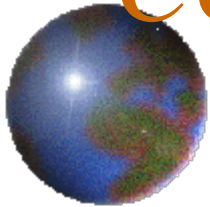
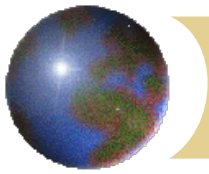




*THE ROLE OF THE NH  
HEALTH OFFICER IN THE  
COMMUNITY*



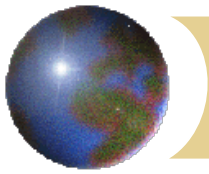
Louise Merchant Hannan  
Health Officer Liaison  
Arsenic Consortium Meeting  
February 16, 2011



# *Town Health Officer*

## *Appointment*

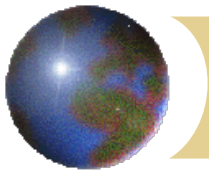
- ✚ 234 Cities and Towns
- ✚ 216 Health Officers
- ✚ Town Health Officers are appointed by the Department of Health and Human Services, Director of the Division of Public Health Services
- ✚ Health Officers serve a 3 year term



# *City Health Officer*

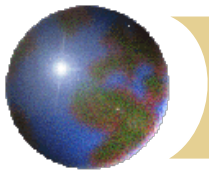
## *Appointment*

- ✚ City Health Officers are appointed by the City Council of their municipality



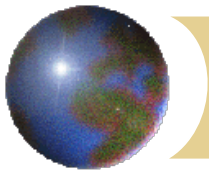
# *Health Officer Appointment Continued*

- ❖ Deputy Health Officers are appointed by the Health Officer in their community with the approval of the Selectmen and the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services
- ❖ The Board of Selectmen collectively act as Health Officer in towns where there is no appointed Health Officer until such time as a new Health Officer is appointed



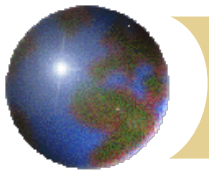
# *Health Officer Appointment Continued*

- ❖ The Local Board of Health consists of the Health Officer and the local Board of Selectmen
- ❖ The only state requirement for Health Officers is that they must be a resident of the State of NH. There are no educational and experience requirements for Health Officers
- ❖ Health Officers shall receive for the health officer's services, the compensation fixed by the Selectmen of the town, except as otherwise provided



# *Health Officer Responsibilities*

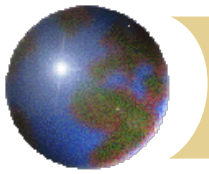
- ⊕ According to Revised Statute Annotated 128, Health Officers enforce the New Hampshire public health laws and rules
- ⊕ Health Officers shall make such sanitary investigations as may be directed by the local board of health, or as may be required by the department of health and human services
- ⊕ Health Officers are the primary enforcers of Revised Statute Annotated 147



# *Health Officer Responsibilities*

## *Continued*

- ✿ May, upon reasonable information, personal knowledge or belief, in order to safeguard public health or to prevent pollution of any aquifer or body of water, enter upon private property, but not into any living quarters, to investigate, and if necessary, take appropriate action to prevent further pollution
- ✿ Serve as liaisons between the state officials and the local community on issues concerning local public health such as arsenic in private well water and private well testing

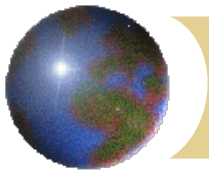


# *Health Officer Responsibilities*

## *Continued*

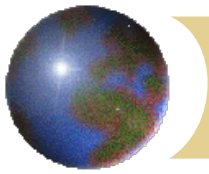
- ❖ Health Officers inspect foster homes, day care facilities, schools, septic systems, rental housing, dilapidated housing and nuisance complaints such as garbage
- ❖ Health officers follow up on issues related to EEE and WNV which could be counseling citizens on dead bird disposal and testing or nuisance issues relating to standing water in swimming pools or other areas of standing water on property





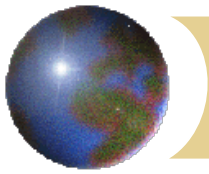
# *Health Officer Responsibilities Continued*

- ❖ The self-inspecting communities Health Officers inspect food establishments
- ❖ Health Officers also deal with food borne and communicable disease outbreaks as directed by the Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Disease Control
- ❖ Health Officers would be involved in any issue that would impact the public health of the citizens within their communities



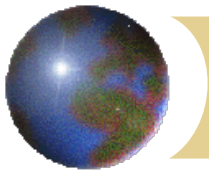
# *Health Officer Infrastructure Challenges*

- ⊕ Inconsistency of payment for Health Officers
- ⊕ Health Officers wear many “hats”
- ⊕ Inconsistency of educational backgrounds
- ⊕ Inconsistency of types of public health issues
- ⊕ No state requirements for certification for Health Officers
- ⊕ Moderate turnover of Health Officers



# *Health Officer Liaison Responsibilities*

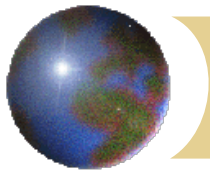
- ❖ Act as a liaison between the health officers, citizens and other state agencies
- ❖ Provide technical support for Health Officers via telephone and accompanying health officers on inspections
- ❖ Provide training opportunities via state-wide conferences and regional health officer trainings across the state



# *Health Officer Liaison*

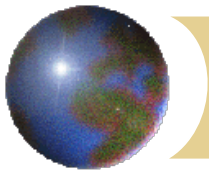
## *Responsibilities Continued*

- ✚ Respond to citizen complaints
- ✚ Provide individual orientation meetings with Health Officers
- ✚ Represent Health Officers on various Task Forces and committees



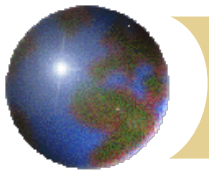
# *Engaging Health Officer Support for Outreach Efforts*

- ✚ Provide educational materials in relation to private well testing and arsenic in well water to the health officers for distribution within their communities.
- ✚ Present educational sessions at future Health Officers' Association conferences and training events
- ✚ Write technical documents on private well testing and arsenic in well water for the Health Officers' Manual



# *The Big Picture – Putting It All Together*

- ✦ The Health Officer has a unique role of possessing a comprehensive understanding of their community which may include being able to identify those citizens who have private wells and can educate those citizens about private well testing and arsenic in well water. The Arsenic Consortium can provide educational materials to the health officer to leave at public places in the community and to give out to the private well owners within the community.



## *For More Information -*

Louise Merchant Hannan

Health Officer Liaison, NH DPHS

(603) 271-4781 (Office)

[Lhannan@dhhs.state.nh.us](mailto:Lhannan@dhhs.state.nh.us)