



## Northeast District Department of Health

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

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### Northeast District Department of Health Celebrates 50 Years of Service Health Department was Established July 1, 1973

(BROOKLYN) – The Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH) celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> year of preventing illness, promoting wellness, and protecting public health with an open house at its 69 South Main Street office in Brooklyn on Friday, June 30, 2023. The event was attended by NDDH staff, board members, town leaders, legislators, and community partners and included light refreshments, educational displays, contests, and well-wishes.

CT State Senator Mae Flexer presented a General Assembly Official Citation to the NDDH team congratulating NDDH on its many years of service with special acknowledgment and appreciation for the leadership, guidance, and service provided throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. A Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for “50 years of extraordinary and high-quality health services to the residents of northeast Connecticut” was received from CT 2<sup>nd</sup> District Congressman Joe Courtney, as was a letter from United States Senator Christopher Murphy thanking NDDH for its role as “a health care leader in Connecticut and providing critical public health services to so many.”

Richard DiPentima, who served as the second NDDH Director of Health from 1976-78 sent his reflections and congratulations via email citing that “through years of unique challenges and problems to address, there was a professional, well-trained, and dedicated health department present in northeast CT to manage these issues and protect the citizens of the region.”

“We are so very grateful for the well-wishes of so many and the privilege of serving our member towns and many constituents for so long,” commented NDDH Director of Health Sue Starkey. “Public health achievements like vaccinations, fluoridated water, the recognition of tobacco as a health hazard, safer workplaces, family planning, safer and healthier foods, and infectious disease control have increased life expectancy since 1900 by nearly 30 years. We are proud to provide public health services that contribute to the health, longevity, and well-being of all people and look forward to continuing our important work.”

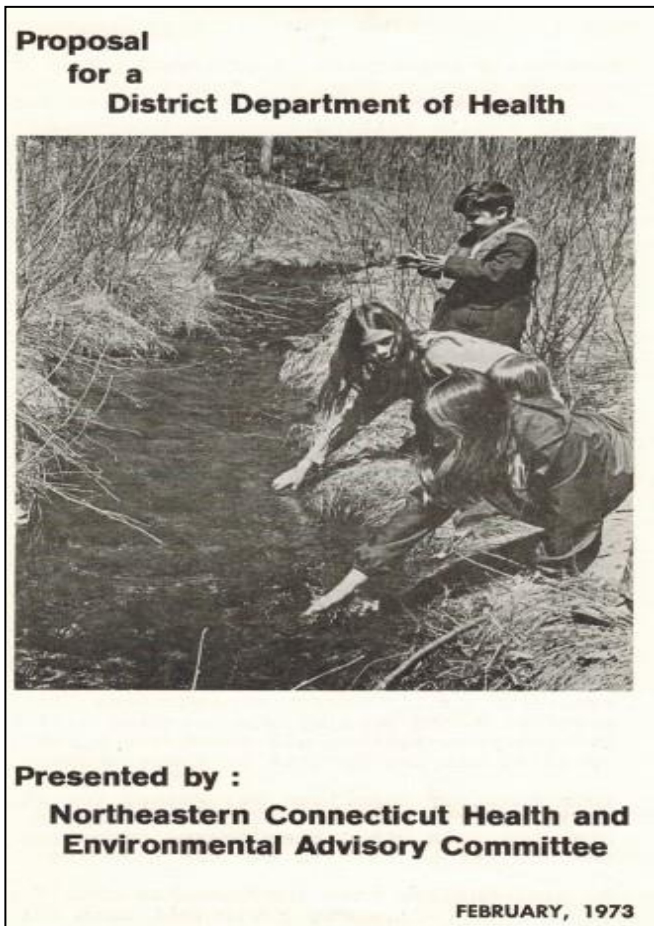
NDDH also took the opportunity of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration to launch their 2023 Community Health Needs Assessment Survey, which asks for public feedback and opinions about community health concerns in northeast CT. Adults ages 18 and older who live or work in the NDDH service area which includes the towns of Brooklyn, Canterbury, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Sterling, Thompson, Union, and Woodstock are encouraged to complete the survey online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LG8ZB35>.

NDDH will use the results of this survey and other information to identify the most pressing matters which can be addressed through community action.

“It’s important to look back to see how we’ve addressed community health in the past and use those lessons to chart a course for the future,” said NDDH Public Health Programs Specialist Isaac Combs. “In preparing for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it was interesting to find a 1974 report by the then NDDH Board of Directors that recommended solving problems with the aid of community involvement. Public opinion mattered then and matters now. The results of the survey will not only help us to look forward but assure that we are looking in the right direction as we address 21<sup>st</sup> century health challenges.”

Starkey added, “NDDH was established in 1973 by the Northeastern CT Health and Environmental Advisory Committee, led by Committee Chair Claire Adiletta of Thompson. We are grateful for their early leadership and vision, continue their mission, have expanded public health services substantially in that time...and look forward to the next 50 years.”

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Original 1973 proposal for a northeast CT health district



CT General Assembly Official Citation congratulating NDDH on 50 years of service.