

Frequently Asked Questions about the Community Health Questionnaire

August 29, 2017

1. Question: Why is this Community Health Questionnaire being performed?

Concerns have been raised by residents about the community's health problems potentially related to PFOA. This Questionnaire was developed to help provide a preliminary snapshot of the occurrence of select health problems that previous scientific research linked to exposure to Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), namely the C8 Science Panel. This Questionnaire will focus on gathering this information about health in the communities of Bennington, VT, Hoosick Falls, NY, and Petersburgh, NY. The results of this Questionnaire will be shared with the communities, researchers, and state officials, and may help indicate areas where further research may be needed.

2. Question: Who is doing the Community Health Questionnaire?

This Questionnaire is supported by the project "Understanding PFOA" at Bennington College, and was designed by Dr. Zeke Bernstein and Dr. David Bond at Bennington College, environmental engineer Robert Chinery, physician Dr. Howard Freed, and former Regional Administrator with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Judith Enck. It has been reviewed by a number of local stakeholders, and by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Bennington College. The college has offered to set up a website to host the Questionnaire, and to oversee the gathering and secure storing the information received from the community. After the Questionnaire concludes, the research team will analyze the data and report the general findings back to the community.

3. Question: Who should fill out this Community Health Questionnaire?

This Questionnaire aims to gather health concerns from those exposed to PFOA in our region. While this questionnaire targets current and former residents of Hoosick Falls, NY, Petersburgh, NY, and Bennington, VT, we would welcome response from former workers in the plants, regardless of where they live, as well as responses from members of surrounding communities impacted by PFOA (including Eagle Bridge and White Creek, NY and North Bennington, Pownal, and Shaftsbury, VT). If you live in, or used to live in these communities, you should fill out the Questionnaire. If you fill out the Questionnaire online, please give your name and address on the form as indicated (www.bennington.edu/PFOA and then click on "PFOA Community Health Questionnaire" link at the top of the page). You can refer others you know to the website to fill out the Questionnaire if they did not receive one in the mail. Paper Questionnaires will also be available in local libraries in Bennington, Hoosick Falls, and Petersburgh.

4. Question: Will my information remain confidential?

Bennington College will store all information on a project-designated computer system that is password protected and secure. This designated system has extra safeguards designed to keep confidential health information from being accessed. Data from the Questionnaire will only be accessible on this system, and only Zeke Bernstein, David Bond, Robert Chinery, Judith Enck, and Howard Freed will have access to that system. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Bennington College reviewed and approved this security protocol. The IRB approves, monitors, and reviews medical and human research undertaken by members of the college. The IRB reviewed the Questionnaire and data storage controls to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to protect the rights and welfare of people participating. If participants elect to allow the research team to confirm their results, a licensed medical doctor will directly contact individuals and, where appropriate, verbally convey confirmation to the research team. Individual medical records will never be sought nor collected by this project.

5. Question: How will the results of the Questionnaire be used?

Questionnaire results will be summarized by the research team and presented to the public in several ways. All summaries will only include general findings; personal information will **never** be shared. Bennington College will post the general findings on its PFOA website (www.bennington.edu/PFOA). The results will also be detailed in a

formal presentation to each community and in a written report that will be submitted to each community. This is an opportunity for the community to use this information to document health concerns and ongoing health issues in residents. It may be useful in informing future needs for further health studies that could include more biomonitoring. Members of the research team may also publish general findings of the Questionnaire in an academic journal.

6. Question: Will this Questionnaire link my health problems to exposure to PFOA?

This Questionnaire is **not** a formal epidemiological study (note: an epidemiological study is a sophisticated research technique that can statistically correlate specific exposures to specific cases of illness). This Questionnaire will only count the number and type of health problems in the community. It is useful to document the past and present health conditions of residents. The Questionnaire **will not** be able to find the cause of individual health problems. You should consult with your doctor to discuss your individual health care needs. However, this Questionnaire may provide information that could be useful in prompting a more rigorous health study.

7. Question: How do I complete the Questionnaire?

Please answer all questions included. Be sure to include your name and address. You may also refer family members and others you know that no longer live in the area to the Questionnaire by emailing them the website address (www.bennington.edu/PFOA) and then click on the “[PFOA Community Health Questionnaire](#)” link at the top of the page) or by copying a blank Questionnaire for them and mailing it to them.

8. Question: Where do I send a completed written Questionnaire?

Completed written Questionnaires can be returned to:

PFOA Health Questionnaire
C/O Prof. David Bond
Bennington College
One College Drive
Bennington, VT 05257

(If you fill out the Questionnaire online, simply clicking the submit button (“>>”) at the end of the Questionnaire will complete the Questionnaire.)

9. Question: Where will I find the results of the Community Health Questionnaire?

The results of this Questionnaire will be summarized by the research team and presented to the public in several ways. (All summaries will only include general findings; personal information will **never** be shared.) Bennington College will post the general findings on its PFOA website (www.bennington.edu/PFOA). The results will also be detailed in a formal presentation to each community and in a written report that will be submitted to each community. Members of the research team may also publish general findings of the Questionnaire in an academic journal.

10. Question: Where can I get more information?

Please refer to the “Understanding PFOA” website at Bennington College (www.bennington.edu/PFOA). If you have additional questions, please contact a member of the research team:

Judith Enck // (518) 605-1770 // judithaenck@gmail.com
David Bond // (802) 440.4324 // dbond@bennington.edu
Dr. Howard Freed // (202) 333-3913 // hfreedmd@gmail.com