

BOARD OF HEALTH

What Boards of Health Do

- 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

Your Board 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.

Board Duties and Additional Powers and Authority

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

Board Activities

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

The primary function of the 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 hhampson@lancasterma.net.

Complaints

Identified complaints are investigated by our Nashoba Associated Board of Health Agent, William J. Brookings, R.S., often accompanied by a Board Member. Violations of the Housing and Sanitary Code often involve multiple issues for the BOH, Building/Zoning Commissioner and Fire Department with jurisdiction being determined accordingly. Additionally, we rely on other Town departments to address areas of mutual concern: the Town Clerk, Animal Control Officer, Conservation Commission, Community Development Office, Assessors, Police, Fire, Public Works Department, Council on Aging and the Town Administrator. Communication is the key to helping each other and the residents we serve. Mr. Brookings also provides professional input on projects for the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Board of Appeals.

Bill Brookings consults in person at the BOH 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 21 septic system plans were reviewed in 2015, and that 23 Title 5 septic permits were issued by the LBOH.

Wells

The NABH reported that 5 well plans were reviewed in 2015, and that 5 well permits were issued by the LBOH.

Miscellaneous Permits

A variety of other permits were issued in 2015, including permits for porta-potties and retail sales of tobacco.

The Lancaster Board of Health Regulations were updated this year to add one additional tobacco permit, for a total of four (4) permits.

Tobacco permits were issued to the following establishments in 2015:

- Cumberland Farms, High Street Extension
- Cumberland Farms, Main Street
- Main Street Auto, Main Street
- South Coast Development, Lunenburg Road

Trash

The Town of Lancaster does provide trash removal services. A private trash hauler must be contracted. The following companies were licensed to operate in Lancaster in 2015:

- 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 BOH web page on the town web site (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 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 ten other 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.

The regional facility will be managed by the North Central Regional Solid Waste Cooperative (NCRSWC), a non-profit that provides these types of services. The site will be run by a professional Household Hazardous Waste vendor, with a chemist on site, and jointly with volunteers from the member towns. Lancaster's Recycling Committee also has been involved.

The site will be open 20 days per year (10 Wednesdays and Saturdays) from March through December. It is also open to Very Small Quantity Generators (VSQGs) who are generally small businesses like dry cleaners that have more waste than the average household but do not meet the large waste requirement, and residents from the member towns. The site can be visited by appointment so traffic can be controlled. Residents and VSQGs will still have a fee to dispose of the waste, which will vary depending on the volume of trash.

Unattended Collection Containers

The Lancaster Board of Health passed new regulations this year for unattended collection containers. The Unattended Collection Container Regulations can be found on the BOH web page on the town web site (www.ci.lancaster.ma.us).

Emergency Preparation

Lancaster is part of the Massachusetts Region II Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coalition (<http://www.publichealth-massregion2.org/what.htm>), a division of the Worcester Department of Health and Human Services. The LBOH has provided input to the 2015 Emergency Dispensing Site Plan.

A Memorandum of Understanding was previously signed between LBOH and Rowlandson/ Burbank Schools to be the location for the Board to administer vaccine or antibiotics from the Strategic National Stockpile due to infectious disease outbreaks of any magnitude. These incidents can range from a single case of hepatitis A in a food handler, to a meningitis outbreak in a school, an influenza pandemic declared by the World Health Organization (WHO), or a bioterrorist attack involving thousands of people or the entire population of the United States. The EDS would be activated within 24 hours by both medical and non-medical volunteers.

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.

The health promotion program and outreach has included monthly Wellness Clinics, which include blood pressure checks, diabetes screening, and flu and immunization protection.

NABH also offers home visits, health fairs for health education and screening, and children's story hours at the library introducing topics such as hand washing and germ control and "A Day at the Doctors".

The primary focus of the NABH town nurse is on patients, families and open communication, as well as crisis intervention and support to high-risk individuals.

NABH/LBOH Rabies Clinic

21 dogs and cats were vaccinated at the rabies clinic held at the DPW garage by Mid-State Mobile Veterinary. Micro-chipping was also available. 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.

Animal Control Officer

We work closely with the 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 __ Burial Permits, of which __ were interred in Lancaster, __ were cremated, and __ were interred elsewhere.

Tobacco Control Alliance

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 new Smoke-Free Work Place Law.

A Message from Your Board

We try to use our experiences, insights and skills to help the residents of Lancaster lead healthier lives and get the care they need. We hope to make a difference.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Piazza, *Chairman*
David Dunn, *Member*
Richard Belanger, *Member*

