

Report of the Health Officer

Fremont continues to face an alarming number of heroin and opioid related overdoses in our small rural community. The heroin epidemic is widespread across the State of New Hampshire and it affects residents of all age groups, in all neighborhoods, and equally in both genders. There were over 400 opioid related overdose deaths that occurred in New Hampshire in 2016. Residents looking to seek help for opioid addiction, or to seek assistance for a loved one can contact the **New Hampshire Statewide Addiction Crisis Line toll-free at 1-844-711-HELP (4357).**

Regional concerns of dry wells and water use restrictions impacted many Fremont residents this year. The National Drought Monitor classified conditions as **Extreme** in many Rockingham County towns during the months of August, September, and October. Rainfall and snow amounts received in November and December upgraded the status to **Severe**. Going forward into 2017, the region remains in the **Severe** drought category. We will need much rain in future months to replenish the depleted supply of ground water.

National concerns of Zika Virus and other vector borne diseases such as West Nile and EEE have thankfully not affected our community. Both the mosquito and tick populations as a whole were down this season related to low water levels and drought conditions. Fremont continues to utilize a Mosquito Control Program as a proactive measure in preventing disease. Please remember for the best protection against ticks and mosquitos to wear clothing with long pants and sleeves, and use an insect repellant that contains 20-30% DEET.

Influenza virus began circulating in New Hampshire for the 2016-2017 season during the month of September. Seasonal influenza is always a concern and preventative measures are key. Please remember to sneeze and cough into your sleeve or a tissue, wash your hands frequently and stay home from work or school if you have a fever or signs of illness. Annual influenza vaccines are recommended for everyone ages 6 months and up.

Deputy Health Officer Carla Smith attended the NH Health Officers Association Spring Workshop and the Fall Annual Meeting. Public health topics discussed covered drug paraphernalia in the home, asbestos, drinking water/groundwater DES Bureau, legal processes, and inspections of food services, schools, and private homesteads for DCYF placement. Carla Smith also attended a session of the Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (JLCAR) with members of the Department of Health and Human Services to support the initiation of a state immunization registry.

Bob Meade and Carla Smith both participated on the Fremont Safety Committee, which addresses safety and wellness for all town buildings. Safety and wellness tips as well as links to other sources can be found at www.Fremont.nh.gov.

Respectfully submitted,
Carla Smith, Deputy Health Officer