

Press Release

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Following Meetings with DEC and DOH, Non-Profit Releases Summary of Fracking Health Risks

Doctors and Scientists Identify Twenty Top Concerns

(Albany, NY) Grassroots Environmental Education, a non-profit organization that organized and facilitated meetings between medical professionals, scientists and senior staff from the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Health as well as representatives from the Governor's office, is releasing today a summary report of those meetings which identifies twenty important public health concerns related to gas drilling in New York State. The report was delivered to meeting participants and the commissioners of both agencies this morning.

"As more independent science on hydrofracking operations becomes available, the full dimension of the potential health impacts is becoming more evident" says Patti Wood, Executive Director of Grassroots and organizer of the meetings. "These are very serious issues, and the emerging science brings into question whether they can be addressed successfully."

The document released today, "Summary Report: Human Health Risks and Exposure Pathways of Proposed Horizontal Hydrofracking in New York State" identifies twenty concerns discussed at the meetings or contained in documents furnished to participants. These include:

- Handling and disposal of radioactive wastewater and sludge
- Accidents involving transportation of radioactive/chemical waste
- Unpredicted synergistic catalyzation and interactions with radioactive material
- Groundwater contamination from leaking storage containers, abandoned wells and failed casings
- High levels of radon in natural gas from Marcellus shale
- Respirable crystalline silica exposure of workers and nearby populations
- Air contamination from diesel engines at drilling sites and in local communities

- Air contamination from flaring
- Exposures that will disproportionately impact sensitive populations (children, elderly, pregnant women)
- Increased health care costs

"When there's a public health emergency, the primary objective is to stop the exposure," says Dr. David Brown, a public health toxicologist with the Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project which is helping sick people get medical care in areas of Pennsylvania with active fracking operations. "We try to help people whose water is contaminated and whose air is severely degraded. We tell them to test their water, stay inside, keep their windows closed, take their shoes off, that kind of thing. But really, at this point there are situations where there's not much we can do for them. There's no way for impacted individuals to stop the exposure."

In addition to Dr. Brown, participants in the meetings in Albany included Dr. David Carpenter, Director of the Institute for Health and the Environment, University at Albany; Dr. Ron Bishop, Department of Chemistry, SUNY Oneonta; Dr. Maya Shetreat-Klein, Albert Einstein College of Medicine; Paul Rubin, HydroQuest; and Dr. Sheila Bushkin, Public Health and Preventive Medicine consultant.

"We fully support calls for an independent health impact assessment, and this report should not be interpreted as endorsing the internal review proposed by the DEC," says Wood. "But regardless of who does the assessment, each of the public health issues raised in this report must be thoroughly addressed before any decisions are made. Many of our experts concur that some of the more critical issues may indeed be irresolvable."

The full text of the Summary Report can be found on the Grassroots web site:

<http://www.grassrootsinfo.org/summaryreport.pdf>

About Grassroots

Grassroots Environmental Education, Inc. is a registered 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization with a mission to educate the public about the links between common environmental toxins and human health, and to bridge the gap between scientific research and public policy. The organization has offices in Port Washington and Rye, NY. For more information, please visit www.grassrootsinfo.org.