Linkage services (OTL). OTL is a collection of activities designed to increase a client’s knowledge of his/hers HIV serostatus, encourage and support risk education, secure referrals for appropriate medical care, preventative measures, as well as Partner Counseling and Referrals Services (PCRS). The Mobile Health Van conducts offsite health communication public information (HCPI) and OTL presentations throughout the greater Waterbury area on a weekly basis. Prevention OTL Counselor/educators conduct educational HCPI and OTL throughout the greater Waterbury area and city of Meriden on a daily basis and provide PrEP / PeP screening and referral services. Staff also conduct urine-based screenings for chlamydia and gonorrhea, Hepatitis C screenings and lead bi-weekly HIV Support Groups for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWA). These services continued to be delivered during COVID-19, and staff began to integrate messaging about the importance of testing and vaccination among immunocompromised community members (Figure VIII). Beginning in May 2021, Prevention staff took a lead role in promoting the Vaccine Equity Partnership Grant pop-up COVID-19 vaccination clinics among the vulnerable populations with whom they already had established trusting relationships.

WIC attendance continued to improve among clients as a result of the COVID-related federal waiver which allowed staff to see clients by phone rather than in-person for benefits determination for the Waterbury and Seymour offices. By the end of FY 22 WIC participation was up 2.4% in Waterbury and 15.7% at the Seymour site.

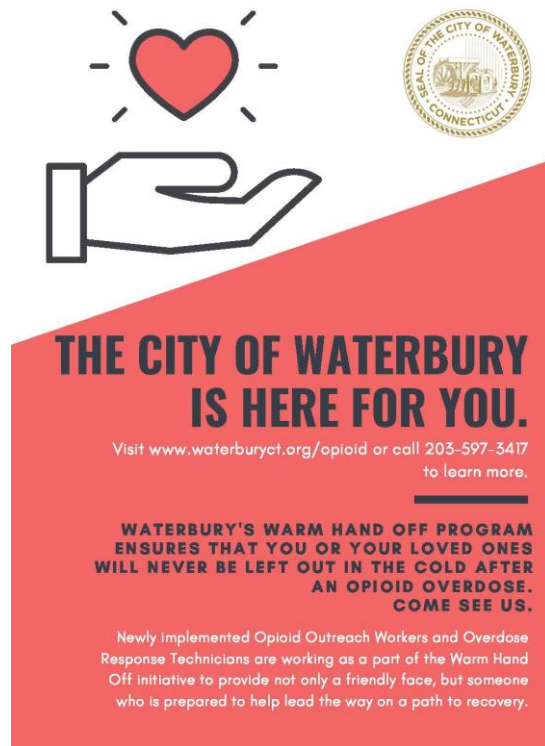
School Nurses continued to deliver essential services to students in the city, despite the constraints of staff vacancies and the evolving landscape of COVID. The following table represents the tangible efforts of the school nurses during the 2021-2022 school year among the student population of approximately 18,000:

Effort	Number of Instances
911 initiated	63
Medications administered	19,752
Gastro-intestinal tube feedings administered	604
Blood Glucose Checks administered	13,367
Diagnosed concussions	22
Urinary Catheterizations	362
Illness /First Aid Visits	133,370
Students returned to class	123,341
Pediculosis Inspections	914
Students positive for Pediculosis	73

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

One of the Department’s School Nursing Supervisors is pursuing a Master’s Degree in Nursing Leadership and has initiated several innovations in the division of school nursing as part of her course work, including developing training for the school nurses and helping promote the use of the electronic medical record in the school setting. In addition, several of the school nurses will be pursuing a certification in school nursing.

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



THE CITY OF WATERBURY IS HERE FOR YOU.

Visit www.waterburyct.org/opioid or call 203-597-3417 to learn more.

WATERBURY'S WARM HAND OFF PROGRAM ENSURES THAT YOU OR YOUR LOVED ONES WILL NEVER BE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD AFTER AN OPIOID OVERDOSE. COME SEE US.

Newly implemented Opioid Outreach Workers and Overdose Response Technicians are working as a part of the Warm Hand Off initiative to provide not only a friendly face, but someone who is prepared to help lead the way on a path to recovery.

Waterbury Health Department has been awarded a Prevention in Connecticut Communities grant to conduct a deeper prevention needs assessment, priority setting, and capacity building process for the city. Visit [Substance Abuse Prevention \(waterburyct.org\)](http://Substance Abuse Prevention (waterburyct.org)) to learn more.

The University of Connecticut – Institute for Collaboration on Health, Intervention, and Policy (InCHIP) is completed their evaluation on the effectiveness of the Warm Hand-Off Program and this information was utilized in the inauguration of the second phase of the Warm Hand-Off Program. To learn more about Waterbury’s strategies to address the opioid crisis, visit our new LiveStory, available online at: Opioid Report | City of Waterbury, Connecticut | LiveStories.

10. Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health

The Waterbury Immunization Action Plan received referrals for 662 children in Waterbury aged 0-24 months for immunization, which is 164 more children than in FY 21. The team successfully identified, brought back into care, or updated records for 619 of them in CT WiZ, the state’s online immunization registry. This represents a 94% referral success rate, surpassing the state’s benchmark of 90%.

The Environmental Health Division utilized CityView software to manage routine inspections and annual permit renewal for Food Establishments in the City. The division successfully migrated the management of Housing Code Violations from FoxPro software, which is not as robust, to CityView in FY 2022. The team responded to three food recalls, investigated two food-borne illnesses and handled 235 food-related complaints and inquiries. They also processed



licensed for 51 temporary events which are one to three day events held in the city that include food trucks, carnivals ,fireworks and any event where food is offered to the public. The Department licensed 124 new food establishments in FY 2022.

Figure XI. Food Establishment Inspections by Class FY 2022.

Classification	# of Establishment	# of Inspection Conducted
Class I	142	135
Class II	229	378
Class III	302	615
Class IV	68	188