



News Update

January 5, 2018



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT
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Update on Groundwater near House Street in Belmont



Update on Health Survey New Schedule for Newsletter Publication

KCHD to Receive Assistance from CDC on PFAS Health Effects Survey

Over the past several months, the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) has been working with representatives from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to develop a process for assessing the potential health effects of exposure to contaminated groundwater in the Belmont/Rockford area.

Together, KCHD and MDHHS created two versions of a potential survey instrument and identified methods for distributing the survey. Additionally, whenever information is collected on human subjects, KCHD must receive approval from the MDHHS Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that those participating in the survey are properly protected. To comply with this requirement, KCHD staff completed the IRB application, with consultation from MDHHS, that outlined the proposed methods for collecting information from households whose groundwater was tested for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Initially, the hope was to begin distributing the survey to households during the first few months of 2018. Because of the large number of households that will be involved in the survey (over 1,000 households have had their water tested) and the desire to ensure that the survey is done correctly, KCHD and MDHHS have decided to involve the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) in survey development. Staff from ATSDR have a great deal of experience studying the impacts of PFAS exposures, and while their review of the survey and survey methods will delay its implementation, this is the best approach to ensure that it is done the right way and best serves the needs of the community.

While these developments potentially lengthen the time table for the completion of the survey, it should be noted that this will not have any effect on residents who are concerned about their health as it does not impact any steps that people are currently taking to minimize their exposure to potentially contaminated water sources.

KCHD and MDHHS staff are scheduled to meet on Tuesday, January 9 to further discuss ATSDR's involvement in the survey and we will continue to keep you updated on its progress in future editions of the newsletter.



About This Newsletter

This newsletter, a publication of the Kent County Health Department, will be published on Fridays as long as the need for timely information regarding the PFAS situation is warranted. Publication will be scaled back to every other week beginning with this edition. The next scheduled newsletter will be published on Friday Jan. 19, 2018. If there is an urgent issue you will be notified by email as a subscriber to this newsletter. The KCHD website will also be updated as new information becomes available.