

Pompton Lakes Health CAG Meeting Summary December 7, 2010

The following is a summary of the December 7, 2010 meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Group for Health (Health CAG). The summary is organized by topic area, and should not be considered as chronological minutes from the meeting. The main issues raised during the meeting are as follows:

Health CAG Membership – Lisa Riggiola brought up the issue of who the official Health CAG members are, and how the original members were appointed or nominated into the Health CAG. Concerns were raised about inconsistent membership and if people are not coming to meetings, those seats should be filled with other people.

Jerry Fagliano and Joe Eldridge from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) stated that the Health CAG has always been open to all who want to attend and participate. The original attendees of the Health CAG included names suggested by several sources including the Mayor, members of the CAG itself, as well as those who self-nominated. The email list for the Health CAG announcements includes all who ever attended a meeting of the group. DHSS also explained that the Health CAG is not a consensus group but an open forum for all voices to be heard. The information provided by the Health CAG assists DHSS and ATSDR in ensuring that the health concerns of the community are addressed to the best of our ability.

Health Survey – Discussions continued regarding conducting a health survey. Jerry summarized the survey methods discussed at the July 2010 Health CAG meeting and provided a cost estimate for a survey of the entire borough (approximately 4,000 current households), with no attempt to survey a comparison town (\$250,000-\$300,000). Such a survey would ask about health conditions among current and former residents of current households, but would not include residents of former households. Lisa Riggiola stated that she could get in touch with people through Facebook and other methods, since many former residents of Pompton Lakes have developed cancer and other illnesses and would not be captured in a survey of current residents. Jerry noted that we could not develop disease rates among those surveyed through this approach since the true denominator would not be known.

Jerry and Joe reminded residents that there are a lot of factors to be taken into account when designing a survey, and it takes time to make sure the right questions are asked so that the results are meaningful.

Residents questioned the difference between a “survey” and a “study.” Jerry noted what we have been referring to as the survey could generate information about rates of diseases or other health outcomes in comparison to another population such as the state; this would help us understand what is occurring more (or less) frequently in the borough or part of the town. What we have been referring to a study would ask questions that would allow us to compare whether people with certain diseases are more likely to have had certain environmental exposures. Maria Kent questioned what would be the specific health outcomes of a study. Jerry mentioned that the two statistically elevated cancers (NHL and Kidney) were concerning, but there were not enough cases to do a reliable study that could ask whether there is a connection to environmental contaminants. Cas Stark expressed concern regarding what will be done with survey data (how it would be interpreted). Two residents explained that a survey or follow-up study will help to hold DuPont accountable for illnesses which may develop from exposures related to the contamination from DuPont.

Michael Serra mentioned that the borough had contacted Columbia University to conduct a study of the community; however the cost was more than the town could afford (over \$200,000) and similar to the cost proposed by DHSS. He also mentioned that the town approached DuPont, which declined to discuss funding the survey in light of litigation. Dana Patterson from the Edison Wetlands Association asked whether any Federal Agency can make DuPont pay for a survey. DHSS and ATSDR responded that they do not have the authority to compel DuPont to fund a survey or study. Community members discussed going to Congressional representatives to provide money for a survey. Representatives of Congressman Pascrell and Senator Menendez were present at the meeting and indicated that they will consult with their offices. DHSS will consult with appropriate outside agencies/academic institutions to explore available options including the feasibility of conducting such studies and surveys.

Components of a Community Health Profile – Jerry prepared a document for discussion with the CAG which described proposed actions to develop a community profile using data already available to the DHSS. This

information will be provided to the community and will include the following:

- Updating the cancer incidence statistics for Pompton Lakes and the plume area in comparison to the State of New Jersey, to include the most recent data available in the Cancer Registry
- Provide data on mortality rates for Pompton Lakes compared to surrounding municipalities and the State of New Jersey
- Provide data on the prevalence of birth defects for Pompton Lakes and the plume area, compared to surrounding municipalities and the State of New Jersey
- Provide data on the prevalence of other adverse birth outcomes (i.e. low birth weight and prematurity) compared to surrounding municipalities and the State of New Jersey
- Describe the rate of hospitalization and emergency room events in Pompton Lakes residents as compared to surrounding municipalities and the State of New Jersey
- Describe the distribution of blood lead levels in children living in Pompton Lakes as compared to surrounding municipalities

The information resulting from the community profile may enable DHSS to focus on a specific health outcome to study, since there is currently a wide range of health outcomes that the community is concerned about. A survey may also assist the DHSS in narrowing down one or more specific health outcomes for which further study is needed.

Physician Education/Outreach -- The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has arranged for a physician specializing in environmental exposures to provide training to area physicians at two local hospitals as part of the grand rounds continuing education program. These grand rounds sessions are scheduled for March 9 and 23, 2011.

In cooperation with ATSDR, DHSS will schedule an availability session for residents to speak with physicians specializing in environmental exposures about any health concerns relating to exposures from contaminants from the DuPont Pompton Lakes Works site. While specific dates have yet to be determined, the availability session is being targeted for late January 2011.

Karen Magee asked that the physician education be broadened to cover a wider range of contaminants found at the DuPont site and not limited to PCE

and TCE. Additionally some members of the CAG expressed the wish for physician outreach to include state-wide physicians and not just local physicians. DHSS agrees and will pursue this in the near future.

Creation of a Local Repository at Pompton Lakes Library - A repository will be set up at the Pompton Lakes Library which will have all documents relating to ATSDR/DHSS involvement with the DuPont Pompton Lakes Works site. This includes both Health Consultations released in 2009 along with any historical reports prepared by DHSS and/or ATSDR.

Newspaper Ad Space - DHSS will take out newspaper ad space in the local papers which may include the Bergen Record and Suburban Trends, to announce upcoming Health CAG meetings, provide Health CAG meeting summaries, and announce planned outreach activities.

List of Health CAG Meeting Attendees, December 7, 2010:

Community Members (based on sign-in sheet)

Josephine Bruno	Lisa Riggiola	Aurelia Ionescu
Joyce Fern	Michael Serra	Sandy & Dorothy Mancini
Maria Kent	Cas Stark	Evelyn Proffit
Michael Keough	Tim Troast	Karen Dean
Karen Magee	Ruth Paez	Paul B. (Congressman Pascrell)
Mary Anne Orapello	Cheryl Rubino	Dana Patterson (EWA)

Department of Health and Senior Services

Joe Eldridge
Jerry Fagliano
Somia Aluwalia
Christa Fontecchio

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Leah Graziano
Raquel Stephenson
Elena Vaouli

Other Agencies

Dave Kluesner, USEPA