



**ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH PROJECT**
DEFENDING PUBLIC HEALTH SINCE 2012



FRACTRACKER
ALLIANCE

PRESS RELEASE

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Health and Environmental Groups Hold Press Conference One Year After Pitt Study Release

***Gov. Shapiro and the PA Department of Health are failing to
protect communities from pollution harms***

Washington, PA – Over a year ago this August, the University of Pittsburgh, in support of the PA Department of Health (DOH), released long-awaited results of the PA Health and Environment Studies (also called the Pitt Study). [Those results](#) showed an alarming correlation between the health of kids living in Southwestern PA and fracking infrastructure. According to the studies, children living near fracking infrastructure faced a 4 to 5 times higher likelihood of experiencing severe asthma attacks, requiring emergency room visits or hospitalization, and a 5 to 7 times greater risk of developing lymphoma. The results also showed that pregnant individuals living within 10 miles of a

well pad faced a lower average birth weight for babies. [These studies were added to a growing list of more than two dozen epidemiological studies and scores of other investigations](#) that link fracking to health harms.

But further evidence of the public and environmental health harms of fracking is apparently not what our elected officials and state agencies are waiting on. **Laura Dagley**, BSN, RN, environmental health and medical writer for Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania, said, “We know the Department of Health and Governor Shapiro have plenty of evidence that fracking harms health. The question is, what will it take for them to finally take action?”

Last year, as the state presented the results of the PA Health and Environment Studies to community members, representatives of the DOH made several promises to communities affected by pollution from fracking infrastructure. These communities included families whose children had passed away or were currently ill with a variety of illnesses, including rare cancers.

The PA DOH committed to do the following:

- Provide continuing education to local healthcare providers on oil & gas pollutant exposure
- Create an initiative to educate schools on air quality
- Create a new Environmental Health Complaint process
- Update its literature review
- Continue to review data and monitor cancer rates in fracking areas to determine any correlations between oil & gas pollution and health harms
- Continue working closely with other agencies, particularly the DEP, to protect the health of all residents and share educational information

However, the DOH has failed to take substantial measures to properly execute the crucial action items outlined above. The agency has provided little to no guidance or follow up to communities or health providers since the research results were released.

The DOH works under the direction of Gov. Josh Shapiro, who is no stranger to the harms of the oil and gas industry. As attorney general, Josh Shapiro brought criminal charges against two oil and gas operators and led the [43rd statewide grand jury investigation](#), which declared that Pennsylvania failed to protect its citizens from the shale gas boom.

“My son died from Ewing sarcoma, a **rare** and aggressive pediatric cancer,” said **Janice Blanock**, a Washington County resident. “It is unconscionable that Governor Shapiro has not publicly addressed the results of the state-funded Department of Health study on fracking and rare childhood cancers, and that none of the eight recommendations have been enacted.”

Heaven Sensky, organizing director at the Center for Coalfield Justice, said, “Governor Shapiro, you came to our communities shortly after these studies were released to visit a well site and to glorify a company that your office, as attorney general, charged with crimes for polluting the places where people live. You have not acknowledged the PA Health and Environment Studies or how fracking is measurably harming children. You owe a visit to these residents and an action plan to address the harms and drive the grand jury recommendations that you have so far failed to implement as Governor.”

The PA Health and Environment Studies covered the entirety of southwestern Pennsylvania, including Allegheny County, Armstrong County, Beaver County, Butler County, Fayette County, Greene County, Washington County, and Westmoreland County.

“These studies were not done in vain,” said **Talor Musil**, field manager for the Environmental Health Project. “They affirmed the lived experiences of people with asthma exacerbations, children with cancer, and infants with low birth weights. They contributed to a body of literature that is unable to demonstrate that shale gas development can be done safely and without impact on human health. They beg the question: How many more studies will it take for the administration to take health-protective action?”

Center for Coalfield Justice, Environmental Health Project, Mountain Watershed Association, FracTracker Alliance, and Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania are launching a [petition](#) today urging Gov. Shapiro and Pennsylvania DOH Secretary Dr. Debra Bogen to take action to protect our communities and our kids!

Following today’s event, speakers will be available for interviews.

Please use [this link](#) to register for today’s press conference. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information for joining. Alternatively, you can use the following QR code:



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