

11. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

The Department of Health Services is a unified agency bringing together traditional public health functions such as disease control and non-traditional functions such as direct patient care, mental-health services, coordination of emergency medical services, the protection and monitoring of the environment, handicapped children's services and functions of the office of the Medical Examiner. This arrangement enhances coordination and avoids duplication. The Department's mission is to preserve and protect the health and safety of the residents of the County.

For telephone numbers, see the blue pages of the telephone directory, "County Offices, Health Services Department."

BOARD OF HEALTH

By County Charter, the Board of Health has seven members and is chaired by the Commissioner of the Department of Health Services. Other members are the Chair of the Health Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature and at least three physicians, appointed by the Legislature for six-year terms. The Board of Health, subject to the provisions of the Public Health law and State Sanitary Code, has the power to adopt, promulgate, amend or repeal rules and regulations affecting public health in the County. They may consider any matter relating to the preservation and improvement of public health.

OFFICE OF HEALTH EDUCATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

This Office gives presentations on such topics as AIDS, smoking cessation and Lyme disease to schools, professional and community groups. It also acts as a clearinghouse for materials and videos on health topics.

DIVISION OF PATIENT CARE SERVICES

Health Centers at Amityville, Bay Shore, Brentwood, Coram, Greenlawn, Patchogue, Riverhead, Shirley, and Wyandanch are operated

by this Division, or their services are contracted for by this Division. Satellites are located in Amagansett, Central Islip, Greenport, and Southampton. Comprehensive services include AIDS testing, adult medicine, audiology, family planning, pediatrics, prenatal care, sickle-cell screening, sexually transmitted diseases, and providing food vouchers and nutrition education for pregnant women, infants and children (WIC).

Jail Medical Services provide medical care for inmates at the Riverhead and Yaphank Correctional facilities.

Lead Program screens for elevated lead levels in children. When the level is found to be high, a nurse makes a home visit and a sanitarian makes an environmental inspection; together they advise the family.

Medical Social Work Unit counsels patients and families and offers consultation to other professionals and the general public.

Mobile Mammography Program/Women's Health Partnership has two vans that visit health centers and community sites and can offer low or no cost breast cancer screenings to eligible women.

Immunization Action Program gives free immunizations. All preschoolers in the County are eligible.

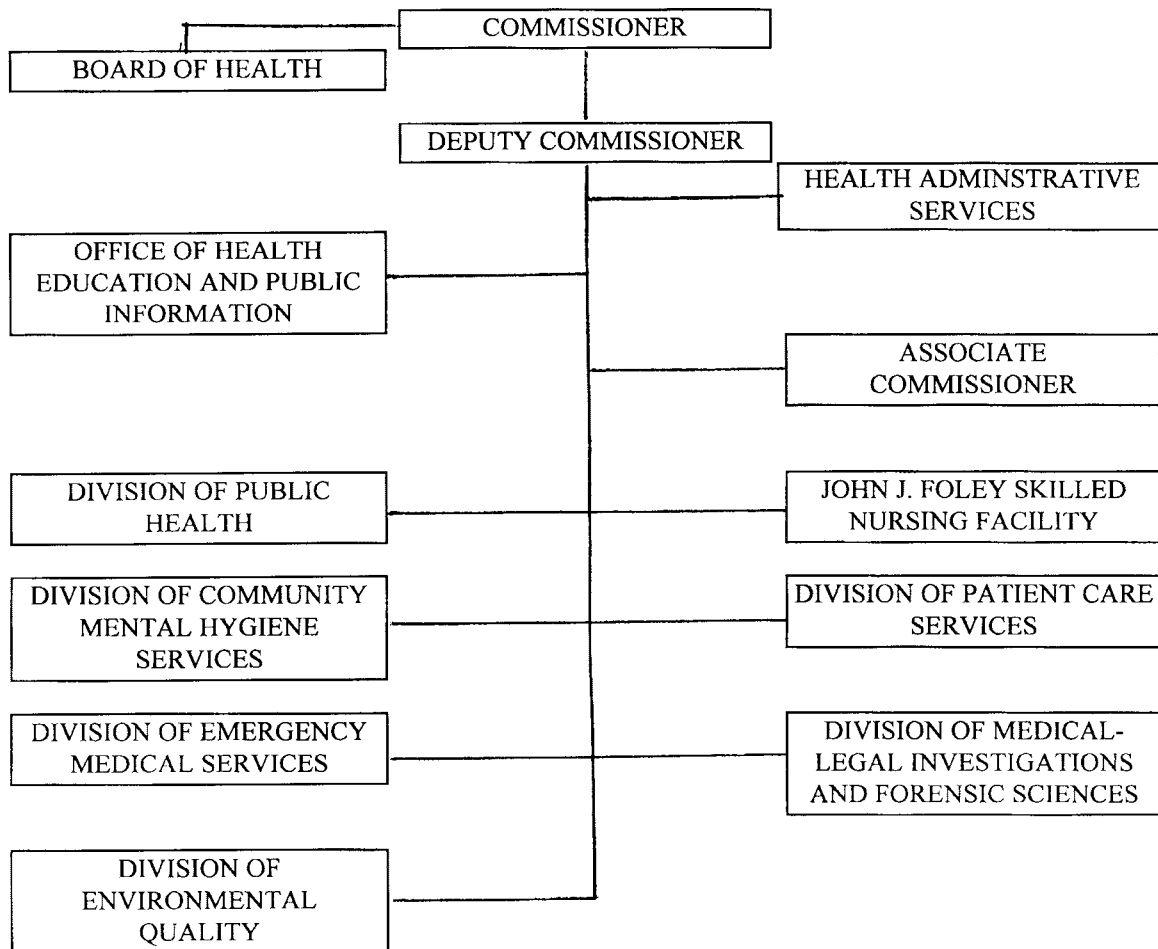
Bureau of Chest Disease provides consultation, examination services, treatment and follow-up for tuberculosis.

Suffolk Health Plan, a Medicaid managed care plan, and the Child Health Plus plan are administered by the Department.

DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

This Division works with providers of emergency services, community groups, hospitals and educational institutions to improve pre-hospital emergency medical care. It also provides technical assistance, training and education, and biomedical telemetry equipment, to assure appropriate care for the suddenly ill or injured.

FIGURE 11.1
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES



DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Control offers consultation for the prevention, control and treatment of communicable diseases, including sexually transmitted diseases, maintains a register of communicable diseases and holds immunization clinics as required by law.

Bureau of Public Health Nursing operates a Certified Home Health Agency, a Long-Term Care Program and an AIDS Home-Care Program. Through these programs, the Bureau provides part-time skilled nursing care and health guidance to pregnant and post-partum women, to infants and children with special needs, and to children and adults with acute or chronic illnesses, including HIV/AIDS. The bureau also provides home health aides, social work and rehabilitative therapies to people in their homes.

Bureau of Environmental Protection enforces the provisions of the State and County Health Laws and Sanitary Codes as they apply to eating establishments, hotels and motels, children's camps, mobile-home parks, migrant labor camps and x-ray facilities.

Bureau of AIDS Prevention and Control conducts active surveillance of AIDS cases, does epidemiological studies, offers consultation and medical monitoring of employees with high-risk occupational exposure, and educates the public and professionals.

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY MENTAL HYGIENE SERVICES

This Division provides mental health services to County residents through direct services as well as by contracting with public and private agencies for treatment of the mentally ill and the mentally retarded. It shares the cost of mental health treatment ordered by a criminal court or by the Family Court.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services provides treatment and preventive services and contracts with towns, schools and not-for-profit agencies to provide services. Services include outpatient treatment for alcoholism and cocaine use, methadone maintenance treatment, AIDS education and counseling, and vocational rehabilitation. Division personnel work with school

personnel, parent groups, human-service agencies, community organizations, and businesses.

DIVISION OF MEDICAL-LEGAL INVESTIGATIONS AND FORENSIC SCIENCES

This Division is responsible for investigating sudden, accidental, suspicious, violent or unattended deaths. Toxicology and crime laboratories service the Health, Police, District Attorney and Probation departments.

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Office of Water Resources monitors all public water supplies in Suffolk County and tests private wells by request for a nominal fee. Major studies of the quantity and quality of our aquifer system are conducted, such as determining the effects of drought and impacts of pesticide use.

Office of Wastewater Management reviews plans for, and inspects construction of sewage-disposal systems, private wells, public water connections and subdivisions. It also inspects trucks hauling solid wastes.

Office of Pollution Control regulates all aspects of the storage, transfer and use of toxic and hazardous materials in the County. It also regulates underground and above-ground petroleum storage tanks.

Office of Ecology reviews environmental impact statements; carries out conservation and environmental education programs; monitors the quality and quantity of the underground water supply, assures compliance with regulations on underground gasoline and fuel oil tanks; inspects public swimming pools and bathing beaches; and protects marine resources (water, shellfish and finfish). The Office of Ecology is the Program Office for administration of the Peconic Estuary Program.

Public and Environmental Health Laboratory performs sophisticated analyses of water and soil samples for pesticides, herbicides, solvents and petroleum products. The PEHL has routinely tested water samples for the gasoline additive MTBE since 1991, an issue that is only now coming to the forefront on a national level.

JOHN J. FOLEY SKILLED NURSING FACILITY

The skilled nursing facility in Yaphank has 285 beds, 12 of which are for AIDS patients. Medical and social needs of residents are met.

Adult Day Care Program is a Medicaid program for adults with conditions that require daily supervision such as Alzheimer's Disease, stroke, multiple sclerosis, head trauma, etc. Patients require health and rehabilitative services but not an inpatient setting.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Bureau of Services for Children with Special Needs coordinates services for young children



Photo © Adam Gaus

**Atlantis Marine World Aquarium,
Riverhead, NY**

(ages birth to 5 years) with disabilities and their families. This Bureau promotes high-quality care for handicapped children under 21 who need rehabilitation or treatment for chronic conditions. Diagnostic evaluation and orthodontic care, as well as financial assistance in some cases, are among the services provided.

LEARN TO BE...TOBACCO FREE

The County dedicated a significant portion of its proceeds from the National Tobacco Settlement to the formation of a comprehensive tobacco control program.

There are four main components of "Learn To Be...Tobacco Free":

1. A comprehensive K-12 health education program to be offered in every school in Suffolk County. In addition, smoking cessation will be available to all high school and middle school students.

2. A countywide smoking cessation program for adults. Free nicotine replacement products as well as a prescription medication will be available at no cost to medically eligible participants in the behavior modification program. These items have been shown to substantially increase success rates in those trying to quit. The program is under the direction of a nurse practitioner.

3. A public education and information program using the media. The tobacco industry has been very successful in convincing consumers that their products are "cool," and has used ads that depict smoking as a healthy and fun activity. The program hopes to denormalize tobacco use, especially among children. Different messages are being used for each target audience.

4. Increased enforcement through the tobacco compliance program, ensuring that tobacco products are inaccessible to children. The overwhelming majority of adults who smoke started before their 18th birthday. The longer children can be kept from becoming addicted to nicotine, the greater the chance they will never try tobacco products. The County has the strictest clean indoor air laws in the State. They will continue to be enforced to ensure Suffolk's residents are not exposed to second-hand smoke.