



# FACT SHEET ON DISTRICT DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH IN CONNECTICUT

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The following information has been put together to help educate community members on what a health district is and the benefits to your town joining or forming a health district in Connecticut.

## What is a district department of health?

A district department of public health or “health district” is a regional public health department formed by two or more municipalities to provide local public health services. A health district is a separate governmental entity from the town it serves. There are many benefits to being a member town of a health district. (See below – Benefits as a Member Town of a Health District.)

## What laws govern health districts?

The laws that govern health districts in Connecticut are found in the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Sections 19a-240 through 19a-246. The CGS can be found on the following web address:  
[Chapter 368f - District Departments of Health](#)

The following is a listing of the CGS section numbers and titles under Title 19a, Chapter 368f, District Departments of Health:

<a href="#">Section 19a-240</a>	Definition of “board”.
<a href="#">Section 19a-241</a>	Formation of district departments. Board.
<a href="#">Section 19a-242</a>	Appointment of director of health. Removal. Sanitarians. Authorized agent.
<a href="#">Section 19a-243</a>	District rules and regulations. Powers of district. Meetings. Expenses.
<a href="#">Section 19a-244</a>	Qualifications, term and duties of director of health. Employees.
<a href="#">Section 19a-245</a>	Reimbursement by the state. Proportionate reduction of payments to health districts.
<a href="#">Section 19a-246</a>	Withdrawal from district.

## Is there any financial assistance available from the state?

Yes, legislation passed by the General Assembly in 1963 makes it possible for a health district to receive state aid annually. Currently, the amount of \$2.60 per capita is given to each health district with a population of 50,000 or more or serves three (3) or more municipalities irrespective of total population (CGS [Section 19a-245](#)).

## What public health services are required of a health district?

Each district department of health and municipal department of health shall ensure the provision of a basic health program pursuant to CGS [Section 19a-207a](#). (See below – Basic Health Program.)

### What are the professional qualifications for a district director of health?

The district director of health may be a licensed physician and hold a degree in public health from an accredited school, college, university or institution or hold a graduate degree in public health from an accredited school, college or institution (CGS [Section 19a-244](#)). He or she would be appointed by the governing board of the district, with the approval of the Commissioner of Public Health (CGS [Section 19a-242](#)).

### How is the decision made to join the form or health district?

Towns, cities and boroughs, by vote of their legislative bodies, after a public hearing may unite to form a health district or vote to join an existing health district (CGS [Section 19a-241](#)).

### What happens to the employees of a municipal health department when the municipality joins a health district?

- a) The municipal director of health appointment is terminated (CGS [Section 19a-242](#)).
- b) Full-time employees become employees of the health district and may continue to participate and retain their rights and benefits in the municipal pension system without interruption until their retirement (CGS [Section 19a-244](#)).

### Can a town withdraw from the health district if it so desires?

Yes, a town can withdraw by voting to do so, providing it has been a member of the district for a least 24 months prior to such vote of withdrawal (CGS [Section 19a-246](#)).

### How would a health district be managed?

A district board of health, like a board of directors of a company, would manage the affairs of the district and would appoint the director of health with the approval of the Commissioner of Public Health. It would be the function of the board of health to establish by-laws and promote reasonable rules and regulations for the promotion of general health within the health district, not in conflict with any law or with the Connecticut public health code (CGS [Section 19a-243](#)).

### How many members would there be on a district board of health, and who appoints them?

The size of the district board of health is related to population. Appointments are made by the board of selectmen or other appropriate legislative bodies (such as city council). One representative is appointed from each municipality in the district. If a municipality has a population of more than 10,000, the municipality is eligible for one additional representative for each additional 10,000 in population, or part thereof. However, no municipality may have more than five (5) representatives. (CGS [Section 19a-241](#)).

### At the present time, how many health districts are in operation in Connecticut?

There are presently twenty (20) health districts in Connecticut. (See map below.)

### If I have additional questions regarding health districts, who can I contact?

You may contact the Office of Local Health Administration of the Connecticut Department of Public Health, 410 Capitol Avenue, P.O. Box 340308, Hartford, CT 06134-0308; Telephone (860) 509-7660; Email [OLHA.DPH@ct.gov](mailto:OLHA.DPH@ct.gov).



## BENEFITS AS A MEMBER TOWN OF A HEALTH DISTRICT

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1. A professional department staffed with trained and certified personnel with expertise in a wide variety of public health areas
2. Improved availability of services: seven days a week, 24 hours a day for emergencies
3. Reduction of fragmented services
4. Uniform enforcement of state laws, regulations, codes, and ordinances
5. Regional approach to address public health problems that cross town lines
6. Ability from member towns to pool staff, resources, and services in times of need
7. Greater capability and capacity to address a wider scope of public health concerns
8. Increased efficiency and utilization of resources through collaborative problem identification, priority setting, and coordination
9. Increased eligibility for additional state and federal funding thereby bringing dollars to the local level that might not otherwise be possible
10. Enhanced networking opportunities for your town to develop partnerships with other local health departments and state agencies



## BASIC HEALTH PROGRAM

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### **CGS Sec. 19a-207a. Basic health program.**

Each district department of health and municipal health department shall ensure the provision of a basic health program that includes, but is not limited to, the following services for each community served by the district department of health and municipal health department:

- (1) Monitoring of health status to identify and solve community health problems;
- (2) Investigating and diagnosing health problems and health hazards in the community;
- (3) Informing, educating and empowering persons in the community concerning health issues;
- (4) Mobilizing community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems for persons in the community;
- (5) Developing policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts;
- (6) Enforcing laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety;
- (7) Connecting persons in the community to needed health care services when appropriate;
- (8) Assuring a competent public health and personal care workforce;
- (9) Evaluating effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population-based health services; and
- (10) Researching to find innovative solutions to health problems.