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From: Ofrane, Rebecca
Sent: Wed 6/7/2017 2:02:21 PM
Subject: news clips - hoosick falls

The News Clips covered the NYSDOH report on Hoosick Falls and cancer. Very interesting, and just wondering how this may affect the site's risk assessment for cancer and site decisions. The report apparently does not cover non-cancer illnesses, but have we had instances like this before where there is published information linking cancer incidence with contaminants at a site?

WNYT

No Elevated Levels of PFOA-Linked Cancer in Hoosick Falls says Health Department Study

By Erin Mardon

June 6, 2017

HOOSICK FALLS - A state Department of Health study released Wednesday did not find elevated levels of PFOA-linked cancer among Village of Hoosick Falls residents. The study, that took a year to complete, focuses on four cancers linked to PFOA exposure using patient data from 1995 to 2014.

Those four cancers that have been linked to exposure to the chemical are testicular, kidney, prostate and bladder. The study focused on other forms of cancers not linked to PFOA exposure. The only cancer the study finds is elevated in Hoosick Falls is lung cancer, which Department of Health Deputy Commissioner Brad Hutton says could be caused by the above-average tobacco use in Rensselaer County.

"I certainly understand that there might have been expectations based upon the exposure and concern about the exposure, that there might have been elevations of certain cancers. We didn't see that," said Hutton.

The Department of Health performed the study because of resident requests. It plans to update these numbers every three to five years. Although cancer numbers are not elevated now, Hutton stressed they could be in the future. Cancer caused by environmental factors like a chemical, occur between 5 and 40 years after exposure.

Manufacturing using PFOA began in the 1950s in Hoosick Falls. The report estimates residents have been exposed for 40 years. Some in the community expressed concern to the health department that PFOA exposure may have been higher in more recent years.

The study does not cover non-cancer related conditions that have been linked to PFOA, such as elevated cholesterol levels and immune changes. Hutton says that information is not as readily available in a database like the New York State Cancer Registry.

Department of Health officials anticipate some residents will be skeptical of the study's results. It took the department more than a year after learning of PFOA contamination in the water to tell residents to stop drinking it. Hutton says the methodology the department used is widely accepted in the field.

"We did take this report and the methods to 12 different peer reviewers to get their input. Largely, they were supportive of the methods and the findings," said Hutton.

The study compares cancer cases in Hoosick Falls to an "expected" number of cancer cases. That number was estimated using cancer cases observed in white non-Hispanic people in upstate New York. 96% of the 3,500 people living in Hoosick Falls are white non-Hispanic. New York ranks third highest in cancer occurrences according to the CDC, trailing only Delaware and Kentucky.

Some cancers did have more actual cases than expected cases. Excluding lung cancer, the Department of Health says the difference was not statistically significant. Meaning the difference could be due to chance. In total, 480 cases of cancer were observed in Hoosick Falls over the past 20 years, while 453 were expected.

Hutton says staff also looked for patterns that have been observed in areas where an environmental factor did cause a higher cancer rate. But Hutton says researchers did not see anything significant in those three categories either. They did not find an increased level of cancer among young people, more aggressive cancer, and similar cancer cells in different cases.

New York has been collecting information on cancer cases for more than 50 years. Physicians are required to report cancer cases by law. Cancer cases are already annually broken down by county. Hutton says the population of Hoosick Falls provided a small sample size. That is one of the reasons the health department used a 20-year sample.

The study only looked at people diagnosed with cancer while living in Hoosick Falls. Some wells outside of the village were contaminated with PFOA. The report states researchers only looked at village residents because the level of exposure was the same for all those residents.

Hutton made a commitment for the health department to continue blood testing for residents. Many of the 3,000 village and town residents tested were shocked by initial results indicating high levels of PFOA in their blood.

Health department employees will be available to answer resident questions at the armory on weekdays from 6pm to 8pm and on weekends from 10am to 12pm. That schedule will last until next Wednesday, and then officials will be available on a less frequent basis.

Read the full report here: https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/investigations/hoosick/

Thanks,

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