



Southwest Suburban
Health Department
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MEMORANDUM

TO: City of West Allis Public Safety Committee

FROM: Bob Leischow, MPH
Health Commissioner

DATE: June 11, 2024

SUBJECT: Communication regarding Southwest Suburban Health Department

The City of West Allis Health Department and City of Greenfield Health Department consolidated on April 1, 2024, and became known as the Southwest Suburban Health Department (SWSHD). The merger increased the resident population by approximately 37,000 residents, bringing the total targeted resident population of the SWSHD to about 100,000 individuals (West Allis, Greenfield, Village of West Milwaukee). The number of licensed establishments increased by 236, bringing the total count of licenses to 890 in all jurisdictions covered by the SWSHD. Also, the merger resulted in 5 Greenfield-based employees being added to the SWSHD structure.

The SWSHD is overseen by a 9-member Board of Health (BoH) and includes Mayoral appointees from West Allis and Greenfield, and a Village of West Milwaukee Trustee appointment. Efforts are underway to organize the first meeting of the BoH later in June, when the Board Chair will be elected.

At this time the programs/services provided by the SWSHD have not altered significantly in relation to the programs/services being provided by the formerly-known-as West Allis Health Department and Greenfield Health Department. The array of services includes but are not limited to:

- clinically based nursing services (e.g., vaccinations, STI testing, TB testing),
- community health services (e.g., car seat checks and installations, vision and hearing screening, bike helmet fittings and giveaways),
- environmental health services (e.g., licensing and inspection, nuisance follow up and abatement, rabies control/dangerous dog follow up, blood lead inspections and abatement),
- community-wide engagement activities (e.g., Hope Walk campaign, paint & sip events, naloxone and fentanyl test strip training, healthy cooking classes, community health improvement input and planning, Community Health Improvement Plan-Implementation),
- Women, Infant & Children (WIC) Program services in West Allis, Greenfield, and Cudahy, and
- Senior Center activities.

Programs/services are implemented in West Allis and Greenfield by staff at each location.

In the context of working toward a truly integrated Health Department, via the efforts of the Implementation team, assets and needs have been and will continue to be identified along with opportunities for alignment and improvement, a list of priority tasks has been generated, and using available project planning/management software we are taking strides toward integration. Among the priorities includes onboarding Greenfield-based staff as City of West Allis employees, developing a logo/brand for the SWSHD, working with IT on technology needed to effectively operate a multi-jurisdiction health department, aligning municipal code, creating a mission and



vision for the SWSHD, standing up a new Board of Health, working with the West Allis Finance Department and Wisconsin Department of Health Services on everything related to grants/contracts, and identifying areas of redundancy that can be streamlined.

Rat/rodent abatement

As of 6/3, a total of 83 rodent complaints have been received since the start of the year. In response, 233 rodent educational letters have been issued to neighborhoods where rodent activity was reported- but no active burrows could be identified. And a total of 10 enforcement letters were issued where rodent burrows were identified and related violations were present; 2 of those properties have received a second order due to incomplete compliance.

In terms of baiting, 50 ContraPest bait stations have been placed in 20 alleyways this year and a total of 803 letters were sent to notify residents of those bait stations. An additional 175 bait stations using Orkin are planned to be placed in 34 alleyways, pending award of the CDBG funds to the City. Letters will be mailed to these residents as well.

Senior Center Update

The new membership model at the Senior Center is going well. Our average daily attendance has increased from 103 people in January 2024 to 140 in May 2024. This is a significant increase from where we were at with daily attendance as of last year with 78 people in January 2023 and 93 in May 2023. Moreover, daily attendance is at an all-time high since we began tracking in 2018. We are also happy to report that we have brought in more new members in 2024 than in past years. From January-May 2024, 101 new members have enrolled compared to 117 in 2023 and 97 in 2022. It appears that dropping the membership fee has resulted in a significant increase in membership, allowing more eligible individuals to access the Senior Center and its programs/services.

We have begun offering additional free programs such as a harmonica group, a Linguistic Spanish class, karaoke, a strength training class, beginners chess, and a billiards group. Our members have enjoyed the variety of program offerings and attendance in classes and programs are doing well.

Our fee-based programs are being well attended. Stained Glass and Painting continue to have active participation. Our Fiber Arts instructor had some medical issues which put the programming on hold, however we are working to rebuild participation in the programming now that she is back and are working with the Commission on Aging to assess the fiber arts fees as participation has been low since classes started again.