

## Report of the Health Officer

The year 2021 has been a challenging year as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to sweep in waves across the globe. The Omicron variant has recently arrived in our region while the Delta variant still looms. We continue to closely monitor the NH Department of Health and Human Services for health alerts and monitor health threats throughout the year. Health guidance frequently changes throughout the year as more becomes known about the coronavirus. The Health Officers have worked closely with Fremont's elected and town officials to provide health guidance. The Health Officers have worked diligently to keep the Fremont community informed with information on how to protect and prevent the spread of COVID-19 throughout the community. The best method to protect oneself, loved ones, and the community is to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and booster as recommended by medical professionals. COVID-19 vaccines are effective at helping protect against severe disease and death from the virus that causes COVID-19, including the variants circulating. Currently, all individuals aged five and above are eligible for the vaccine. Vaccinations for children less than five years old are on the horizon as medical trials continue for this age category.

Earlier in the month of December 2021, New Hampshire had been reporting the highest case rates per 100,000 residents in the Nation which highlights the need for vaccinations to protect the community. Hospital staff have been so overwhelmed with COVID-19 hospitalizations that Federal staffing support has been sent to help local hospitals. Approximately two-thirds of hospitalized cases are unvaccinated individuals. To keep abreast of the unfolding COVID-19 Pandemic in New Hampshire and those inquiring about COVID-19 vaccines or free testing kits for home use please refer to the COVID-19 website: <https://www.covid19.nh.gov/> The Town website is: <https://www.fremont.nh.gov/>

The Health Officers worked with the mosquito surveillance contractor to monitor mosquito-borne health threats. As tax paying citizens we believe it is important that the community understands what the contractor does. The contractor provides active surveillance by setting up mosquito traps throughout the community, collecting mosquitos, and testing them for lethal mosquito-borne illnesses such as West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis and reporting the results to health officers. This is a proactive approach as opposed to waiting until a citizen or animal comes down with a deadly mosquito borne illness. Fremont citizens continue to support funding mosquito surveillance programs as they understand active mosquito surveillance allows the community to respond quickly to any health threats which includes spraying in high traffic areas in town.

Joanne and April have inspected various properties in Fremont throughout the year in response to health and sanitation complaints. A home daycare facility was inspected for State licensing requirements. Twenty-one food vendors were inspected at the Grass Drags in the fall. Food vendors who were not in compliance with temperature and safe food preparation and storage were reinspected. Some properties continue to be monitored for health and sanitation violations throughout town. We wish the citizens of Fremont a safe and healthy New Year!

April Phelps, DNP, MSN-NE, RN, Health Officer and Joanne Cotton, MSPH, Deputy Health Officer