



## THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH AND SHALE GAS DEVELOPMENT

A NEWSLETTER FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS

Issue 2: Health Impacts of Compressor Stations: Biomonitoring Advice

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Extraction of natural gas in Pennsylvania has been part of the landscape since the late 1800s. Natural gas development in the Marcellus Shale formation by way of unconventional horizontal fracking began in 2002. Rapid growth in this industry has resulted in significantly higher levels of air emissions and water use than previous methods of extraction. Accumulation of human health studies related to this latest method of gas extraction has been building.

### WHAT EVIDENCE OF HARM IS THERE?

*“... the number of peer-reviewed publications relevant to assessing the environmental, socioeconomic, and public health impacts of shale gas doubled between 2011 and 2012 and then doubled again between 2012 and 2013. More than 90 percent of these publications have been published since January 2013, with nearly one-quarter of the now more than 1,300 available studies published in 2017 alone.”*

[Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings  
Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking – Fifth Edition](#)

“...a fully referenced compilation of the evidence outlining the risks and harms of fracking.”

[Physicians for Social Responsibility \(PSR\)](#) | [Concerned Health Professionals of New York \(CHPNY\)](#)

### CAN NATURAL GAS COMPRESSOR STATION EMISSIONS IMPACT YOUR PATIENTS' HEALTH?

“Health care providers practicing in or near areas where compressor stations are operating should be aware of the chemicals being emitted, and the possible health impacts of exposure to those chemicals for their adult and pediatric patients.”

SWPA EHP published the technical report [Health Effects Associated with Stack Chemical Emissions from NYS Natural Gas Compressor Stations: 2008-2014](#).

A report brief, [HERE](#). Full report, [HERE](#).

*Important Information for Medical Professionals* based on the report can be accessed [HERE](#).

### SHOULD PATIENTS PURSUE BIOMONITORING?

If patients think they have been exposed to emissions from shale gas development, they may request biomonitoring. EHP has developed a handout for providers to help explain to patients what biomonitoring is and why it may not be conclusive or applicable depending on the patients' situations.

The [Biomonitoring and Volatile Organic Compounds](#) handout can be accessed [HERE](#).

### [ACT 13 MEDICAL GAG RULE OVERTURNED IN 2016](#)

In late 2016, PA Supreme Court struck down the 'Gag Rule' portion of Act 13 (a law passed in 2012) that many doctors feared would limit their ability to discuss with their patients the chemicals involved in natural gas development (fracking).

The PA Medical Society's Legislative & Regulatory Counsel's explanation of the ruling can be read [HERE](#).

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**The Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project (EHP)** is a nonprofit public health organization that assists and supports residents of Southwestern Pennsylvania and beyond who believe their health has been, or could be, impacted by unconventional oil and gas development (UOGD, or Fracking).

**Services offered by EHP**

- [Medical ToolKit – Screening & Assessment Tools – Reference Materials](#)
- [CME/CEU Credits](#)
- [National Shale Gas & Oil Health Registry](#)
- [Latest health studies related to UOGD](#)



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