



INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

Acton Board of Health - Telephone 978-264-9634 - Fax 978-264-9630

November 30, 2010

TO: Finance Committee

FROM: Doug Halley, Health Director

SUBJECT: Public Health Nursing

This memo is responding in part to a request made by Pat Clifford regarding the legal requirements for communities to provide public health service. The following are the legal requirements as defined by the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards (MAHB) that are applicable to the Nursing Service:

B. Health Care and Disease Control:

1. Upon request, telephone to a gas and electric utility company and certify in writing within seven (7) days of said telephone call that there is a serious illness in a residence such that n, gas or electric company shall shut off or fail to restore gas or electric service in any residence during such time as there is a serious illness. M.G.L. c.164 s.124A; 220 CMR 25.03 (2).
2. Receive reports of cases of disease dangerous to public health. Keep records of these reports and also forward copies of these reports to the local school committee; and to other local boards in whose jurisdiction the patient resides, or may have contracted the disease, or may have exposed others. M.G.L. c.111, s.111. See 105 CMR 300 10 for list of diseases required to be reported.
3. Report cases of dangerous diseases to the Department of Public Health within twenty-four hours. M.G.L, c.111, s.112. See 105 CMR 300.100 for a list of diseases required to be reported.
4. Consult with the Department of Public Health regarding the prevention of dangerous diseases. M.G.L. c.111, s.7.
5. Send to the Department of Public Health weekly reports of deaths due to dangerous diseases. MG.L. c.111, s.29.
6. Receive notices of school children sent home because of dangerous disease. M.G.L.. c.71, s.55A.
7. Report to the Department of Public Health cases of a certain contagious disease occurring at dairy farms. See 105 CMR 310.100-110 for list of such diseases required to be reported.

8. Receive reports of any inflammation, swelling, redness or unnatural discharge from the eyes of an infant less than two weeks old, and take immediate action to prevent blindness. M.G.L. c.111, s.110.
9. Receive reports of persons afflicted with cerebral palsy, and submit an annual report of these cases to the Department of Public Health. M.G.L. c.111, s.111A.
10. Provide anti-rabies vaccine and treatment. M.G.L. c.140, s.145A; 105 CMR 335.
11. Supervise or carry out the disinfection of dwellings which have housed a person who has suffered from or died of a disease dangerous to the public health. M.G.L. c.111 s.109.
12. Receive reports of food poisoning and send these reports to the State Department of Public Health, 105 CMR 300.000.
13. Receive notices from inspectors of the Department of Labor and Industries regarding violations of health laws or nuisances in industrial establishments; investigate these reports, and enforce appropriate laws. M.G.L. c.149, s.136.

In addition, MAHB has also defined what they believe are the "Responsibilities of Public Health Services" as follows:

- monitor health status of community;
- investigate and diagnose health problems and health hazards;
- inform, educate, and involve residents in health problems;
- mobilize community partnerships to solve health problems;
- develop policies that support community health efforts;
- assure access to health care services;
- assure an expert public health work force;
- evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of health services; and
- develop new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

In its 1988 report, "The Future of Public Health", the Institute of Medicine identified three essential functions of public health systems:

ASSESSMENT

monitoring health status

conducting needs assessments

health surveillance

investigation and diagnosis

program monitoring and evaluation

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

leadership and advocacy

planning

collaborative health partnership

adequate financing

public participation

legislation

ASSURANCE

education and training

early identification of problems

information and referral

direct services

public information

community mobilization

licensing, regulation, certification

standards and guidelines

program monitoring and evaluation

When the Nursing Service was last studied in 1993 it was found that similar communities to Acton were somewhere between the legal requirements and the optimum recommendations.