

Press Release

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Releases Merrimack Village District PFC Blood Testing Assessment Findings

Contact:

Jake Leon, Communications Director
(603) 271-9290
jake.leon@dhhs.nh.gov

Publish Date:

October 10, 2017

Concord, NH – Customers on public water in Merrimack and Bedford, NH, have been exposed to perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) at higher levels than the general U.S. population but at lower levels than in other exposed communities, according to a [new report issued by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services \(DHHS\)](#) .

In September 2016, DHHS initiated the Merrimack Village District Water Works (MVD) Community Exposure Assessment to measure perfluorochemicals (PFCs) exposure among approximately 200 MVD public water supply customers. According to the results, participants had PFOA exposure at levels similar to private well owners in southern New Hampshire near the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics facility in Merrimack. Levels were lower than those found in residents of Bennington, VT and Hoosick Falls, NY. Both of those communities are also located near a Saint-Gobain facility.

"We heard from many local officials and MVD customers concerned about their potential exposure to PFCs through the public drinking water supply. We conducted the Community Exposure Assessment to provide more information to community members about levels of exposure," said Dr. Benjamin Chan, New Hampshire State Epidemiologist. "Because levels of PFOA were found in the MVD public drinking water supply, PFOA blood levels were found to be higher than the average U.S. resident. That is why we have advocated for a national health study on PFC exposure and human health so we can better understand what PFC exposure, including in towns served by MVD where the exposure is lower than other exposed communities, might mean for a person's health."

DHHS officials will discuss the MVD Community Exposure Assessment findings during the [October 10 Merrimack public meeting](#) held by the NH Department of Environmental Services. A summary of the MVD results compared to PFC blood levels at other exposure sites can be found at <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/pfcs/documents/results-summary.pdf> .

The MVD Community Exposure Assessment randomly selected households served by MVD to measure PFC exposure levels in MVD customers. A total of 217 MVD customers had their blood

drawn and tested as part of the Community Exposure Assessment. All participants will receive a personalized test result report. DHHS has also shared the summary report on the assessment with Merrimack and Bedford town officials, MVD customers, and MVD officials. The results can be compared with other tested populations, including the general U.S. population, other communities tested in New Hampshire, and other communities of concern around the country.

The MVD Community Exposure Assessment assessed approximate levels of human PFC exposure in the community. The MVD public water system is supplied by multiple individual wells which are combined prior to delivery of residential drinking water. MVD water supply wells are monitored for PFCs, and concentrations are below the Environmental Protection Agency Health Advisory Level of 70 parts per trillion (ppt). Two supply wells were taken offline in June 2016 when they tested above 70 ppt.

For more information about PFCs and what DHHS is doing, visit www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/pfcs/index.htm. For information about what the NH Department of Environmental Services actions related to PFCs, visit www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pfoa.htm. If you have questions related to testing for PFCs in New Hampshire, please call the DHHS Public Inquiry Line at 603-271-4499.