

# PRINCETON HEALTH MATTERS

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## New Animal Control Officer Joins Health Department Team

In July, the Princeton Health Department welcomed it's newest team member, Nate Barson. Serving as Princeton's newest municipal employee, Mr. Barson will be employed as the town's animal control officer (ACO). As the ACO, Mr. Barson will be in charge of preserving the well-being of both domestic and wild animals, enforcing local and state statutes pertinent animal control while protecting and improving the public health of Princeton.



Growing up in West Windsor, Mr. Barson is familiar with the community, and has experience with the species of wildlife that frequent the area. Mr. Barson graduated from Delaware Valley College with a Bachelors in Criminal Justice with a minor in Biology. Shortly after, Mr. Barson began providing contractual animal control services to 18 municipalities in Hunterdon County. When asked about his opinion on the position, Mr. Barson stated, "I've always treated animal control as a public service, whether its through a contract or as an employee of a municipality or county." He added, "Animal control is an essential service for towns that want to control zoonotic disease, and promote the wellbeing of its residents, and its domestic and wild animals as well.

Though the animal control position was formerly under the Princeton Police Department for a period of time, this shift will not decrease the positive collaborations between the two departments. In fact, the animal control position relies on the teamwork of both departments. Police are typically the first to arrive on scene and when animals are involved, the animal control officer will likely work with the responding officer to handle the issue.

Mr. Barson has also expressed the desire to increase educational opportunities to the public on animal control and specifically, how to properly handle interactions with wildlife.



## Public Health Term of the Month:

### Herd Immunity

Also known as "community immunity," herd immunity occurs when a critical portion of a population is vaccinated against a contagious disease such as influenza, measles, mumps or pneumococcal disease. When this threshold is met, an outbreak is unlikely to occur, and most members of the community will be protected. Even those not eligible for certain vaccines—infants, pregnant women's or immunocompromised individuals—get some protection because the spread of disease is contained.

Herd immunity can even lead to the eradication of disease. For instance, today there is no evidence of naturally occurring smallpox transmission anywhere in the world, which eliminated the need for children to be vaccinated against it. The last case of smallpox in the United States was in 1948, and the last case in the world was reported in 1977 in Somalia.

Healthy People 2020, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has set national baseline goal of 90 percent for preschooler MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccinations. According to the initiative, reaching a national immunization rate of 91 percent has helped reduce measles rates by 99 percent.

## What is nuisance wildlife?

In accordance with NJ State guidelines, Animal Control Officers will not provide traps for healthy wildlife removal, nor relocate healthy wildlife captured in privately owned traps. Anyone trapping or relocating a wild animal must follow New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife regulations. Trapping animals that have not caused property damage or trapping without a permit may result in civil and criminal penalties. Causing trapped animals to die by any methods that are not approved may also result in civil and criminal charges.

Nuisance wildlife are animals that cause significant property damage, such as groundhogs that burrow alongside building foundations or under decks and sheds where it can lead to the failure of the structure. Raccoons and other animals causing damage to the property or living in the attic may also be considered nuisance wildlife. Though stinky, skunks are not often considered nuisance wildlife as they rarely cause significant property damage.



Residents should contact private wildlife control or extermination companies for nuisance animal issues. Traps are also available for purchase online and at many local hardware stores. If you have a question concerning a nuisance animal you may contact the Animal Control Officer at (609) 924-2728.

Wildlife that exhibits signs of rabies, which is rare, will be investigated by the Animal Control Officer. Residents should report any possible rabid animals to the Princeton Police Department (609)921-2100 or directly to the Princeton Animal Control Officer. Signs of rabies in wild animals include being wobbly or stumbling, walking in circles, not being afraid of humans, unusual aggression, lethargy, or coma.

## Health Officer's Message: Pertussis: A reemerging threat

Pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough, is a highly communicable disease caused by the organism *Bordetella pertussis*. The most prominent clinical feature is a persistent cough that may be accompanied by paroxysms, whooping, and vomiting. While most people recover without incident, it can be particularly dangerous for infants and unimmunized children. Complications can include pneumonia, encephalitis, and seizures. A highly contagious disease, pertussis can infect 90% of susceptible people exposed to an infected individual within their household.

In 2014, the United States witnessed 28,660 cases. The same year in New Jersey, 292 probable or confirmed cases were reported with 8 of these cases from Princeton. For 2015, PHD has received 1 report so far with 0 labeled confirmed or probable. Unfortunately, these numbers represent only a fraction of the true number pertussis cases as most cases are either not identified or not reported to public health officials.

Nationwide, the number of reports of pertussis have been on the rise since the 1980s. Public health officials suspect this is due to waning immunity from childhood vaccination against pertussis. For this reason, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services now requires all students entering sixth grade to receive a Tetanus Diphtheria and acellular Pertussis (Tdap) booster. Adults are also being encouraged to receive Tdap in place of Td when they come due for their tetanus booster. It is hoped that these recommendations will slow the spread of pertussis and decrease the number of children who become ill or even die from this infection. Unsure of your immunity? Speak with your primary care physician. Princeton is offering Tdap vaccines at the upcoming 2015 flu clinics. See Details: <http://princetonnj.gov/flu-2015.html>

## Update on Princeton's Health Department Accreditation Process

The Health Department has submitted the first year application fee to the National Accreditation Board. In November, Accreditation Coordinator (Keith Levine), and Health Officer (Jeff Grosser) will be traveling to Alexandria, VA to perform on site training with PHAB professionals on how to properly submit documentation to the Accreditation Board. Working tirelessly through summer, the Health Department has acquired nearly 75% of the necessary paperwork to become accredited.

The Public Health Department Accreditation Process seeks to advance quality and performance within public health departments. These standards are used for evaluating health departments processes and services, outcomes, and progress towards specific goals and objectives, and develops accountability to stakeholders. Accreditation provides a foundation for departments to identify performance improvements opportunities and management, develop leadership, and improve



# Health Department Announcements and Upcoming Events

## *Princeton has a satellite WIC clinic!*

Princeton WIC clinic operates the 3rd Friday of every month and is located in the Community Room of the Princeton Municipal Building, 400 Witherspoon Street. Upcoming WIC Clinic is scheduled for October 16th. WIC provides supplemental nutritious foods to pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up the age of five. For appointments and to see if you are eligible, please call (609) 498-7755.



## *Princeton Flu Clinic and Senior Health Fair*

The Princeton Health Department has teamed up with the Princeton Senior Resource Center and Rite Aid to provide a flu clinic and senior health fair. The event will occur at the Princeton Senior Resource Center (45 Stockton Street) on Tuesday, October 13, 1-7 p.m. Clinic appointments can be made by calling Mauri at (609)924-7108. In addition to the influenza vaccine, pneumococcal and DTAP vaccines will be offered. Attendees are urged to make an appointment and bring a completed consent form <http://www.princetonnj.gov/health/2015-2016-Screening-Questionnaire-Consent.pdf>



## *Community Night Out: What a success!*

Sponsored by the Princeton Recreation and Police Departments, Princeton's community night out featured many municipal departments providing education and fun giveaways! This year, the Princeton Health Department concentrated on educating children and their parents on sun safety. Over 200 UV detecting bracelets and necklaces were made. The UV detecting beads turn bright colors when exposed to the sun too long.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH MATTERS...IN PRINCETON**

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