
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



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For additional information contact:

Steve Kelso at (616) 632-7274 or Steve.Kelso@kentcountymi.gov

Kent County Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Addresses PFAS on Capitol Hill

GRAND RAPIDS – Dr. Karla Black, PhD, MEP, PEM, REHS, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at the Kent County Health Department (KCHD), participated in a Congressional Briefing in Washington DC. held October 24, 2019. Dr. Black's presentation and comments were part of the *PFAS and Water Protection Briefing with Public Health Experts* organized by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the organization that invited Dr. Black to speak.

Dr. Black told congressional staffers about PFAS contamination of wells in Northern Kent County and KCHD's response efforts to understand and mitigate resident's exposure. KCHD documented more than 700 sites in the county that were contaminated with various levels of PFAS. "Each household affected may face health and economic impacts due to PFAS contamination," Dr. Black told the group. "We still don't know the full extent of the problem and how long it will take to recover. Our community is counting on local, state and federal agencies for support and answers."

Black was one of three speakers invited to participate in yesterday's briefing. The other participants were Patrick Breyse, PhD, CIH, Director of National Center for Environmental Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Agency for Toxic Substance & Disease Registry and Christine L. Bean, Ph.D., MBA, MT(ASCP), New Hampshire Public Health Laboratory Administrator.

The briefing was co-sponsored by NACCHO, the National Environmental Health Association, The Association of Public Health Laboratories, Trust for America's Health and the American Public Health Institute.

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 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.

700 FULLER AVE. NE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503