

## BOARD OF HEALTH

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Janet Amdur, LICSW, Outreach Worker	Lauren Becker, Youth Services Coordinator (4)
Stefan Russakow, M.A., R.S., Assistant Director & Sealer of Weights and Measures (5)	
John Maguranis, Animal Control Officer & Veterans Services Officer	

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.

There were a number of staff changes in the Department this year. In recognition of the staff needed to respond to anticipated emergencies, and provide greater flexibility with respect to day to day operations, the Assistant Director position was re-instated and the Sanitarian was promoted to that position. The Youth Services Coordinator left in July and was replaced in September and the Public Health Nurse left her position at the end of July. That position was not filled in 2006.

Food sanitation is one of the most important activities of the Health Department because of the potential for serious foodborne illness. 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; four were renovated; one new establishment opened and plan reviews were conducted for four possible new establishments to open in 2007. The Farmers' Market opened in June, located in a portion of the Claflin St. parking lot. The Health Department worked very closely with the organizers and the vendors to insure that it was safe and in compliance with the Food Code. The Market was monitored weekly during this first year and some procedural changes will be made for next year, but it was a wonderful addition to the community.



A Belmont Farmers' Market vendor proudly shows some of her vegetables for sale

Photo: Victoria Thatcher

A newsletter to food service establishments is published once or twice each year; an anti-choking workshop and an annual seminar are conducted for food service staff. This year owners of a new restaurant were asked to present a program on working with the local health department. Having local staff give the presentation seemed to be very well received. Food Manager Certification regulations were updated this year, effective March 1, 2007, that will require a certified food manager onsite all hours that a food establishment operates. This is stricter than the federal and State code but the Board of Health felt strongly that compliance was not what it should be and having additional trained staff would have the most positive impact.

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 12 housing complaints during this year. One very difficult housing complaint was finally resolved in 2006; the house was demolished but there are no plans to rebuild yet.

In addition to housing complaints, the Department responded to approximately 100 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 2 tanning salons, 5 to 7 day camps, 11 swimming pools at 6 sites, and 8 muscular therapy establishments. 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. Legal action was taken, but odor complaints in 2006 were almost nonexistent so no further action was necessary. At the urging of the Purecoat Committee, the Board of Health started the process of promulgating hazardous materials regulations this year. A public hearing was held in November, 2006, and it is hoped that the regulations will become effective in spring or summer of 2007. There may be as many as 150 permits issued under these regulations.

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, review of plans and oversight of construction are responsibilities of the Health Department. As properties are renovated or replaced, a significant number of them are connecting to Town sewer. At least eight properties abandoned their septic systems and connected to Town sewer this year. Licensing fees and in-service training requirements were instituted by the State for System Inspectors and Soil Evaluators. The Director and Assistant Director are System Inspectors and the latter is also a Soil Evaluator.

The Department of Early Education and Care oversees child care facilities in the State 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 reducing the total number to eleven, 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. Flu vaccine was plentiful this year, although delivered very late again. Because Belmont received over 500 doses total, it was decided to use the flu clinic as an emergency dispensing site exercise. Although the exercise was very successful, it was not clear that it was the best way to distribute vaccine in a normal year, so a regular clinic schedule may be available in 2007. Medicare reimbursement is still substantial, although the number of clients for which the Health Department can receive reimbursement was less this year. There were 56 cases of reportable disease followed up by the Public Health Nurse and the Director.

Despite the lack of State funding for tobacco control, the Health Department has continued to support education and retail compliance checks. The Health Department supplied the Elementary School Nurses with program resources and they brought the 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. Retailers did well this year with a total of four tickets being written. The average number of retailers in Town is 22.

The Tobacco Regulations were updated to reflect the State regulations that had become effective in 2005 and our local regulations will become effective March 1, 2007. The primary change is that workplace regulations are no longer included in the local regulations.



This lucky homeless cat was adopted thanks to the efforts of Belmont's Animal Control Officer.

Photo: John Maguranis

This was the fifth year of having a full-time Animal Control Officer on duty and over 6,000 miles were logged as he patrolled the parks, streets and conservation areas of the Town. Approximately 15 dogs and 11 cats were put on quarantine due to bites; 12 animals because they did the biting and 13 because they received a bite. Two wild animals were rescued and 10 animals and birds were euthanized, usually due to extensive injury or obvious serious illness. The ACO made 121 home visits this year; was dispatched by the Police Department 60 different times and 61 times by Health Department staff. Eleven dogs and 48 cats were reported missing to the ACO or the Health Department. All of the dogs were 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 unknown. Six bats were submitted to the State Lab for rabies testing and all were 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. The ACO continued to be very active throughout the State giving presentations on coyotes to residents, legislators, schools and other towns.

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 other Town departments and agencies continued to expand, especially with the new Youth Services Coordinator. A Girls' Group and a media project are planned for early 2007 through this collaboration. The Outreach Worker is also an active member of the newly formed Community Coalition for Youth Safety, a group facilitated by the Health Department to assist in educating parents and students about risky behaviors and how to reduce the negative impact on families and the community.

Belmont continues its participation in the Minuteman Hazardous Products Facility located in Lexington. Eight towns comprise the core group operating the facility, although it is open to all towns 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 200 families participated from this community. The site was open seven Saturdays and one Sunday this year, a schedule to be duplicated in 2007.

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 catch basin 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, but Belmont had no specimens sent this year. The Health Department treated approximately 1900 catch basins twice this year, early July and August with assistance from DPW. The Town did have two positive mosquito pools reported in late August and a third round of larviciding to high risk areas was done. 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 second annual two page informational sheet was produced this year and was sent to each household with the electric light bills in September. Through work with Region 4b, a Medical Reserve Corp. was established in the region to facilitate staffing of emergency clinics. The Health Department participated in a shelter drill sponsored by the Belmont Emergency Management Agency, two communication drills by Region 4b, Operation Little Bird, an infectious disease drill sponsored by DPH, our own emergency dispensing site exercise held on Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at the Belmont Hill School, and a regional emergency dispensing site exercise held in December in Newton.

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 lack of a formalized training program for this position is still hampering the Department's ability to obtain full certification. The Assistant Director is acting as the Sealer of Weights and Measures for the Town. The Sealer did attend a training in New York State that was New York specific but still very helpful. Despite the lack of local training, most of the backlog of devices requiring inspection and "sealing" was cleared. The Sealer removed some scales from service this year and required all vendors at the new Farmer's Market to have their scales sealed. Ultimately this was done by the Belmont Sealer since the vendors were unable for a variety of reasons to get it done in their home town. There are approximately 300 devices that need to be sealed each year including 109 gasoline meters at thirteen gas stations; 18 taxicabs; scales at 5 pharmacies; scanners at least three 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 and averages forty students on regular nights and up to 100 on dance or special activities nights. The third 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 Commission reached out to families more this year with family movie nights and an "end of the year" barbecue held at the Middle School. The summer community service project was not done this year because the Youth Services Coordinator position was vacant through the summer, but the position was filled in time for the start of the new school year. The website was greatly enhanced this year with the skills of the new Coordinator and more dialogue with students is hoped for through that medium. The Youth Commission continues to assist with the Food Pantry and collaborate with other agencies such as the Library on the babysitting course and the "band bash." Collaboration with the Outreach Worker has produced such programs as a girls' group and a media project. The Youth Services Coordinator and other members of the Commission are participating on the Community Coalition for Youth Safety.

Laurie Graham became the Chairman in July and other Commission members include Dr. David Alper, Karen Freidberg, Laurie Carlson, Charles Laverty, Caroline Lindstrom and Scott Stratford as Liaison from the School Department. Many thanks go to Gene O'Brien who served on the Commission until the end of June.

### **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.

2006 was the second full year that the Veterans Services Officer operated out of the Health Department. Regular office hours are from 10 am to 12 pm on Tuesday mornings. In addition to providing general support to those veterans who inquired during the course of 2006, 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) David Alper was elected to his seventh term in April.
- (2) Rick Chasse resigned as the Youth Services Coordinator in July.
- (3) Ann Marie Thistle resigned as the Public Health Nurse at the end of July.

- (4) Lauren Becker was hired as the Youth Services Coordinator in September.
- (5) Stefan Russakow became the Assistant Director in November.

**2006 Permits and Licenses Issued**

Animal Permits	1	Rubbish Disposal Permit	34
Bakery Registrations	1	School Age Programs	6
Burial Permits	78	Septage Hauler Permits	6
Child Care Licenses	5	Swimming Pool Licenses	6
Day Camp Licenses	5	Tanning Facilities	3
Dumpster Permits	74	Temp. Dumpster Permits	208
Food Establishment Permits	107	Installer's Permit, Title 5	0
Funeral Director Licenses	4	Review, Septic Plan	0
Massage/Muscular Therapy	29	Disposal System Con. Permit	1
Milk Licenses	39	Tobacco Sales Permits	22
Mobile Canteen Licenses	5		

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECEIPTS THROUGH 12/31/2006**

Animal Permits	0
Animal Impoundment	392.00
Burial Permits	780.00
Citations, Animal	175.00
Citations, Dumpster	100.00
Citations, Nuisance	150.00
Citations, Food Service	500.00
Citations, Tobacco	200.00
Copies Fees	7.00
Day Camp	550.00
Day Care Licenses	2075.00
Dumpster Permits	2485.00
Food Establishment Permits	9925.00
Food Service Seminars	420.00
Milk Licenses	390.00
Mobile Food Trucks	185.00
Flu Clinic Receipts	8951.07
Funeral Director Licenses	400.00
Massage/Muscular Therapy	1950.00
Nonalcoholic Beverage	37.50
Rabies Clinic	350.00
Rubbish Haulers	1025.00
Sealer of Weights & Measures Fees	2160.00
Swimming Pools	330.00
Septic Plan Review	0
Installation Permit	0
Percolation/deep Hole Observation	0
Disposal System Construction Permit	75.00
Septage Haulers Permits	150.00
Tanning Facilities	275.00
Tobacco Sales Permits	1050.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$36,292.57</b>

**CASES OF REPORTABLE DISEASES BY YEARS 1998-2006**

	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Animal Bites	21	13	26	15	12	13	9	7	6
Campylobacter	3	5	4	8	10	12	6	11	7
Chicken Pox	5	65	5	1	1	7	2	2	15
Fifth's Disease*				32	0	0	0	0	0
Giardiasi	7	4	3	5	5	2	4	1	2
Hepatitis	8	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Lyme	7	3	7	4	3	4	10	5	14
Pertussis	5	2	7	5	1	1	2	3	1
Salmonellosis	4	4	6	2	2	0	4	1	3
Shigella							1	1	1

**Cancer Deaths 2006**

Breast	3	Prostate	6
Lung	8	Colon	6
Stomach	0	Pancreas	5
Ovary	3	Remaining Sites	22
<b>Total</b>		<b>53</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 2006**

Heart Disease	44	All Cancers	46
Cerebrovascular Disease	19	Pneumonia & Influenza	33
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	2	Diabetes Mellitis	1
Liver Disease/Cirrhosis	3	Atherosclerosis	3
Accidents, Suicides Poisonings, Violence	5	Alzheimers/Dementia	15
Birth Injuries, Newborn Infections, Congenital Malformations	1	All Other Causes	33

Deaths recorded in the Town Clerk's office as of 2/07/07.

**TOTAL DEATHS**    **205**