

State to assign 2 aides to monitor Christmas Tree Inn

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choose it over other living arrangements.

A city Health Department memo noted one nurse was told that residents live there because "This place offers us a refuge." Some of the residents lived in parks or at the St. George ferry terminal before moving there.

The landlord, Anthony Guddemi, said that he considers many people at the inn "like his family." Indeed, many residents say he is the only person who cares for them.

The Health Department, however, responding to a request for an investigation from Mrs. Connelly, said that apparently Guddemi's "care" is not enough.

Mrs. Connelly notified the Health Department on Dec. 21. A health sanitarian visited the three-story, 27-room building on Dec. 22 and found only one of its boilers operating. Work was in progress on the boiler:

The sanitarian said she saw "poor maintenance" and referred the problem to the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, which has listed the building for 32 minor violations.

A city nurse, Eldred Graham, visited the inn on Dec. 26, but residents barred her from rooms. "Several residents in the hallway assured us the rooms were warm," she said in a Jan. 2 memo. She added, "We found the hallway cold."

The nurse contacted Guddemi and revisited on Dec. 28. "Cleaning activity was in progress," Ms. Graham said. "The kitchen, hallways and bathrooms were being cleaned," she said.

Ms. Graham interviewed 18 residents. One needed immediate medical attention, and two "were found to be in need of some follow-up care." Ms. Graham had to return again to get the woman admitted to Richmond Memorial Hospital.

The city Health Department told Mrs. Connelly in a letter sent Monday that

the Island office "is continuing to monitor the situation to see that appropriate medical supervision is given."

Ms. Graham cautioned that, although some residents can walk, "they seem to require (medical) care."

About food, Ms. Graham said Guddemi told her that "he provides residents with three meals a day." The city says he has no licenses to prepare food. Ms. Graham said food includes "cheese peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and sometimes soup."

"Clients do seem to accept this regime without complaints. We did observe many empty beer bottles in rooms," she added.

Ms. Graham said the kitchen showed no evidence of use and had no refrigeration.

City Health Commissioner Reinaldo A. Ferrer, in a letter to Mrs. Connelly, said: "A major problem remains in the area of food...The meals provided by the owner, Mr. Guddemi, for an additional charge, are very inadequate."

Ferrer said the city would begin to work with five agencies to improve food services and "to decrease inappropriate discharges" from hospitals to the boarding house.

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