Drilling and fracking are inherently dangerous and responsible for making many Pennsylvanians sick. As residents describe in the videos on the home page (/home), fracking takes peaceful, healthy communities and turns them into dirty, dangerous industrial zones. The drilling and fracking processes use hundreds of hazardous chemicals, which are emitted and pollute the air, and which are leaked, contaminating drinking water. Many of the chemicals are known carcinogens and endocrine disruptors.

Across the state – and the country – residents living near fracking describe similar symptoms including severe and chronic headaches, chronic nasal and sinus issues, trouble breathing, hair falling out, skin problems, abdominal issues, nosebleeds, eye irritation, and rashes.

Responding to the risks, harms, and the science, the 16,000-member Pennsylvania Medical Society called for a moratorium on drilling and fracking (http://www.post-gazette.com/local/region/2016/10/27/Doctors-group-calls-for-moratorium-on-fracking-in-Pennsylvania/stories/201610270226), as have many other medical experts, scientists, and public health organizations.
Scientific studies demonstrate the harms of drilling and fracking. More and more studies confirm the serious and widespread public health impacts. Physicians for Social Responsibility provides a comprehensive summary of the studies in the Compendium (http://psr.org/resources/fracking-compendium.html) of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking.

Findings of some of the studies addressing public health effects of drilling and fracking in Pennsylvania include:

- A 2016 Yale School of Public Health study found that at least 157 of the chemicals used in the drilling and fracking process are reproductive or developmental toxicants, including arsenic, benzene, cadmium, formaldehyde, lead, and mercury. “The study suggests that the presence of carcinogens involved in or released by hydraulic fracturing operations has the potential to increase the risk of childhood leukemia.” https://publichealth.yale.edu/news/article.aspx?id=13714 (https://publichealth.yale.edu/news/article.aspx?id=13714)
  
  Tweet (https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=.%40GovernorTomWolf%20%40SecretaryLevine,%20study%20finds%20risks%20from%20%23fracking%20chemicals,%20including%20leukemia&url=https://publichealth.yale.edu/news/article.aspx?id=13714&hashtags=pafrackingimpacts)

  

- A 2016 Johns Hopkins University study of 35,000 medical records of people with asthma in north and central Pennsylvania, from 2005 to 2012, found that those who live near more or larger gas wells were
1.5 to 4 times more likely to suffer from asthma attacks than those who live farther away.
A 2015 Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health study found that pregnant women who live near fracking operations in Pennsylvania were at a 40 percent increased risk of giving birth prematurely and at a 30 percent increased risk for having obstetrician-labeled high-risk pregnancies.
A 2015 University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University study found that drilling and fracking activity was associated with increased rates of hospitalization in Pennsylvania. Between 2007 and 2011, impatient prevalence rates surged for people living near shale gas wells. In communities with the most fracking wells, the rate of cardiology hospitalizations was 27 percent higher than control communities. http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0131093
(https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0131093)Tweet
- A 2015 University of Pittsburgh study linked fracking to low birthweight in three heavily-fracked Pennsylvania counties. Mothers whose homes were nearest to a high density of wells were 34 percent more likely to have babies who were small for gestational age. Low birth weight is a leading cause of infant mortality. [Link](http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0126425)

- A 2015 Yale University study found that health symptoms reported by Pennsylvania residents increased in frequency the closer they were to gas wells. Noting the link between the biological plausibility of a link between fracking activities and the reported health effects, the study authors said their findings were, “consistent with earlier reports of respiratory and dermal conditions in persons living near natural gas wells.” [Link](https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/1307732/)

- A 2014 peer-reviewed summary of the scientific literature on drilling and fracking concluded that, “[a] number of studies suggest that shale gas development contributes to ambient air concentrations known to be associated with increased of morbidity and mortality.” [Link](https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/1307866/)
Tragically, the pleas for help from many Pennsylvania families have long been ignored by state politicians and regulators. Since fracking took off in Pennsylvania approximately a decade ago, politicians have been influenced by fracking industry lobbying and campaign contributions, often repeating grossly erroneous propaganda about safety and job creation. Investigative reporting provides one of the worst examples of this. In 2014, *Stateimpact Pennsylvania* revealed whistleblower accounts (http://stateimpact.npr.org/pennsylvania/2014/06/19/former-state-health-employees-say-they-were-silenced-on-drilling/) that Pennsylvania Department of Health employee had been told not to engage with residents who called with health complaints containing specific “buzzwords” pertaining to likely symptoms of fracking.

**Nineteen “buzzwords” included ‘fracking,’ ‘Marcellus,’ ‘hair falling out,’ ‘skin rash,’ ‘cancer cluster,’ and others that match the common health harms of drilling and fracking.**

Follow-up right-to-know requests uncovered the records (https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/sites/default/files/right_to_know_request_pa_fracking.pdf) of such complaints made specifically to the Department of Health. Residents reported experiencing such issues as “labored breathing,” “tightness in her chest,” and “a burning pain in his chest.” In one case, a concerned doctor contacted the Department of Health due to seeing an unusual number of skin lesions/rashes in residents.

Despite this, the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Governor did not take action to remedy the injustice. Residents have still not been helped.

Water contamination (/water-contamination) poses a serious health hazard to residents, whether from drinking it or from bathing in it, which is why many households in Pennsylvania are forced to use bottled water and water deliveries. In Dimock, Pennsylvania, for instance, the Center for Disease Control’s Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry released a report on water contamination (https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hac/pha/DimockGroundwaterSite/Dimock_Groundwater_Site_HC_05-24-2016_508.pdf) that looked at 64 water wells and concluded:
“Chemicals in the private water wells in Dimock are at levels high enough to affect health in 27 private water wells, and pose a physical hazard at 17 private water wells.”

The health impacts of fracking led both New York and Maryland to ban it. After a multi-year review of the scientific information, New York State concluded (http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/findingstatevhf62015.pdf) that fracking poses significant public health risks and that:

“…There are no feasible or prudent alternatives that would adequately avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts and that address the scientific uncertainties and risks to public health from this activity.”

After Maryland studied the issue for years, the State Legislature overwhelmingly passed a ban on fracking in 2017. Upon signing the bill, Governor Larry Hogan said: (http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/327266-maryland-governor-signs-fracking-ban-into-law)

“The possible environmental risks of fracking simply outweigh any potential benefits… Protecting our clean water supply and our natural resources is critically important to Marylanders, and we simply cannot allow the door to be open for fracking in our state.”

In addition to the risks and harms from drilling and fracking, buildout of associated infrastructure including pipelines and compressor stations poses serious impacts. Across Pennsylvania and the United States, many pipelines have leaked and exploded, harming people and the environment. Compressor stations emit dangerous pollutants, often in high concentrations, endangering those who live nearby.

Find many more studies about drilling, fracking, infrastructure, and public health impacts here (http://psr.org/resources/fracking-compendium.html).
Share these Videos with @GovernorTomWolf, @SecretaryLevine, and your Friends and Family

(https://www.pafrackinghealth.org/video/delma-burns/)

(https://www.pafrackinghealth.org/video/bridget-shields/)
Health Impacts - Pennsylvania Fracking Health Impacts

(https://www.pafrackinghealth.org/video/bob-schmetzer/)

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