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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



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## **Kent County Health Department Reports Progress in Establishing PFAS Health Study**

**Grand Rapids** – The Kent County Health Department (KCHD), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) are working together to characterize people’s exposure to per and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances as it relates to the ongoing groundwater contamination issues in northern Kent County.

The goal of this assessment is to characterize exposure levels for people whose private wells have been shown to have detectable levels of PFAS in northern Kent County.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set a Lifetime Health Advisory for two PFAS found in drinking water: perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) at 70 parts per trillion (ppt) combined. Within the proposed study area there are more than 100 drinking water wells with over 70 ppt PFOA and PFOS, some as high as 58,000 ppt. Currently, no other area in Michigan has as many wells exceeding the advisory level nor are any test results as high.

“We believe that we should learn as much as possible about what happened and if our residents were harmed,” said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer at KCHD. “Sharing their data with the CDC and ATSDR may significantly enhance our collective knowledge about the health effects of PFAS exposure.”

“The partnership between Kent County, the State of Michigan, and the ATSDR on this exposure assessment in a tremendous step forward for Michigan residents, as well as the overall science around PFAS,” said Dr. Eden Wells, chief medical executive with MDHHS. “Michigan’s PFAS response is a top priority in the state and we’re proud to push forward on an effort that will greatly inform discussions regarding PFAS exposure and its health impacts.”

The team will work until early summer to design a questionnaire. Final study protocols should be established and ready for review by late summer. Implementation of the assessment should begin by mid fall.

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).