



Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility

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Director Robert R. Redfield, MD
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30329

April 4, 2019

Dear Director Redfield:

On April 1, 2019, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [announced](#) plans to conduct a health study on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS. According to the agency's [draft planning document](#), the study will not assess whether exposure to the chemicals can cause cancer, a primary concern of those who have been drinking PFAS-contaminated water.

The purpose of this letter is to ask you to intervene to ensure that the study addresses the cancer risks of exposure to PFAS as part of its study, or to lay out an alternative plan to for the CDC to study cancer and PFAS. According to new research from Harvard University, more than 16 million Americans drink water contaminated with PFAS. However, the full scope of this emerging health crisis is only beginning to become clear.

Because of their toxicity and bio-persistence, industry voluntarily agreed to begin phasing out one version of the chemical, PFOS, in 2002 and to phase out another, PFOA, by 2015. However, industry immediately began replacing PFOA and PFOS with new unregulated short-chain PFAS chemicals (a slight variation of chemical formula) and continue to do so at a high rate.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifies PFOA, a type of PFAS, as possibly carcinogenic to humans, and the American Cancer Society says that it may increase risk of testicular, kidney or thyroid cancer. It is illogical to study the link between PFAS and kidney, thyroid, and liver disease, diabetes, immune response, sex hormones and sexual maturation, vaccine response, and neurobehavioral outcomes in children, and cardiovascular disease, osteoarthritis and osteoporosis, endometriosis, and autoimmune disease in adults, while completely ignoring the carcinogenic potential of these compounds.

Because the CDC is in a unique position to look at the relationship between PFAS exposure and health outcomes, it is troubling that agency has chosen not to examine carcinogenic potential given the known risks of these chemicals and public's right to have answers about the health risks they face.

Thank you for addressing our request to ensure that CDC addresses the cancer risks associated with exposure to PFAS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy Whitehouse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Timothy Whitehouse
Executive Director