

## **Public Statement on Governor Wolf's Announcement of Research Partner for Shale Gas Development Health Studies in Southwestern Pennsylvania**

### ***Background:***

*On Tuesday, December 22, 2020, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced that the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health would partner with the Pennsylvania Department of Health to conduct **two observational epidemiological studies of health impacts from shale gas development** in southwestern Pennsylvania.*

*One study will attempt to replicate earlier studies performed elsewhere on acute conditions, such as **asthma and birth outcomes**, using data from southwestern Pennsylvania. This study will be led by Jeanine Buchanich, associate professor of biostatistics and director of Pitt Public Health's Center for Occupational Biostatistics and Epidemiology. A second study will investigate the relationship between shale gas development and **childhood cancers** in southwestern Pennsylvania. This study will be led by Evelyn Talbott, professor of epidemiology and director of the Environmental Epidemiology section,*

*Governor Wolf first announced the studies in November 2019, authorizing \$3 million for the two studies. The University of Pittsburgh's contract includes \$2.5 million of that amount. The studies are expected to take about **two years to complete**.*

*More than 12,000 shale gas wells have been drilled and fracked in four southwestern Pennsylvania counties in the past 15 years, using **dozens of toxic chemicals**. More than two dozen epidemiological research studies have shown a correlation between shale gas development and **a host of health issues**, including respiratory problems, cardio-pulmonary issues, fatigue and nausea, poor birth outcomes, neurological issues, and depression.*

### ***EHP Statement on the Announcement of a Research Partner:***

We are pleased to learn that the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health will conduct this important research into health effects experienced by so many in southwestern Pennsylvania. Assuming the studies investigate all sources of emissions and contain the appropriate controls, we believe these new studies will show results similar to dozens of other studies already completed – that shale gas development does indeed raise the risk of health impacts in people who live nearby. This is borne out by the health effects we have witnessed in so many in these vulnerable communities.

**Alison L. Steele, Executive Director**  
**Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project**  
**December 23, 2020**