

Experts II

Chemical Exposure and Disease in the Greater Pottstown Area

PA DEP, EPA, and many state elected officials have tried to hide from the reality and even cover up the truth about the enormous exposure risks to our health in the Greater Pottstown Area. Those who make the decisions and those who stand idly by and watch are all responsible for our growing health crisis, along with the major polluters.

DEP has manipulated sampling and test results in favor of the polluters and refused to adequately answer and address most of the community's questions and concerns. The major polluters continue to get pollution permits which continually make a bad situation worse in our area. The health crisis continues to grow.

Pollution permits have been based on unprotective standards and regulations. Common sense and logic are missing.

DEP's refusal to evaluate all our most dangerous exposure risks when issuing air pollution permits has been termed reckless endangerment to tens of thousands of area residents.

We are fortunate to have had the insight and courage of Pottstown Mayor Anne Jones and Pottstown Council who are trying hard to protect all of us. Congressmen Holden and Hoeffel have tried to help.

ACE Quest for Awareness and Solutions To Toxic Exposure led us to several National Experts who helped us address our severe issues of Toxic Exposure.

1. Linda King, director and founder of the Environmental Health Network first came to Pottstown in September of 1998 to share her experiences and thoughts on the hazardous risks in Pottstown. She concluded that Pottstown was facing some of the most serious health threats that she had seen anywhere in the world and encouraged people in Pottstown to take action to stop the destruction of our life support systems - our air and our water. Since that time, Linda King has come to our community numerous times to try to help our community. She conducted several environmental educational forums and mediated meetings between ACE and DEP, as well as the Montgomery County Health Department.

2. Dr. Doris Rapp, a nationally acclaimed expert in environmental medicine and a pediatric allergist came to Pottstown in Nov. 1999 to try to help our community. Dr. Rapp has 8 published books on environmental illness, authored information for medical texts, and is the author of more than 30 scientific articles in professional journals.

She warned of the serious threats to our health from all of the hazardous air we are breathing. Whether slowly or quickly, this can progressively harm any part of the human body - doing damage which can last for years or even a lifetime.

She said there is no doubt that the extremely dangerous polluting industries like the Pottstown Landfill, Occidental Chemical, and the Limerick Nuclear Power Plant are destroying not only our air but our water and soil as well. She said the Greater Pottstown Area may be "worse than Love Canal."

We must make a connection between cause and effect so that we will start to take action to protect our children, families, and friends.

Hazardous chemical exposures are a major factor in the onset of allergies, asthma, ADD in children, and an immense variety of other health problems. These exposures are impairing our health, well-being, and potential of many children and adults.

Frustrating and debilitating environmental illnesses are also causing us great psychological stress.

Dr. Rapp believes we all need to develop increased awareness of what can cause ill health, inappropriate and even violent behavior, and an inability to learn. Dr. Rapp believes we urgently need to address the issue of toxic exposures by (1) first recognizing them, (2) trying to avoid and remove them, and (3) finding solutions to them.

Dr. Rapp believes if you or your children are too sick, tired, hyper, aggressive, depressed, unable to think clearly or learn, then you could have unsuspected or unrecognized environmental illness. If you often have flu-like symptoms, allergies, asthma, fibromyalgia, etc., these can all be signs of over-exposure to toxic chemicals.

In her book "Is This Your Child's World" you can learn to recognize symptoms plus find out what to do and where to go for help. For more info contact ACE at: ace@acereport.org

For more information on Children's Chemical Exposures go to www.childenvironment.org - Dr. Philip Landrigan - Pediatric Expert

3. Dr. Janette Sherman, a well-respected toxicologist and doctor of internal medicine, came to Pottstown in Nov. 2000. Dr. Sherman is the author of two books which answer the questions - "WHY" Why did I get sick? Why is the cancer rate so high? Why was this child born with birth defects? Chemical Exposure and Disease provides investigative and diagnostic techniques with case-reports for all body systems: Brain, Pulmonary, Reproductive, Gastrointestinal, etc.

a. It covers the inherently dangerous industries releasing hazardous chemicals and examples of chemicals causing endocrine-disruption, neurological damage, cancer, and birth defects.

b. This book DISPELS the notion that "MORE STUDIES are needed" before we can take action to take action to prevent harm.

Life's Delicate Balance focuses on the causes and prevention of cancer, especially breast cancer in both women and men.

a. Analyses identify the links between chemicals like those from the Pottstown Landfill and Occidental Chemical, ionizing radiation like that from the Limerick Nuclear Power Plant, endocrine disrupters like dioxin from the landfill and Occidental, and cancer.

b. Dispels "myths" of risk for cancer.

c. It provides insight into the economic and political factors fueling the cancer epidemic and what can be done to end this tragic disease.

d. For more info: www.janettesherman.com

Dr. Sherman's presentation in Pottstown verified the dangerous risks we face due to the massive hazardous chemical combinations emitted into our air from Occidental Chemical and the Pottstown Landfill which then synergized and add on to the radiation emissions from the Limerick Nuclear plant. She left us with no doubt that nuclear plants emit radiation which damage our health in many ways in extremely tiny amounts. Radiation, combined with dioxin from so many sources which also damages our health in very small amounts is synergized and added to massive amounts of other hazardous chemical combinations creating a dangerous and even deadly situation.

4. Joseph Mangano, research director of the national Radiation and Public Health Project, came to Pottstown this past January. He is author of "Low-Level Radiation and Immune System Damage," "The Enemy Within," and numerous medical journal articles concerning radiation and nuclear power plants.

a. With Joseph Mangano's visit and press conference Pottstown joined the national "Tooth Fairy Project" to get members of our area to send in baby teeth to be measured for radiation.

b. Mr. Mangano compiled cancer statistics for Montgomery County which ACE announced at the press conference. The Center For Disease Control and Prevention website: www.cdc.gov revealed alarming childhood cancer increases. Shocking increases in many cancers from the PA Cancer Registry confirmed our suspicions.

For more information call Joseph Mangano - (718) 857-9825

5. Dr. Jean Flood is an area physician who belongs to a national group concerned about health effects of hazardous chemicals, "Physicians For Social Responsibility." She shared their researched findings and her concerns on chemical exposures and illnesses at a public hearing on Occidental Chemical's air emissions in January and on several occasions since January.

Dr. Flood identified numerous hazardous emissions in our air, which are particularly alarming health threats, such as dioxin.

Of particular concern to her are the endocrine disrupting chemicals.

Dr. Flood is noticing many more asthma cases in her patients from this area than where she came from in Chicago.

For more information on Physicians For Social Responsibility: website: www.psr.org - e-mail: psrnatl@psr.org - phone: (202) 898-0150 - Fax: (202) 898-0172

6. Dr. Charles Vickerman, a well respected area dermatologist who also has a masters degree in Environmental Science has been quite concerned with our overexposure to hazardous chemicals.

He has acknowledged increased skin problems and cancers in his patients in his Pottstown office compared with his office in another location.

For some time he has been convinced of the toxic chemical link to endometriosis.

Dr. Vickerman recently sent a letter to Mayor Anne Jones in which he referred to a July, 2001 article in Science News which proved that LANDFILLS MAKE MERCURY

MORE TOXIC. This is just one example of how much more dangerous toxic landfill gas can become when all hazardous substances are mixed together.

Dr. Vickerman believes that transporting and ultimately burning toxic landfill gases in or near a residential region seems highly ill advised.

Dr. Vickerman says the transport by pipe or combustion of this toxic mixture of gasses should be prohibited in or near residential areas.

7. Dr. Fred Winter, retired radiologist from the Pottstown Memorial Medical Center, is quite concerned that the health crisis we are experiencing is just the "tip of the iceberg" due to the harmful health effects of all the hazardous pollution dumped in and on our community. He has spent countless hours investigating these harmful health effects of air pollution.

Dr. Winter has insightfully identified our situation as a CHEMICAL PLAGUE.

Dr. Winter realizes that we must take an immediate PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH if we are to protect this entire area.

For many years he has worked very hard to share all the facts with other area physicians.

Our region is truly fortunate to have such an insightful and courageous doctor as Doctor Fred Winter, who is willing to do whatever it takes to protect the people he loves in this community.

8. Pottstown Memorial Medical Center Physicians just took a stand to protect the community, most especially their patients in the hospital just 1/2 mile away from the planned increased hazardous emissions at Occidental. Also affected would be 31,000 residents and thousands of children who attend schools all within 2 miles of Occidental's hazardous air emissions and all those downwind in Sanatoga, Limerick, Schwenksville, Spring City, Royersford, Phoenixville, East Coventry, and even Collegeville.

The physicians stated that they are concerned about human health and patient welfare and are asking that DEP reverse its decision which would allow the burning of Pottstown Landfill gas at Occidental.

In accordance with the policies of the American Medical Association, these doctors are encouraging preventive as well as corrective medicine.

They used lead as an example of how hazardous substances can severely degrade human development, and how unmitigated exposure to other pollutants can also degrade human health.

PMMC physicians said it is unacceptable for DEP to permit an enormous increase of hazardous air emissions dangerously close to our community's hospital. As the Hippocratic Oath requires doctors to "First do no harm," PMMC physicians said PA DEP must "First do no harm" to Greater Pottstown Area residents.

Petition and letter sent to Governor Ridge -

Doctors are concerned as they see a significant increase in pollution-induced disease.

Most concerned are pulmonologists, allergists, pediatricians, and obstetricians, as well as family physicians.

Pipeline could be bad for this whole area.

Of particular concern is the concentration of such hazardous emissions just one half mile from their hospital.

Enormous numbers of people from the Greater Pottstown Area and many downwind have expressed heartfelt gratitude to PMMC physicians. Everyone is thankful and very proud of them for strong protective action.

If you haven't thanked your doctor, do it next time you see him or her.

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