**Guidance for Health Care Providers**

In 2016, District Health Department No.2 along with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services issued a “Health Advisory” for certain groundwater drinking wells near the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base (WAFB) in Oscoda. Test results showed elevated levels of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). These chemicals are in a group of chemicals referred to as Perfluorinated Chemicals (PFC). The Advisory, which recommended seeking an alternate water supply for drinking and the preparation of food was issued on February 26, 2016.

PFAS and PFOA are manmade chemicals that were used widely in nonstick cookware, stain resistant carpets, and other household items. They were also used in firefighting foam that was used on the former WAFB. The chemicals persist in the environment as well as the human body and can be detected in most everyone that lives in a developed nation. They are listed as an “emerging contaminant” as health effects are still being studied and not fully understood. It is felt they may cause adverse health effects over time with cumulative exposure and are probable carcinogens. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established a level of 70 ppt (parts per trillion) below which it is safe for consumption by all individuals. To date, two (2) properties test results were above this level. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has published a clinician fact sheet that can be found at [https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfc/docs/pfas_clinician_fact_sheet_508.pdf](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfc/docs/pfas_clinician_fact_sheet_508.pdf). The fact sheet is an excellent reference for clinical questions that may arise. Please note that blood testing for PFC’s in individuals, other than part of a research study, is not recommended. There is no level that can correlate to disease state or predict outcome; and again, virtually all individuals have detectable levels.

I hope you find this information helpful as you counsel your clients and help address the concerns in our community. More information is available on our website at [www.dhd2.org](http://www.dhd2.org) under the “News and Events” section. Updated information and links to resources can also be found on the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services website at [www.michigan.gov/mdhhs](http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs) and then search “Wurtsmith”.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact District Health Department No. 2 at 1-800-504-2650.

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