

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**RUTHERFORD BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**FOR THE YEAR 2008**

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Dr. Ira Kurz, Board Public Health Physician

**RUTHERFORD HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2008**

During the calendar year 2008, 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 News Leader of Rutherford, The South Bergenite, and to approximately 30 service organizations and houses of worship in the borough.

The environmental health aspect of the Department continued to be active by conducting 126 food related inspections and sampling 165 potentially hazardous food items from local food establishments. 548 citizen complaints were received and investigated. Five Municipal Court complaints were signed to alleviate citizen concerns.

The 2008 calendar year marked the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 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 2008 for a private Animal Control Service. This decision not only realized the Borough an increase in field related animal control services, but at a reduced cost and at a time when it was continually needed with the Community in the rabies enzootic area and an increase in 2008 in bat related human rabies exposures.

The Public Health Nursing Staff continued to provide the residents with numerous preventive health screening programs. The Influenza Vaccination Program, Multi-Phasic Blood Screening Program and Child Health Conference continue to be the most popular programs. 234 residents participated in the Multi-Phasic Blood Screening and 757 residents were vaccinated against the Influenza Virus. 337 blood pressures were taken during the weekly walk-in blood pressure program held on Tuesdays. The Child Health Conference continued to provide to residents State funded vaccine for the prevention of 13 childhood diseases with 37 children immunized by the Board of Health Pediatrician.

For the 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, the Health Department was able to apply for reimbursement for those residents 65 and over who were Medicare patients and were vaccinated against Influenza. Instead of the Influenza Vaccination Program costing the Department \$10,720 in vaccine costs, with Medicare reimbursement, with a potential savings to the Borough of \$6,959.60. We vaccinated a total of 757 adult residents over four clinics for 2008.

The Department continued its role in the School Nursing Program. For the 2007-2008 School Year, the Public Health Nurses continued the School Nursing Services at St. Mary High School, Rutherford Child Care Center and St. Mary Elementary School.

State entitlement per pupil is available for providing these services to the non-public school students and resulted in reimbursement of \$42,615.00 for the 2007-2008 School Year. To accommodate the continued school nursing involvements, adjustments made to a number of existing nursing related programs remained in place.

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 six (6) hours a day on this program. This resulted in the Public Health Nurses spending less time on other Health Department sponsored programs and the annual program usage for other 2008 programs reflects a decrease in resident participation.

From a budget and finance standpoint, the Board of Health realized a total revenue source of \$83,634.00 in 2008. The largest sums were in the school nursing reimbursement account that totaled \$42,615.00, retail food establishment licenses totaling \$25,026.00, and vital statistics revenue totaling \$11,497.00.

The total appropriation for Salaries, Wages, Operating and Capital Budgets for 2008 were \$453,963 which was 1.76% of the total Municipal Budget (\$25,829,973).

The Vital Statistics aspect of the Department issued 1901 certified copies of Death, Marriage, Domestic Partnership, Civil Union and Birth records that generated \$9,502.00 in revenue.

In the calendar 2008, a number of specific items are in need of noting:

West Nile Virus activity in the Borough was very quiet in 2008. Two dead crows were reported by residents. This was the second 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.

Six retail food establishments in the Borough were nominated for the “Bergen County Gold Star Program Award for Excellence In Food Protection”. Establishments that exceed minimum sanitation and food safety code requirements are eligible for recognition. The six establishments receiving the award were: Ice Cream Charlie’s, Burger King, Dairy Queen, 55 Kip Center, Rutherford Child Care Center, and Mattise Cafe.

The bloodborne pathogen exposure program was updated and distributed to the Police, Fire and EMS organizations as required by PEOSHA.

The Department interacted with the Animal Control Officer with regard to approximately a half of a dozen locations in the Borough that had a problem with a feral cat population. The cats were humanely trapped and removed, since cats are the leading domestic animal in New Jersey with the deadly rabies virus.

The Department followed up on a host of graffiti issues on structures throughout the Borough. Property owners were cooperative by removing the graffiti in a timely fashion when notified.

There was an increase in the number of properties in town this year where the property owners did not abate overgrowth violations, which forced the Department to hire a private contractor to abate the violations. Properties located on Prospect Place, Riverside Avenue, Eastern Way, Garfield Place and Washington Avenue had property maintenance code violations abated by the Health Department and the cost of the clean ups were sent over to the Chief Financial Officer and Tax Collector for tax lien action.

The Department properly disposed of 19 pounds, 7 ounces of regulated medical waste that was generated at health department programs. The regulated medical waste consisting of used syringes, live vaccine vials and over classified material was removed by a State DEPE licensed medical waste hauler and a DEPE documented tracking form was placed on file for auditing purposes.

With one of the Public Health Nurses, a visual environmental lead investigation was conducted of a rented dwelling unit that had a child with an elevated blood lead level. The child’s exposure occurred in Jersey City and the child was relocated to a dwelling unit in Rutherford by the parents. Subsequent venous blood lead levels revealed the lower lead level after the inspection and providing the parents of the child with health education information on lead exposure to small children.

The Department Head continued to serve on a host of Borough appointed committees during the calendar year including participation on the municipal alliance committee, safety committee, local emergency planning committee, the office of emergency management, information and technology, bloodborne pathogens, recycling and environmental, and special events committee.

The Borough continued to have a series of 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 at these events to insure a safe and wholesome food product was provided at these temporary events.

The Department spent a considerable amount of time investigating animal bites to humans. This was a very time intensive activity. While 35 animal bites were followed up on, some of the bite exposures were problematic and did result in several residents receiving the post exposure treatment for rabies. Since rabies is a fatal disease, proper follow up and documentation in a timely manner is imperative.

During the month of August, in a 19-day period of time, we had investigated nine calls of live bats in habitable dwellings, with six of the nine bats being tested for rabies and one bat testing positive for the deadly disease. Nine residents went through the post exposure treatment for rabies as a result of the potential exposure, including a seven month old infant.

In 2008, the Governing Body passed an ordinance outlining a fee of \$100.00 for the Mayor to perform weddings as a revenue source. The Municipal Court Judge in 2008 elected not to perform weddings, deferring to the Mayor to conduct the ceremonies.

A host of computer issues effected the Department throughout the year. Three of the six desk top computers for the staff crashed and had to be replaced in addition to a printer. The units that were replaced were original equipment that was over 10 years old.

The Department was able to network with St. Mary's Hospital in Passaic who conducted blood work for the Prostate Cancer Screening Program and Pap and Breast Exam Program at a reduced rate to the participants.

The Department spent some time during the summer months assisting a Rutgers University student graduate who had completed the Environmental Health and Law Program at Cook College with her mandated field work. The student successfully passed the State Health Department license exam in November.

With the assistance of the Building Department and the Bureau of Fire Safety, the Department was involved in checking on the welfare of residents residing in five dwellings in the Borough. Gross unsatisfactory living conditions were noted in one of the private homes with the occupant being relocated. The other four dwellings were maintained in a less than desirable condition and the Department worked along with the occupants to improve the living conditions to insure a safe and healthy environment.

One of the public health nurses retired on October 1<sup>st</sup> and adjustments were made with the remaining two nurses to conduct the school nursing programs at St. Mary High School, St. Mary Elementary School and the Rutherford Child Care Center, in addition to the nursing programs at the health department.

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

**\*2008 VITAL STATISTICS**

- 1,901 - Certified Copies of Death, Marriage, Domestic Part., & Birth Records Issued
  - 126 - Death Certificates Processed
  - 126 - Burial Permits and/or Transit Permits Issued
  - 106 - Marriage Licenses Issued
    - 3 - Civil Union Applications Issued
  - 57 - Death Certificates Recorded for Deaths Occurring in Town
  - 99 - Marriage Certificates Filed in Rutherford
    - 3 - Civil Union Certificates Filed in Rutherford
    - 2 - Re-Marriage Certificates Filed in Rutherford
- 107 - Residents Died During 2008
  - 0 - Births Recorded in Town
- \*164 - Birth Certificates Received for New Residents
  - \* Female - 67                      Male - 93

\* - As of January 21, 2009

\$11,497.00 in revenue was received for Certified Copies of Marriage, Birth, Death Records, Civil Union, Domestic Partnership Affidavits, Burial Permits and Marriage Licenses.

**2008 – BUDGET & FINANCE**

2008	Operating Budget - \$44,567
2008	Salary & Wages Budget - \$402,946
2008	Capital Budget - \$6,450

Total Borough Funds allocated for Board of Health, Salary & Wages, Capital & Operating Budget in 2008 was \$453,963 or 1.76% of the total Municipal Budget (\$25,829,973).

If you factor in the Board of Education budget (\$33,633,818), with the Borough budget, we required 0.77% of the money raised by taxes to cover the entire Health Department's budget in the calendar year 2008.

The Health Department during 2008 brought in the following revenue:

\$ 11,497.00	Vital Statistics
25,026.00	Retail Food Establishment Licenses
1,010.00	Vending Machine Licenses
36.00	Store Milk Licenses
0	Court Fines -* \$1,057 - Noted only for 2008 - Not Added to Revenue
42,615.00	School Nursing Reimbursement (2007-2008 School Year)
0	Miscellaneous Fees (Including Lead Testing)
2,725.00	Dedicated Revenue
725.00	Massage License Fees
\$ 83,634.00	Total Revenue

**2008– ADULT SCREENING PROGRAMS**

Blood Screening:	April – 119 (referred 110) Oct. - 115 (referred 113)
Flu Clinic:	Participants –757
Hemocult:	22
Pap Program:	Nov. 8, 2008 – 12 Participants (0 Referrals)
Pneumonia:	Throughout 2008 –5 participants
Podiatry:	February 27, 2008 – 12 Participants (2 Referrals)
Prostate:	June 24,2008 - 22 (referred 4)
Rabies Clinic:	March 29, 2008 - (167 Dogs - 20 Cats) Total 187
Skin Cancer:	May 21, 2008 - 67 (referred 15)

**2008 – PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING**

Audiology	0
Blood Pressures	337
Communicable Disease Follow Up	56
Health Risk Assessments	28
Immunization Audits	13
Referral Home Visits	4
TB Testing (seven positive reactors for follow-up)	112
Newborn Letters (As of 1/9/09)	159
Medication management & follow-up for positive Mantoux Reactor client From Bergen County TB Chest Clinic	1
Monitored two elevated lead cases and investigated	3

**2008 – CHILD HEALTH CONFERENCE**

Attendance	41
Children Immunized	40
Hearing Screening	0
Hematocrit & Hemoglobin	0
Hours	9
Lead Testing	1
Nurse Counseling	41
Physicals	12
Referrals	1
TB Testing (CHC)	0
Vision Screening	0

**2008 – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH****Citizen Complaints** 548

## Chapter 12 – Detailed food Inspections:

Satisfactory on Initial Inspection	103
Satisfactory on Re-inspection	5
Conditional on Initial Inspection	9
Conditional on Re-inspection	0
Unsatisfactory	0
Spot Checks – Re-inspections	5
After-Hour Complaints, Activities	30
Animal Bites Follow Up	38
Child Care Facilities Inspections	1
Court Action Complaints	1
Food Embargoes	1
Food Samples	165
Garbage Inspections	220
Inter Office Memos	114
Licensed Retail Food Establishments	126
Licensed Massage Therapy Establishments	1
Miscellaneous Correspondence	798
Miscellaneous Food Related Inspections	67
Mobile Vendor Inspections	3
Pet Shop Inspections	1
Plan Review	9
Pre-Operational Inspection – Chapter 12	5
Public Recreational Bathing Inspections	2
Youth Camps	0

Audits and surveys of public and private schools and 12 daycare centers in the Borough concerning Immunization Compliance with Chapter 14 of The State Sanitary Code.

Complete School Nursing Program at St. Mary High School, St. Mary Elementary School and Rutherford Child Care Center covering over 515 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 and student health counseling, etc. At least five (5) Nursing Hours are spent each day on programs when schools are in session.

Health counseling, which includes telephone calls, walk-ins, home visits, screenings, follow-ups, etc. – approximately 4,000.

The Annual Report for 2008 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.

The Governing Body of the Borough of Rutherford also 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 mandates can be successfully achieved.

As this report concludes the ninth year of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for the Rutherford Health Department, many major dramatic health threats have been eliminated since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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. Infectious diseases associated with poor hygiene and poor sanitation, diseases associated with poor nutrition, poor maternal and infant health, and diseases or injuries associated with unsafe workplaces or hazardous occupations have been drastically reduced or eliminated.

While this list of health threats seems rather remote to us today based on advances in public health, we have completed the eighth year of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with public health threats inconceivable over 100 years ago. The concern of biological terrorism is one example of a modern day public health threat that presented itself in the State of New Jersey six years ago with the release of Anthrax through the mail system. Another example of a dreaded disease now resurrected by the federal government as a source of a potential biological weapon of mass destruction is Smallpox. Smallpox (variola virus), which was eradicated worldwide in 1977, now has become a concern because of its potential use of clandestine supplies of the Smallpox virus being used in a bioterrorism incident in the United States. Except for laboratory stockpiles, the variola virus has been eliminated. However, in the aftermath of the events of September and October 2001, there is heightened concern that the variola virus might be used as an agent of bioterrorism. For this reason, the U.S. government is taking precautions for dealing with a smallpox outbreak. The concern of biological terrorism highlights the need for the public health infrastructure to change to provide the elements necessary for successful public interventions throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Special thanks have to be extended to the members of the Medical Community who volunteered their time during various screening programs offered at the Health Center throughout the year: Dr. Manuel R. Morman, for conducting a Skin Cancer Screening Program, Dr. Philip Obiedzinski, for conducting the Foot Screening Program & Dr. Theodore Witter, for conducting the Pap & Breast Screening Program. Additionally, St. Mary Hospital in Passaic also assisted the Department by conducting the lab work, at a nominal charge, relative to the Prostate Cancer Screening Program and the Pap & Breast Program. All of these programs would not have been possible without the willingness of the aforementioned individuals in donating their time and services to our Department.

The Staff looks forward to working with the Board in the 2009 Calendar Year in continuing to provide a sound public health program to the residents of Rutherford. While the US economy took a turn downward towards the end of the 2008 calendar year, it did not affect the continued demand for health services on the part of the Borough population. Working with a continued tight budget framework, the 2009 year should pose some unique challenges to the Staff and Board.

Respectfully Submitted,  
For The Board Of Health,

Brian M. O'Keefe  
Administrative Officer  
Rutherford Health Department