

BERLIN HEALTH DEPARTMENT & NURSING SERVICES

The City of Berlin Health Department serves several functions for the community. As a self-inspecting community Berlin has the responsibility of protecting the public by ensuring that food establishments are following best practices. Each establishment is licensed on a yearly basis and any complaints are inspected and if needed plans of correction are issued to ensure safety. Any person or place of business that serves food to the public more than four times a month (not including those who provide only prepackaged foods such as chips or soda in individual sealed containers) is required to have a food license.

At this time a license is \$50. Any person or place serving food less than four times a month is still expected to follow safe handling guidelines and is given handouts on how to maintain safety. New Hampshire has Farmer's Markets laws and Homestead laws governing making foods in the home for sale to the public which means the Health Officer also spends time educating individuals on those laws in addition to safe food handling education and inspections. Should anybody have a concern about any food vendor they can contact the Health Department at 752-1272.

The Health Officer also responds to complaints on nuisances to the health of the public such as infestations, unsanitary conditions, and threats such as conditions that could cause mosquitoes, rodents, and other harmful vectors to breed. The City is charged with enforcing health and safety laws to protect the public. In addition the Health Officer works with other community partners to win grants to promote the overall mental, physical and financial health of the citizens. One example of how the public benefits from community partners working together is our

ability to once again provide vegetable seedlings to the Berlin Recreation Department's Summer Program so children could experience the fun of growing their own vegetables and could eat the healthy produce they grew. This was made possible this past summer through a partnership with WREN and The Roundtable Green House. WREN, while working on a grant to teach gardening and cooking, heard of the city's desire to once again have gardens for the children participating in summer programs and worked with The Roundtable Green House for donations of vegetable plants for the children.

It is our hope that we will inspire another generation to garden and to enjoy fresh produce. Fresh fruit and vegetables are essential in helping to maintain a healthy body mass index and healthy blood sugar levels. Gardening is a wonderful way to exercise as well. Unfortunately, Coos County has repeatedly scored poorly in Community Health Indexes in areas of obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and smoking. Establishing healthy eating and fun ways to exercise at a young age carries over as a lifestyle as adults.



A large function of the Health Department is the Home Health Nursing Program and Public Health Clinic. The Home Health Program provides skilled nursing in Berlin, Gorham, Randolph, Milan, Dummer and Shelburne. Services provided include medication preparation and reorder assistance, IV therapy, wound vacuum

therapy, home health aides, and end of life palliative care, wound dressing changes, lab draws, foot care and head to toe assessments, physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. The Public Health Clinic provides services such as cholesterol testing, Blood Glucose testing, blood pressure readings, flu shots, head checks, foot clinics and so much more.

Service Type	Quantity
B12 injection	83
Blood Pressure Check	127
Cholesterol Screening	94
Service Type	Quantity
Flu Vaccine	38
Home Health Aid Visits	111
Medicare	3,601
Private Insurance	55
Physical Therapy Only	17
Private pay RN	247
TB test	55
Toe Nail Clinics	300
VA visits	415
Occupational Therapy	30
Other	752
Totals	5,925

WELFARE DEPARTMENT

The City of Berlin Welfare Department is charged with the dual purpose of meeting the basic needs of the poorest in our community and responsibly accounting for the taxpayers' money. New Hampshire requires each of its municipalities to have general assistance to help "those who are poor and unable to support themselves". This mandate is

balanced against keeping taxes low. In order to maintain that balance the City maintains great relationships with social service agencies, church assistance programs, food pantries, the Berlin Housing Authority, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services and other groups in the community who help low income individuals meet their basic needs of shelter, food, medication, utilities to maintain heat, water and electricity, clothing and personal/household needs. By working together we can ensure the best use of all funding sources in order to help as many people as possible. The City maintains written guidelines per RSA 165 so that members of the public know what assistance is available and what requirements must be met.

The City, when it assists with basic needs, files a lien on property owned in New Hampshire if property is owned by an assisted person. If the assistance is not paid back within a year interest is charged at a rate of 6% per year. This ensures that the tax payers' money is returned to the general fund to support other community needs. If an individual does not own property and is physically/psychologically capable of doing so, the City requires assisted people to work on the Work Program either at a City office or a social service provider location in the city to "repay" the tax payers.

This serves the additional purpose of providing people with additional skills to list on a resume and someone to list as a reference. Oftentimes those who receive assistance do not have enough skills, work experience or local references which makes it more difficult to find employment that can cover their basic needs. More and more "working poor" are serviced by the department. Those who work 20 to 40 hours a week but still cannot earn enough to cover basic needs. Those who work places where

there is no paid sick time or paid family leave so if they or a family member become ill they are unable to meet the basic needs. Families served include those who experience a medical emergency that put them out of work, those applying for disability, those leaving harmful family situations, those who are homeless and those who work but still cannot afford all their basic needs.

The department provides case management, negotiates payment plans on the client's behalf, provides budgeting and referral services to other programs that can assist long term with alleviating some expenses such as Medicaid, SNAP (Food Stamps), HUD, etc. The overall goal is to help get the basic needs met in the long term and to promote personal responsibility as well. The Health and Welfare Director has, in conjunction with NH Catholic Charities, worked hard to bring financial fitness classes to the area so that community members can learn better ways of managing their finances and be proactive financially.

The average number of months a family was receiving assistance was 1.73 months. 63 vouchers were issued.

Assistance was provided to 41 families in the following areas and amounts:

Assistance Type	Amount Issued
Rent	\$16,136.05
Bus ticket	\$0
Shelter	\$0
Food	\$ 1,244.45
Personal/household need	\$ 442.89
Medication	\$0
Burials/Cremations	\$ 3,750.00
Electricity	\$ 798.35
Heating Fuel	\$0
Property tax	\$0
Totals	\$22,371.74

Nine Hundred hours were worked on the Work Program which translates into \$7,200 in assistance "repaid" through community work. \$1,733.63 was reimbursed through lien repayment and other repayment. 1,098 office contacts were made to answer questions, refer or assist clients. The City Welfare Office works closely with other area providers to ensure that basic needs are met and that the money available to help those in need goes as far as possible.

Angela Martin Giroux, Health & Welfare Director



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