



## Northampton County Recognizes Outstanding Senior Citizens

By State Rep. Ann Flood

The 2026 Outstanding Senior Awards were held at the Charles Chrin Community Center, recognizing individuals and one organization for outstanding service and dedication to the community.

This year's honorees included Breaking Bread Kitchen Crusaders of Bangor; Mary Ellen Erdie of Bushkill Township; John Diacogiannis of Hanover Township; Richard Elterich of Bethlehem; Mary Neher of Hellertown; Mark Atwood of Lower Nazareth; the Rev. Kevin Fetterhoff of Cherryville; Janice Fritts of Easton; Frank Chisesi of Bethlehem Township; Attorney William Agnew of Nazareth Borough; Donald Eckhart of Walnutport; and Barbara Sandbrook of Nazareth.

The awards, hosted by the Northampton County Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council, honor seniors who have made meaningful contributions through volunteerism, civic engagement, faith-based service and community leadership. My office was represented at the ceremony by my legislative aide, Alex Webber.

Congratulations to all of this year's honorees and thank you for your continued service to our communities!

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## Lead Could be Lurking in Your Water

By Janel Gist

SLATE BELT - Lead can feel like the boogeyman of old homes. Homeowners worry it could be in the paint on the windowsills or on the exterior of the home leading to chipping and lead dust. While many know there are dangers associated with lead paint in old homes, it may be less commonly known about the dangers of lead in water.

Lead isn't normally found in natural water supplies like rivers or freestanding bodies of water, instead lead in water is typically from pipes, the pipe soldering or fixtures. While there are laws in place now about how much lead can be present in objects, in the past there wasn't, or the amount of allowed lead was much higher.

Lead is an issue that can affect well owners and public water consumers equally. Well owners are typically on their own to maintain and monitor their own water quality, but public water consumers normally can trust that their supplier is regularly testing and maintaining the system. Lead is different because it's normally coming from within the house which the public water supply doesn't monitor.

This is why it's important for all homeowners, public or well, to be aware of the dangers of lead and take steps to mitigate risk. Lead is most dangerous to children and pregnant woman. Lead exposure in children can cause lowered IQ, developmental problems, anemia and other serious symptoms.

While homeowners may be confident that their plumbing is lead free, a sneaky source of lead in water can be faucets and fixtures.

Faucets from before 1997 are most likely to contain high levels of lead, before rules were changed. Homeowners should be cautious even today about buying faucets online. The US Consumers Product Safety Commission recalled 100k faucets from Amazon in 2025 because they contained high levels of lead (cpsc.gov).

While lead exposure is serious there is an easy way to mitigate risk with water. Lead gets into water when it's sitting in the pipes. The longer it sits the higher the lead concentration can be, to be safe it's best to run the water before using it, especially for drinking and cooking. If you are unsure of the content of your plumbing or are just looking for peace of mind, it can be helpful to get your water tested.

Lead water testing generally involves letting the water sit in your plumbing with no water usage for 6 to 24 hours and then collecting the very first water that comes out of the faucet. The maximum lead limit for public water supplies and a good guideline for private homeowners is 0.015 mg/l (milligrams per liter). The good thing about testing for lead is you generally only need to do it once unless you change your plumbing. Lead is a serious issue, but being informed and taking precautions can keep you and your family safe from the dangers of lead.

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