



Department of Health

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

SALLY DRESLIN, M.S., R.N.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

June 2, 2016

Hon. Chris Gibson
Member of Congress
United States House of Representatives
1708 Longworth Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Gibson:

Thank you for your letters to New York State Commissioner of Health, Howard A. Zucker, M.D., J.D., regarding the presence of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) in the Village of Hoosick Falls' public water supply. We share your concern for the health of the residents and the quality of their drinking water. In particular, we appreciate your acknowledgement of the New York State Department of Health's (Department) on-going involvement. In your December 2015 letter, you requested that the Department consider conducting a study of cancer rates and performing medical monitoring in the Village. In January 2016, we began an investigation of cancer rates in the Village and, as you know, in February 2016, we began a blood testing project for people with concerns about PFOA exposures from living or working in the area.

The Department is producing a health outcomes review presenting the comparative numbers of all cancers and specific types of cancer occurring among Hoosick Falls Village residents from 1995 through 2013 (the most recent year for which complete data are available). To accomplish this, the Department used data from the Cancer Registry, which receives reports on all cases of cancer occurring among New York State residents, as required by law.

In the interim, until this report is completed, information about cancer from a variety of sources is available on the Department's website: <http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/cancer/>. The New York State Environmental Facilities and Cancer Mapping application (http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/cancer/environmental_facilities/mapping/) provides a map of New York State showing highlighted areas where cancer incidence is higher or lower than expected. These cancer data are for the years 2005-2009. Information for 23 types of cancer are provided on the map. The map shows that Hoosick Falls is not included in any areas showing "high" cancer rates, but is in one of many areas showing a "low" rate for stomach cancer. These analyses have certain limitations however, and an investigation specific to the Village of Hoosick Falls and covering more years may show different results. Regarding your question in your April 2016 letter about an additional cancer study for the Petersburg area, the Department is currently assessing the feasibility of performing such a study to determine if there are sufficient numbers of people with similar potential exposures to PFOA to make the study scientifically valid and meaningful.

The Department has administered questionnaires about PFOA exposure and conducted blood testing among approximately 2,000 people who chose to participate in the bio-monitoring project. Current and former Petersburg residents have also been offered blood testing and, to

date, approximately 50 have participated. Blood testing is ongoing for both Petersburg and Hoosick Falls. All samples are being analyzed by the Department's Wadsworth Center Laboratories. Participants were advised that a minimum of two to three months would elapse before results were available because the analysis for PFOA is more complex than most types of laboratory tests and the project includes analysis of extensive patient exposure histories.

Both the bio-monitoring project and the cancer incidence health outcomes review were implemented as quickly as possible as high priorities. I very much appreciate your concern and those of your constituents, and I thank you for sharing your requests with us. If you or your staff have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Amy Nickson, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Governmental and External Affairs, at (518) 473-1124.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Graber', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nathan Graber, M.D., M.P.H.
Director
Center for Environmental Health

cc: Ms. Nickson