

RUTHERFORD HEALTH DEPARTMENT

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

COUNCIL LIAISON

Frank Nunziato

BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Joseph DeFazio, President

Dorothy Willms, Vice-President

Theresa Gilburn, Board Secretary

Matt Ziemkiewicz, Board Member

Linda Manzo, Board Member – Resigned 9/19/2019

Denise Goumas, Board Member

Michael Sartori, Board Member – Resigned 9/18/2019

Mr. Ellery Tarife – Alternate Board Member #1 – Appointed 2/25/2019

2019 STAFF

Brian M. O’Keefe, Administrative Officer/Registrar of Vital Statistics

Linda A. Hricik, Secretary, Deputy Registrar of Vital Statistics

Janet Calhoun, RN

Therese Hoff, RN

Dr. Jill A. Garripoli Pedalino, Public Health Physician

Dr. Neil Beeber, Board Veterinarian

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During the 2019 calendar year, the Rutherford Health Department continued to provide a wide variety of services to borough residents. Through various preventive screening programs, issuance of vital statistics documents, investigation of citizen complaints, inspection activities, etc., the Health Department had contact with a large segment of the borough population.

The Health Department continued to increase the level of publicity and public awareness towards state mandated programs and services offered to residents. Press releases and pictures were taken of various programs and screenings offered at the Health Center and submitted to The South Bergenite, and approximately 30 service organizations and houses of worship in the borough.

The environmental health aspect of the department drastically changed in 2019, with the outsourcing of the Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) responsibilities to the county health department. The shared services contract with the county health department continues to be limited in scope and did not encompass all of the responsibilities that the department has been tasked with and services provided by an in-house REHS.

This reporting period marked the 28th year of rabies in land-based animals in Rutherford. This continued to result in an increase in manpower hours being devoted to rabies control measures and follow up on 26 animal related bites to humans and other animals. The department continued to receive excellent service and cooperation by the Governing Body contracting once again in 2019 for a private Animal Control Service. This decision not only realized the borough an increase in field related animal control services, but at a time when it was continually needed with the community in the rabies enzootic area.

The Public Health Nursing Staff continued to provide the residents with numerous preventive health screening programs. 54 residents participated in the Multi-Phasic Blood Screening, Four residents participated in the annual Pap & Breast Screening Program, and 139 residents were vaccinated against the seasonal influenza virus (January 1 – October 22, 2019). 137 blood pressures were taken during the weekly walk-in blood pressure program held on Tuesdays.

For the 25th consecutive year, the Board of Health was able to apply for reimbursement for those residents 65 and over who were Medicare patients and were vaccinated against influenza through a shared services agreement with the Bergen County Department of Health Services.

The department continued its role in the School Nursing Program. For the 2018-2019 School Year, the Public Health Nurses continued the School Nursing Services at The Academy at St. Mary and St. Mary High School.

Since 1992, state entitlement per pupil is available for providing nursing services to the non-public school students by the board of health through a shared services agreement with the Rutherford Board of Education. This resulted in reimbursement of \$31,719.00 for the 2018-2019 school year.

By continuing our role in the school-nursing program, it required at a minimum, the Public Health Nurses, when schools are in session, to devote an additional five (5) hours a day on this program. 333 students received our services in the 2018-2019 school year.

For the first ten months of the 2019 calendar year, a number of specific items are in need of noting:

Board members Dorothy Willms and Dr. Joseph DeFazio were appointed to three-year terms on the Board of Health by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the Governing Body.

Councilman Frank Nunziato was also appointed as the council liaison to the Board of Health.

The Department Head continued to serve as the bloodborne pathogen coordinator for the Borough.

The Men's and Ladies' Rooms at the health center were open to the public during the summer concert series and other special events held in Lincoln Park and staffed by a park ranger.

The bloodborne pathogen exposure control plan was updated and distributed to Police, Fire, EMS, and the DPW. Bloodborne pathogen training is now available on-line during the year.

The Department Head participated in the "Community Partnership Committee" set up by Felician University in order to improve communications and relationships with the borough. After the Felician University building project was approved by the Planning Board these meetings ceased to continue.

West Nile Virus activity in the Borough was very quiet in 2019. This was the 13th consecutive year, since 2000 when the virus appeared in the State that we did not have a crow test positive for the West Nile Virus. The Department did reach out to 17 service stations in town regarding the issue of stagnant water associated with discarded vehicle tires.

The Department had to hire a private landscaper to cut overgrowth on several properties in town when the property owner failed to respond to written notice provided. Several liens on the properties for the cost of the clean-ups were placed by the Governing Body on the properties in question. Overgrowth on properties were abated by the health department on the following private properties: Summit Cross, Riverside Avenue, Elliott Place and Carmita Avenue (twice, same property).

The health department completed a review of records retention and after approval from the state, we were able to destroy several boxes of records.

Two members of the staff donated sick days to two ailing employees in the Department of Public Works.

Influenza vaccination clinic for the 2019-2020 influenza season was held on October 23rd, with 120 residents vaccinated against the flu.

The Borough continued to have a series of temporary special events throughout the year that required departmental participation in the planning stage and review food safety concerns for food items provided to the public to insure a safe and wholesome food product. 101 temporary applications were reviewed for food safety concerns.

Access to Open Public Records Act requests, known as OPRA requests, increased to 117 requests, 1,301 pages of health department documents, and three cd's. One person made a request for 834 pages of documents.

The Department spent a considerable amount of time investigating animal bites to humans and to domestic animals. This was a very time intensive activity. Eight animals (five cats, two dogs, and one bat) were sent by the Department to the State Health Department Rabies Lab outside Trenton, NJ to rule out rabies. While 30 animal bites to humans were followed up on, some of the bite exposures were problematic but did not result in any residents receiving the post exposure treatment for rabies, which now involves four inoculations over a 14-day period of time. Since rabies is a fatal disease, proper follow up and documentation in a timely manner is imperative.

Former board of health member and former Mayor Andrew E. Bertone passed away in 2019 and a resolution honoring Mr. Bertone's contributions to the borough was passed at a board of health meeting in his honor and sent to his family.

Suez Water reported some elevated lead levels in their water system, one in a home tested in Rutherford. The Department Head attended a meeting at Suez's Water Headquarters in Paramus, NJ on behalf of the mayor regarding this issue.

The governing body amended the appointment ordinance of members to the board of health by adding two alternate member positions as allowed under state statute.

Mr. Elery Tarife was appointed by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the governing body to one of the two alternate positions.

The board of health updated its retail food establishment license fees with general increases of 10% each year for the next three years.

The board of health re-appointed Mr. Brian M. O'Keefe as the Registrar of Vital Statistics and a re-appointment resolution was passed by the board and sent to the state registrar as required by law. State statute requires that a deputy registrar be appointed by the registrar and Mrs. Linda A. Hricik was re-appointed deputy, along with two alternate registrars, Mrs. Janet Calhoun and Ms. Therese Hoff.

The Department Head was able to secure generic adult and junior epi-pens for the department at a cost of \$109.99 for a twin packet.

The borough administrator requested that the board of health minutes be posted on the borough's web site. The minutes for 2018 and 2019 are noted on the web site and can be viewed at www.rutherfordboronj.com.

The Department continued to be involved with the Bureau of Fire Safety with hoarding conditions inside dwelling units. Most of these complaints come to the department from the police department while responding to service calls at a particular address. The American population is aging and a number of these types of complaints involve elderly citizens who are residing in an owner/occupied residence.

Dr. Consetta Cheatam a local OB-GYN doctor in town volunteered her time and conducted a Breast Exam and Pap Smear Program for residents.

Nurses were able to arrange for the delivery of free adult and junior Epi-Pens for St. Mary High School and the Academy at St. Mary.

Department worked on the issue of a rodent problem in the main sewer line on Feronia Way and Wheaton Place. One resident reported over a period of time 10 rats in her toilet bowl and four rats in her home. The main sewer line in two locations were baited by the department with a restricted use rodenticide. Since our Department's efforts, no further complaints have been received.

The Department Head continued to serve on a host of Borough appointed committees during the calendar year, i.e., Safety Committee, Local Emergency Planning Committee, The Office of Emergency Management, Bloodborne Pathogen, and Special Events Committee.

Four new establishments opened in 2019. Those establishments are located at: 30 Park Avenue, 8 Highland Cross, 50 Route 17 South, and 300 Union Avenue.

Mr. Mike Sartori and Mrs. Linda Manzo both resigned from the board of health after re-locating outside of the borough.

The Department Head interacted with the county health department, who arranged for the county health department to accept outside bloodborne pathogen training and entering the training records into their database.

Student Government Day occurred in the Borough in May and two Rutherford High School students were assigned to the department for a portion of the day.

The Department hired a bee keeper/contractor to remove honeybees from a borough tree on Elycroft Parkway and re-locating the bees and securing the harborage areas on the tree to discourage additional infestation of the bees.

The board of health continued with a number of share services in 2019, including, bloodborne pathogen program, influenza vaccination program, nonpublic school nursing program and an administrative/infrastructure contract with the county.

The Department followed up with the massage therapy establishments in town after the governing body enacted amendments to its massage therapy ordinance.

Influenza vaccination clinics for the 2019 influenza season were held on October 22nd and November 1, 2019 with 120 residents vaccinated against the flu on October 22, 2019.

The Borough received \$31,719.00 in state aid for the Department providing the nursing services at St. Mary High School and the Academy at St. Mary, covering 333 students. This was accomplished without adding staff.

The following is a breakdown of activities for each component of the Health Department:

2019 VITAL STATISTICS

- 1,073 - Certified Copies of Death, Marriage, Domestic Part., & Birth Records Issued
- 1,588 – Electronic Certified Copies of Death Certificates Issued
- 215 - Death Certificates Processed (178 electronic & 37 photocopied)
- 95 - Marriage Licenses Issued
 - 2 - Re-Marriages Occurred in Rutherford
- 46 - Death Certificates Recorded for Deaths Occurring in Rutherford
- 50 - Marriage Certificates Filed in Rutherford
- 116 - Residents Died During 2019
- 173 - Births Recorded in Rutherford
 - 2 - Births Occurred in Rutherford

\$1,695.00 in revenue was received for certified copies of Marriage, Birth, Death Records, Civil Union, Domestic Partnership Affidavits, Burial Permits and Marriage Licenses plus electronic payments of \$7,800.00 - (Vital Statistics - \$1,695.00 + Electronic Payments - \$7,800.00 = \$9,495.00.

From a budget and finance standpoint, the Board of Health realized a total revenue source of \$62,710.00. The largest sums were in the school nursing reimbursement account totaling \$31,719.00, retail food establishment licenses totaling \$26,661.00, vital statistics revenue totaling \$1,695.00, and electronic vital statistics revenue totaling \$7,800.00.

The vital statistics aspect of the department issued 1,073 certified copies of Death, Marriage, Domestic Partnership, Civil Union, and Birth records that generated \$1,695.00 and \$7,800.00 in electronic payments in revenue totaling \$9,495.00.

BUDGET & FINANCE

- Operating Budget - \$ 110,883.99
- Salary & Wages Budget - \$ 329,000.00
- Capital Budget - \$ 0
- Animal Control Services - \$24,000.00

In the 2019 budget process with the borough, there are two budgetary items that have had an impact on the board of health operating budget and need to be addressed with the governing body. Those two items are:

- 1- Abatement of overgrowth on properties by the health department resulted in charges of \$975.00 to the board’s budget. The bulk of these costs are eventually recouped by the borough, yet the board of health budget is not credited accordingly.
- 2- \$3,010.00 was charged to the board of health budget for ambulance corps medical physicals. This activity is not a function and responsibility of the board of health and in 2020 this account should be removed from the board’s budget and inserted into a more appropriate budget category.

The Health Department brought in the following revenue:

\$ 1,695.00	Vital Statistics
26,661.00	Retail Food Establishment Licenses
280.00	Vending Machine Licenses
30.00	Store Milk Licenses
31,719.00	School Nursing Reimbursement (2018-2019 School Year)
2,375.00	State Shared License Fees
\$ 62,710.00	Total Revenue

(\$7,800.00-Electronic Payment Total for 2019 not added to above total revenue) (\$62,710.00+ \$7,800.00 = \$70,510.00 (2019 Revenue Final Total)).

ADULT SCREENING PROGRAMS

Blood Screening:	April 26, 2019 - 23 - (23 referred)
	Oct. 25, 2019 - 31 - (30 referred)
Flu Clinic:	Participants - *January - June 2019 = 19
	(*includes three years and older)
	October 22, 2019 Clinic - 120 Participants
	November 1, 2019 Clinic -285 Participants
Pap Program:	October 9, 2019 - 4 Participants (3 referred)
Rabies Clinic:	April 6, 2019 - (68 Dogs - 12 Cats) Total 80

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

Blood Pressures	137
Communicable Disease Follow-up	63
Health Risk Assessments	17
Immunization Audits	23
Immunization Enforcement Follow-up	10
TB Testing (6 reactors)	38
Monitored elevated lead cases and investigated	1
Cardiovascular Assessments	15
Nutritional Assessments	127
Heights and Weights	68
Diabetic Education	3
Home visits for lead investigations	1

SCHOOLS

Complete IMM 8's & A45's (immunization charts) for all students according to New Jersey State Department of Health & Senior guidelines.

Provide health screenings according to New Jersey State Department of Health & Senior Services guidelines for the following:

St. Mary High School - 389.5 Nursing Hours - 2018-2019 School Year
 Health/Nursing Protocol for Middle States Accreditation
 Facilitate AED/CPR training for faculty and staff
 Facilitate Epi-Pen training for faculty and staff

The Academy at St. Mary – 319 Nursing Hours - 2018 - 2019 School Year
 Lice Screening - Students & Staff
 Facilitate Epi-Pen training for faculty and staff
 Health/Nursing Protocol for Mid States Accreditation

Continuing Education – Seminars & Webinars for Continuing Education Credits throughout the year – 15 Continuing Education Credits for Public Health Nursing & 15 Continuing Education Credits for Nursing Licenses.

Audits and surveys of public and private schools and 13 daycare centers and eight (8) schools in the borough concerning Immunization Compliance with Chapter 14 of The State Sanitary Code.

Complete School Nursing Program at St. Mary High School and The Academy at St. Mary covering over 333 students. Programs cover such things as auditing and maintenance of health records and immunizations, tuberculin testing, health screenings which include vision, hearing, scoliosis, heights and weights, first aid to ill and injured students and faculty, student health counseling, etc. At least five (5) nursing hours are spent each day on programs when schools are in session.

HEALTH COUNSELING

Includes telephone calls, walk-ins, home visits, screenings, follow-ups, etc. – approximately 4,000.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The bulk of the food related inspections and those of the daycare centers, public recreational facilities, pet shop, tanning establishment, kennel inspections, etc., and plan review and citizen complaints received regarding those establishments were outsourced to the county health department.

CITIZEN COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION

The department handled a large segment of the citizen complaints received during this reporting time period. Of the 344 citizen complaints received from the public, 319 of the 344 complaints were followed up and investigated by the Rutherford Health Department. The county handled 25 complaints. The department and the county together handled two complaints. It should be noted that the volume of citizen complaints logged by the department might be lower than the actual number received, since it is unsure if all of the citizen complaints handled by the county health department were logged into the citizen complaint numbering and tracking database maintained by our department. If the county had handled all of the citizen complaints, the county contract cost would have increased to \$47,286.24.

STAFFING ISSUES

The board of health and department head continue to express serious concerns about the continuity of services at the health department based on outsourcing of the registered environmental health (REHS) position. Currently two of the employees, (half of the current staff) who are key employees, are both eligible for retirement. One employee has completed 41 years of service and the other 32 years with the borough. There has been a 37% reduction in staffing levels in the department. Each and every employee in the health department has required licensing or certification requirements unique to their positions as compared to many of the other borough employees. Each health department employee handles various responsibilities outside their job title in order to allow the department to function properly and provide the essential public health services to the residents. The essential operations of the department have the potential of being seriously compromised by the current staffing arrangements.

FACILITY ISSUES

The health department operation has been housed in the municipal annex since 1981. For the last 38 years, the current facility continues to meet our needs to provide public health programs to the residents of Rutherford. Our section of the municipal annex is in very good shape and has not been a burden to the borough in maintenance costs. For example, over the last 38 years, only the carpeting and the HVAC unit have had to be replaced in the facility, in addition to a backflow preventer being installed on the main sewer line to the building. The facility, while 38 years old, is the third newest facility owned by the borough. The facility has been used for meetings by

other committees in the borough due to its handicapped capabilities and is used during multiple special events held in Lincoln Park so the public has access to restroom facilities. With the construction of a new police department facility planned to commence in 2020, there have been no discussions with the board of health as to what the status of the municipal annex will be and if the health department will continue to occupy the municipal annex, and if not, what is the plan for a suitable other location for public health activities.

CLOSING REMARKS

This report is a credit to the members of the Rutherford Board of Health for their insight and support of the Staff in providing a public health program designed to meet the needs of the Community. Board members serve on the Board of Health to fulfill the statutory responsibility of a local board of health and receive no compensation for devoting their time and talent to the Borough of Rutherford.

The Governing Body of the Borough of Rutherford needs to be commended for continuing to provide an acceptable and reasonable level of funding to the Board of Health in order that public health needs and mandates can be successfully achieved.

A special thanks needs to be extended to the Borough Administrator who was instrumental in resolving a host of outstanding board of health issues during this reporting period. His assistance was gratefully appreciated by the staff and board of health members.

As this report concludes the 20th year of the 21st century for the Rutherford Health Department, many major dramatic health threats have been eliminated since the turn of the 20th century which have contributed to the increase in the average life span since the early 1900's by over 30 years, 25 years attributable to advances in public health.

Local public health continues to adjust to changes in the public health infrastructure since the local board of health was created by the Governing Body back in 1901, with all of the powers and duties delegated to the Board by acts of the State of New Jersey Legislature. The Board of Health continues to take the lead by partnering with other governmental agencies in shared services agreements. In 2019, the Board had a shared service contract with the Bergen County Department of Health Services for public health infrastructure and administration, direct nursing supervision, influenza vaccination reimbursement through Medicare Part B and blood borne pathogen training and immunization for employees.

The Board also continued with a shared service contract with the Rutherford Board of Education, providing nursing services to two of the nonpublic schools in town, realizing the Borough a revenue source of \$31,719.00. In addition, the Board continued to encourage the Governing Body by contracting with a private animal control service, providing the borough with additional services.

The staff looks forward to working with the board in the 2020 Calendar Year in continuing to provide a sound and robust public health program to the residents of Rutherford. Working with a continued tight budget framework and a continued reduction in staffing, the 2020 year should continue to pose some unique challenges to the Staff and Board of Health.

Respectfully Submitted
For The Board of Health,

Brian M. O'Keefe
Administrative Officer
Registrar of Vital Statistics
Bloodborne Pathogen Coordinator
Rutherford Health Department