

ANNUAL TOWN HEALTH OFFICER REPORT

2015

Lorraine Matteis, Health Officer

This past year was a relatively quiet one from the perspective of this office. There were the usual tenant complaints of minimal heat or mold exposure. The majority of these calls could be handled with conversations between landlord and tenant, and some education...often found on the websites for the state or CDC. To their credit, the vast majority of Lyndon landlords has become very savvy about tenant rights and has worked to comply with those health and safety standards. Part of the understanding of local citizens must be that health officers should only address *public health/safety concerns*. Concerns must be brought to the Health Officer by a property owner or a tenant. Third party complaints are discouraged and are not grounds for action except to encourage tenant and/or landlord to seek assistance. A town health officer does not make determinations about who is "right or wrong". We work very hard to enforce the Rental Housing Health Code.

Incidences of animal bites seem to have decreased over the years. I can't help but think that this is in part because more pet owners are taking pet owner responsibility seriously, following leash and vaccination laws. Kudos to Lyndon's animal control officer and to the safety standards set by the town.

Earlier in the year, we did see some issues with 'bedbugs'. Again, we do not play the "blame game" but concern ourselves with education, containment and eradication. Everyone is anxious and eager to do whatever it takes to de-bug their homes and apartments, and to see that further infestation is discouraged. The citizens of Lyndon are to be commended for their cooperation and diligence.

In all my years as a Town Health Officer, this year I had my first experience with a hoarding incident. It was contained and handled in a safe and healthy manner.

Again, here are some informative health department websites from the state: www.healthvermonters.info and <http://healthvermont.gov> The CDC also has a wealth of information and resources available in the internet.

Finally, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude the citizens and residents of the Town of Lyndon for the pleasure of having served you as Town Health Officer over the past 20+ years. This annual report is my last. Please give your new Health Officer, Deb Smith, the support, encouragement and cooperation that you have shown me. As I have said before, it has been an honor and a privilege to have served my home town in this capacity. Thank You!