

A Letter from the Health Officer

Fiscal Year 2014 ushered in many changes for the Harford County Health Department including the new look for the annual report. In addition to our website and traditional print media, we actively began using social media - Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest - as our modes of communication. These social media outlets appeal to a segment of our population that we had not previously reached.

The public health symbol was adopted as the Department's logo. Although we do an excellent job of providing services to the community, we have fallen short in providing education about public health and our role as a public health department. We initiated the public health conversation through branding on signs, banners, and publications. This can be seen through our new signage inside and outside of the 120 S. Hays Street Building. We are in transition, but as the community becomes familiar with the public health symbol, we will use it more extensively. I invite you to check out the public health logo video on our website.

And while on our website, click on the *Data and Reports* tab to access county level data, charts, graphs, and trends made available by the State of Maryland. It provides information about the health of our community in comparison to the state and other Maryland counties. This a great resource for citizens, elected officials, community partners, and anyone interested in public health. Technology has assisted us in other ways as well. A new practice management system was introduced to assist with billing, increasing efficiency and maximizing reimbursements.

The Division of Addiction Services made great strides by creatively addressing behavioral health issues. The Division submitted its application to become an Outpatient Mental Health Center, partnered with the Detention Center to implement the Vivitrol Project, and began naloxone trainings to protect against overdose deaths. More information on these initiatives can be found in the FY 2014 Annual Report.

Preparation for Public Health Accreditation culminated in May when we pushed the "submit" button and provided documentation to satisfy 97 measures. The submission consisted of 11,623 pages of documentation! The site visit by the Public Health Accreditation Board is scheduled for January 2015. Stay tuned for results.

This has been an exciting, innovative, and challenging year filled with many "firsts." Many facets of public health have been outlined in the FY 2014 Annual Report. As always, your feedback is appreciated. For more information about our programs, please visit our website www.harfordcountyhealth.com and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the former Board of Health for its support, and welcome the new Board of Health members who took the oath of office on December 1, 2014.



Harford County Health Officer



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