



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

ROBERT GORDON
DIRECTOR

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Dear Community Members:

Michigan needs your help to learn how per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) affect the health of people who have been exposed to these chemicals. PFAS are a family of human-made chemicals (including PFOS) that have been used in manufacturing and commercial products since the 1940s. Practical uses of PFAS include creating non-stick surfaces on cooking pans and food wrappers, waterproofing chemicals, foams used to fight fires, and in industries to keep fumes down for worker safety. They also have been found in the environment – including groundwater (which has been used as drinking water), lakes, rivers, fish, and deer.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recently conducted the North Kent County Exposure Assessment in the Belmont and Rockford areas of Michigan. The exposure assessment looked at the levels of PFAS in the blood of people whose drinking water was contaminated by these chemicals. People who took part in this exposure assessment have been provided with their blood and water test results, and MDHHS scientists recently released the first report that summarizes the initial findings. You can view this report at www.michigan.gov/envirohealth.

What's next?

The North Kent County Exposure Assessment was designed to look at the level of PFAS in people's blood. Now, MDHHS is planning two more studies to look in-depth at potential health outcomes that may be linked to these PFAS exposures.

We are partnering again with the Belmont and Rockford areas, in addition to the communities of Parchment and Cooper Township, MI, on the next step of our journey. With your help, we can further public health knowledge and learn more about the health impacts of PFAS, which may help develop better policies about the use and disposal of PFAS as they are developed in the future.

How can I sign up?

People who qualify will receive an invitation in the mail with a request to take part in the MDHHS studies: Michigan PFAS Exposure and Health Study (MiPEHS; pronounced *my-peez*) and the Multi-Site Health Study (MSS) that is being coordinated by the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) in partnership with MDHHS. Invitations to join MiPEHS will be sent out toward the end of 2020. Invitations for MSS will go out in 2021.

Do I have to choose which study to take part in?

You are welcome to take part in every MDHHS PFAS study that you qualify for – joining other studies run by other organizations won't change that! While the two MDHHS studies are similar, they are slightly different – in what they look for and who can take part.

MiPEHS will allow you to get comprehensive snapshots of your PFAS and other chemical levels and an assessment of several key health factors over the next few years. MSS is a nationwide study run by ATSDR that will contribute to a more comprehensive look at how PFAS affects health among differing populations. Both studies are free and voluntary.

What does it take to participate in one of MDHHS's studies?

- **Your time.**

Being part of either MiPEHS or MSS will require up to several hours of your time. In both studies, we will ask you to complete surveys on your health and ways you may have been exposed to PFAS. We will also ask you to visit a study office in your community so that we can take blood samples and body measurements. For MiPEHS, you might also be asked to have your current drinking water sampled by MDHHS staff so it can be tested for PFAS. For MSS, children who participate may be asked to complete neurobehavioral testing at their study visit. Study staff will use the best available practices at the time to protect against the spread of COVID-19 during study office and water sampling visits.

- **Your blood.**

During your visits to the study office, you will be asked to give blood samples. Not only will we test for some standard health measures that you are tested for by your doctor during a typical annual exam (like cholesterol), we will also measure your PFAS and, in some cases, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) blood levels.

While the focus of these studies is PFAS, MDHHS will also be testing the blood of some people for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). PCBs are found in the fish and sediment of the Kalamazoo River due to historical pollution problems. When consumed, these chemicals have been linked to health problems that are similar to the health problems linked to PFAS. Additionally, a type of PFAS, perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), is found in fish in the Rogue River. You can learn more about PCBs and PFOS in fish from the Kalamazoo River, the Rogue River, and other area waterbodies, as well as how to choose and prepare fish in ways that reduce the amount of contaminants, at www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish.

With your help, we may all gain a better understanding of how exposure to these chemicals affects the long-term health of all Michiganders. If you have any questions, please give MDHHS a call at 844-464-7327.

Thank you for your consideration. On behalf of the entire MDHHS research team, I hope you will decide to join us for these important studies that are starting soon!

Sincerely,



Kory Groetsch, M.S.

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Michigan Department of Health and Human Services