

BOARD OF HEALTH

The Lancaster Board of Health (LBOH) consists of three Lancaster residents elected for staggered three-year terms. Members volunteer their time and expertise to make Lancaster a healthy place to live, work and raise a family through prevention and protection programs. They are responsible for ensuring the enforcement of public health laws, and to

- Prevent epidemics and the spread of diseases
- Protect against environmental hazards
- Promote physical and mental health, welfare and safety
- Assure the availability and accessibility of quality health services
- Respond to disasters and assist communities in recovery

Health Boards are responsible for over 60 areas of public health law and policy, deriving their authority directly from the Massachusetts General Court. Some of these are:

- Homeland security
- Inspections and enforcement
- Records and reports
- Noise, nuisances and complaints
- Health care and disease control
- Pesticides and herbicides
- Housing and dwellings
- Pools, beaches and camps
- Hazardous and toxic wastes
- Water purity and well permits
- Solid waste and septage
- Porta-potty and outdoor hydronic heater permits
- Collection container permits
- Rubbish and garbage
- Residential and daycare centers
- Food safety and service
- Body art, trash hauler and tobacco sales licenses
- Smoking and air quality
- Cemeteries, funeral directors, burial permits

The volume and scope of the work required to offer necessary health, sanitary and environmental services to individuals and to the community is comprehensive and continues to increase in complexity.

The primary function of the LBOH office is to assist callers and visitors by providing accurate information and/or referrals for questions, concerns and applications. The office is open Monday-Thursday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and we can be reached at 978-365-3326 x1310 or by e-mail at ddennis@lancasterma.net.

AHI

In 2018 the Board initiated participation in the State's Abandoned Housing Initiative. This program, driven by the Attorney General's office supports Massachusetts cities and to help them seek out delinquent owners of abandoned residential property and encourage them to voluntarily repair their properties and make them secure.

Complaints

Identified complaints are investigated by our Nashoba Associated Board of Health (NABH) Agent, William J. Brookings, and R.S., often accompanied by a Board Member.

Bill Brookings consults in person at the LBOH office each Wednesday morning from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM, and can be contacted anytime by voicemail at the NABH office at 978-772-3335 x304 or wbrookings@nashoba.org.

Septic Systems

The NABH reported that 38 septic system plans were reviewed in 2018, and that 14 Title 5 septic permits were issued by the LBOH.

Regulation Changes

The Board changed the regulations to eliminate requirements that exceed the State's Title 5 regulations. These changes have streamlined the process for the development and approval of on-site underground wastewater management systems, also known as "Septic Systems".

Wells

The NABH reported that 14 well plans were reviewed in 2018, and that 4 well permits were issued by the LBOH.

Miscellaneous Permits

A variety of other permits were issued in 2018, including permits for porta-potties, pools, collection containers and retail sales of tobacco. Tobacco permits were issued to the following establishments in 2018:

- Cumberland Farms, High Street Extension
- Cumberland Farms, Main Street
- Main Street Auto, Main Street
- N&K Lancaster LLC Racing Mart

The Boards of Health Tobacco Control Alliance (BOHTCA) continues to work with the LBOH in providing inspectional services regarding all tobacco-related issues, including

enforcement of all youth access and environmental tobacco smoke regulations, and enforcement of the Smoke-Free Work Place Law.

The Board amended the Sale of Tobacco Products on May 9, 2018 which took effect on July 1, 2018.

Trash

The Town of Lancaster does not provide trash removal services. A private trash hauler must be contracted. The following companies were licensed to operate in Lancaster in 2018:

- E.L. Harvey & Sons, Westborough
- Fiore Trucking & Disposal, Fitchburg
- Mitrano Removal, Shirley
- Republic Services, Tyngsboro
- Sons of Kristoff, Sterling
- Tully Disposal and Recycling, Sterling
- Waste Management, West Boylston

The Trash Hauler Regulations can be found on the LBOH web page on the town web site at www.ci.lancaster.ma.us.

Recycling

All licensed trash haulers in the Town of Lancaster are required to provide recycling services. In addition, the Lancaster Recycling Center can be used to recycle a wide variety of items. The Lancaster Recycling Center's regular hours are 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Saturday and Sunday, weather/holiday permitting. The Recycling Center is open to Lancaster residents and also residents of surrounding towns.

Household Hazardous Waste Facility

The Town of Lancaster, along with several surrounding municipalities, has organized a regional Household Hazardous Waste Facility at Devens, at their current DPW facility. There is a small annual operating assessment from each participating community. Visit www.devenshhw.com for hours of operation, materials accepted and disposal costs.

Unattended Collection Containers

The LBOH has regulations for unattended collection containers. The Unattended Collection Container Regulations can be found on the LBOH web page on the town web site at www.ci.lancaster.ma.us.

Town Health

The NABH public health team's mission is to provide high-quality public health nursing to our member towns. They provide essential (and state-mandated) services of communicable disease investigation and follow-up, high-risk maternal child services and health promotion.

NABH offers home visits and health fairs for health education and screening. The health promotion program and outreach has included monthly Wellness Clinics, which include blood pressure checks, diabetes screening, and flu and immunization protection. The primary focus of the NABH town nurse is on open communication with patients and families, as well as crisis intervention and support to high-risk individuals.

NABH Rabies Clinic

22 dogs and cats were vaccinated at the annual rabies clinic. Rabies vaccination certificates for cats are kept on file at the LBOH office; rabies certificates for dogs are kept on file in the Town Clerk's Office, where dog licenses are issued.

We work closely with the local Animal Control Officer and the Town Clerk in sharing Possible Exposure to Rabies reports from veterinarians. The Animal Control Officer quarantines the wounded animal if the injury is from an unknown or unvaccinated source.

Burial Agent

The Town Clerk issued 55 Burial Permits, of which 12 were interred in Lancaster, 43 were interred elsewhere, 31 were cremated, and 2 removed from the State.

Earth Product Importation

Member John Farnsworth has been educating the Board about the risks associated with importation of earth products. This is a state-wide issue that has involved what are perceived as negative impacts to the health of a number of communities. The goal of the Board is to raise awareness among the citizens and the appropriate Town Boards and Committees so that data driven decisions can be made to determine if Lancaster needs to take steps to address these challenges.

Other Business

The Board welcomed John Ranieri as a new member replacing Richard Belanger. The Board would like to thank Richard for his service to the Board and to the Town.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Piazza, Chairman
John Farnsworth, Clerk
John Ranieri, Member

