

Evaluation of Possible PCB Exposure for the New Bedford High School, Keith Middle School, and Neighborhood

Jan Sullivan, Director
Community Assessment Program
Massachusetts Dept. of Public
Health
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Role of MDPH

- Letter from New Bedford City Council to MDPH Commissioner
- Request from Director of New Bedford Health Department
- Petition from abutters and school staff

MDPH Scope of Work

- Administer exposure assessment questionnaire to individuals concerned about neighborhood/school exposure
- Offer to conduct PCB blood serum testing for individuals identified at greatest risk of exposure
- Analyze cancer incidence data using Massachusetts Cancer Registry data

Potentially Exposed Population

- School staff
- Students
- Neighbors

Questionnaire Participation

- Greater chance of exposure
 - Current or former school staff (with long tenures)
 - Neighbors within a quarter-mile of the schools
- Lesser chance of exposure
 - Current or former students with no other exposure opportunities (e.g., neighborhood resident)
- All welcome to participate in exposure assessment questionnaire

PCB Exposure Assessment Questionnaire

- To identify those with greatest potential for exposure
- Questions relate to:
 - Tenure in the schools
 - Length of residence in neighborhood
 - Occupational history
 - Seafood consumption

Blood Testing Offer

- MDPH will score exposure assessment questionnaires
- 100 individuals with greatest potential for exposure will be offered blood testing

Serum Testing for PCBs

- Measuring PCBs in blood serum
 - the most direct method to assess potential exposures of community concern
 - available comparison values
 - well-established laboratory protocol

Interpretation of PCB Serum Levels

- Third National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals
- Allendale Elementary School, Pittsfield, MA
- Greater New Bedford PCB Health Effects Study

How to participate

- MDPH will inform school administration and the NBEA, and will publicize in New Bedford Standard Times and The Portuguese Times when and where to go to complete the exposure assessment questionnaire
- Those who have already called us will receive a call from MDPH to schedule a time for the questionnaire

Timeline

- MDPH outreach (May/June 2008)
- Concerned individuals complete interviews/exposure questionnaires (May/June 2008)
- MDPH reviews questionnaires (July 2008)
- MDPH sends 100 letters to offer blood testing (August 2008)
- 100 individuals have their blood tested (September 2008)
- MDPH laboratory analyzes blood samples (October 08– March 09)
- MDPH sends participants their own blood test results (April/May 2009) unless seriously high serum PCB level detected (which will be reported immediately for clinical follow-up)
- MDPH releases summary report (April/May 2009)

Questions/Comments

Mass. Dept of Public Health
Bureau of Environmental Health
Community Assessment Program
250 Washington St., 7th floor
Boston, MA 02108

(617) 624-5757