

## 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 moved back into renovated space in the Homer Municipal Building in June of this year. The new location has a private office for the nurse and veterans officer to have confidential meetings and the new storage space has accommodated much of the emergency equipment and supplies now required of health departments. A new Sanitarian and Sealer of Weights and Measures was hired in July of this year, and due to his previous experience, the work was caught up fairly quickly.

Food sanitation is one of the most important activities of the Health Department because of the potential for serious foodborne illness. Staff members from the Department of Public Health were invited to give a program on Hepatitis A at the annual food service seminar held in June each year. After the increased number of cases of Hepatitis A in Massachusetts communities in 2004, this program was extremely important. Food service establishments from Arlington and Watertown were invited this year to take advantage of the guest presenters.

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 retail store changed hands; and six new establishments opened, all in renovated space.

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 15 housing complaints during this year, including one lead paint issue. One very difficult housing case has persisted throughout 2005 despite various attempts to get it resolved. Court action in 2006 will be necessary before the issue is resolved.

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, 6 day camps, 11 swimming pools at 6 sites, and 5 muscular therapy establishments. The municipal ice rink now has electric ice resurfacing equipment so no longer requires an inspection and permit from the Health Department. Although the Board of Health promulgated Body Art regulations in 2001, there are no establishments in Town currently. There are two facilities with biotechnology permits.

The Health Department continued its efforts to mitigate odor complaints associated with a plating company in Town. The company completed a complicated process of eliminating the acetic acid in its nickel plating process, which was believed to be the greatest source of the odor. It appeared to be successful in June and July but complaints resumed in August. The Board held another public hearing in October and determined that the nuisance odors still existed and issued another order for the company to abate the nuisance odors. A preliminary injunction against the company was being sought at the end of the year through the efforts of Town Counsel.

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 one property and two of the components of the septic system were replaced. This particular property will connect to Town sewer in the near future. One other septic tank was replaced. Several properties are awaiting the reconstruction of Pleasant St. in order to connect to Town sewer. As properties are renovated or replaced, a significant number of them are connecting to Town sewer.

The State's Office of Child Care Services became the Department of Early Education and Care this year and Belmont remains one of its "delegated communities." As such, the Health Department licenses the group day care, nursery school and after-school programs in the Town. One nursery school closed this year taking the total number back to twelve, and six after-school programs remain. 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 DEEC.

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 less challenging than in 2004, but remains a very time-consuming and difficult project in the fall each year. The vaccine allocation to Belmont from the State was so low that it was decided to do all of our high risk clinics by appointment only. Six flu clinics were held at the Senior Center and one at the High School. This year we were able to decrease the number of phone calls because we were able to set up the clinic times before having everyone call in. As was done last year, a regional clinic involving five local health departments is being planned for January, 2006. The Medicare reimbursement was increased this year so that the Town will be reimbursed for the cost of these clinics. There were 40 cases of reportable disease, seven of which were animal bites, followed up by the Public Health Nurse and other Department staff.



*Stefan Russakow, MA, RS, Sanitarian from the Health Department checks a distribution box for a new septic system*

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 were carried out through a tobacco collaborative, "Smokefree Communities," for which Belmont is the lead agency. After the initial compliance check done in January during which six retailers sold tobacco to minors, the compliance check in April had no sales and there was only one sale in October. All 22 retailers had an inspection done by Health Department staff in December to check for the proper permits and signs and appropriate location of tobacco products. One retailer did surrender his permit after the December inspection.

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."

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 seven Saturdays and one Sunday, April through November, in 2006.

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 2005 and no reported cases of West Nile Virus, but did have two positive mosquito pools. Approximately 1800 catchbasins were

treated this year by staff at East Middlesex Mosquito Control. While this was a huge time savings for the Health Department, it meant that the treatment was done only once during the summer. It is anticipated that the Health Department may have to resume the treatments in 2006 in order to treat the catchbasins twice per season. 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. A color two page informational sheet was produced this year and was sent to each household with the electric light bills. It is hoped that residents can be updated yearly on our emergency preparedness plans. The Health Department spent some time on plans to vaccinate the entire community in the event of a flu pandemic, and emergency clinic equipment was provided to the community through the Region 4B group.

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. The Director completed her two year term as President of MHOA at the end of December.

### **ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER**

This was the fourth year of having a full-time Animal Control Officer on duty and over 5,000 miles were logged as he patrolled the parks, streets and conservation areas of the Town. Approximately 18 dogs and cats were put on quarantine due to bites; five animals because they did the biting and 13 because they received a bite. 12 wild animals were rescued and 17 euthanized, usually due to extensive injury or obvious serious illness. The ACO made 158 home visits this year; was dispatched by the Police Department 68 different times and 52 times by Health Department staff. Twenty-one 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. Two bats were submitted to the State Lab for rabies testing. One was positive and one 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. 24 dogs and 26 cats were vaccinated at that clinic. The ACO continued to be very active throughout the State giving presentations on coyotes to residents, legislators, schools and other towns.



*Many lost cats and dogs were returned to their owners by the Animal Control Officer. Stray animals that were "adoptable" were placed in good homes. Maggie Canetta (left) was adopted by a town resident*

### **OUTREACH WORKER**

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 and 2005 proved to be a very busy year for this program.

The Health Department facilitated two meetings this year to discuss issues of substance abuse among students. The Board of Health, Health Department staff, the Police Department, the Board of Selectmen, the Youth Commission and the School Department all sent representatives to these meetings to discuss a community strategy. It is expected that these meetings will continue in 2006.

### **SEALER OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES**

The Town was without a Sealer through the first half of this year when a new Sanitarian was hired. The Sealer from the Town of Arlington assisted when necessary. 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. There are approximately 293 devices that need to be sealed each 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 Youth Center continues to be very successful on most Friday nights during the school year. An average of 25 to 40 sixth and seventh graders attend the Center and enjoy basketball, videos, ping pong and a relaxed atmosphere with friends. Special activities such as crafts and programs are planned at regular intervals. Several dances were very successful this year and will be a regular feature in the future. The second 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 again sponsored a special week of community service during the summer and the Youth Commission assisted so that the Belmont Food Pantry could be open one evening a month. Family movie nights and early release programs were also a part of the Youth Commission calendar.

Many thanks go to Dr. Martin Norman, Catharine Caruso, Brenna Feeley, Donna Griswold, Robert Palladino, Robert Cohen, Terese Chipman, Maria Murphy, Susan O'Regan, Anna Winston and Maria Tourreilles who served on the Commission through the end of June.

Dr. David Alper became the Chairman in July and other Commission members include Karen Freidberg, Laurie Graham, Charles Laverty, Eugene O'Brien and Scott Stratford as Liaison from the School Department.

## 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. One veteran did receive financial support this year.

2005 was the first full year that the Veterans Services Officer operated out of the Health Department. With the move to the Homer Municipal Building, office space exists for this program.

In addition to providing general support to those veterans who inquired during the course of 2005, 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. The Veterans Services Officer attended two veterans' conferences during the year in addition to monthly meetings. 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.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna L. Moultrup, RN, CHO

- (1) Donna David was re-elected to her fifth term in April.
- (2) Stefan Russakow was hired as the new Sanitarian and Sealer in July.

## Cases of Reportable Diseases by Years 1997-2005

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Animal Bites	26	21	13	26	15	12	13	9	7
Campylobacter	10	3	5	4	8	10	12	6	11
Chicken Pox	12	5	65	5	1	1	7	2	2
Fifth's Disease*					32	0	0	0	0
Giardiasis	4	7	4	3	5	5	2	4	1
Hepatitis	3	8	5	0	0	0	0	0	2
Lyme	1	7	3	7	4	3	4	10	5
Pertussis	8	5	2	7	5	1	1	2	3

Salmonellosis	7	4	4	6	2	2	0	4	1
Shigella							5	1	1

**Cancer Deaths 2005**

Breast.....	6	Prostate.....	3
Lung.....	10	Colon.....	5
Stomach.....	2	Pancreas.....	4
Ovary.....	2	Remaining Sites.....	31
		<b>Total.....</b>	<b>63</b>

Breakdown by age and gender available in the Health Department. This total will not correspond to the total under "All Cancers" in the death statistics below because this total includes more than the primary cause of death.

**Deaths of Belmont Residents 2005**

Heart Disease .....	38	All Cancers .....	56
Cerebrovascular Disease .....	19	Pneumonia & Influenza.....	23
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.....	3	Diabetes Mellitus .....	4
Liver Disease/Cirrhosis .....	0	Atherosclerosis .....	2
Accidents, Suicides Poisonings, Violence.....	7	Alzheimer's/Dementia.....	19
Birth Injuries, Newborn Infections, Congenital Malformations .....	0	All Other Causes.....	40
Deaths recorded in the Town Clerk's office as of 1/27/06.		<b>TOTAL DEATHS.....</b>	<b>211</b>

**2005 Permits and Licenses Issued**

Animal Permits .....	1	Rubbish Disposal Permit .....	32
Bakery Registrations .....	1	School Age Programs .....	6
Burial Permits.....	88	Septage Hauler Permits .....	6
Child Care Licenses .....	7	Swimming Pool Licenses .....	6
Day Camp Licenses .....	5	Tanning Facilities .....	2
Dumpster Permits.....	81	Temp. Dumpster Permits .....	214
Food Establishment Permits .....	107	Installer's Permit, Title 5.....	1
Funeral Director Licenses .....	4	Review, Septic Plan .....	2
Massage/Muscular Therapy.....	20	Disposal System Con. Permit.....	0
Milk Licenses.....	35	Tobacco Sales Permits .....	2
Mobile Canteen Licenses.....	5		

**Health Department Receipts through 12/31/2005**

Animal Permits .....	0
Animal Impoundment .....	263.61
Burial Permits.....	880.00
Citations, Animal .....	230.00
Citations, Dumpster.....	25.00
Citations, Nuisance .....	0
Citations, Food Service .....	175.00
Citations, Tobacco.....	700.00
Copies Fees .....	56.20
Day Camp .....	650.00
Day Care Licenses .....	950.00
Dumpster Permits.....	3220.00
Food Establishment Permits .....	10,780.00
Food Service Seminars.....	545.00
Milk Licenses.....	350.00
Mobile Food Trucks.....	185.00
Flu Clinic Receipts.....	4488.78
Funeral Director Licenses .....	400.00
Massage/Muscular Therapy .....	1400.00
Nonalcoholic Beverage .....	37.50
Rabies Clinic .....	500.00
Rubbish Haulers.....	1600.00
Sealer of Weights & Measures Fees.....	645.00
Swimming Pools.....	475.00
Septic Plan Review .....	75.00
Installation Permit.....	175.00
Percolation/deep Hole Observation.....	125.00
Disposal System Construction Permit .....	200.00
Septage Haulers Permits .....	350.00
Tanning Facilities .....	275.00
Tobacco Sales Permits .....	<u>1230.00</u>
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$30,935.65</b>