

Cape Fear Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Community Survey

NORTH CAROLINA • 2019

NC Department of Health and Human Services Posts PFAS Community Survey Results

A survey of people living within 10 miles of the Chemours Fayetteville Works Plant shows that community concerns persist about possible health effects, the safety of drinking water, and the safety of outdoor activities after GenX and other related chemicals from the plant were found impacting their environment.

Conducted by the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), the Cape Fear Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Community Survey sought to understand the impacts that exposure to PFAS s from the plant has had on people’s activities and lives, and how community members prefer to receive information and communications from NCDHHS and other agencies.

The survey found 34% of households have changed their water usage, even if the level of GenX in their drinking water was below the provisional drinking water health goal of 140 parts per trillion. Thirty-eight percent changed other activities such as fishing and gardening. 615 of the more than 1,800 respondents expressed concerns about potential health effects, with cancer being the most common concern. Community members also indicated that they desired more information on how to avoid exposure and preferred information sent directly to them by mail.

GenX is an unregulated member of the PFAS family of chemical compounds. It was found in the Cape Fear River in 2017 and triggered an investigation that also discovered PFAS in residential water sources near the plant.

This survey helps NCDHHS understand the community’s concerns, especially in this situation where there is limited information on the health effects of many PFAS. Although health studies are being done, it will take years to truly understand how these chemicals effect people’s health. In the meantime, these results help document the effects this issue is having on people’s daily lives.

NCDHHS sent paper surveys, with an online option, to more than 15,000 households in early 2019. The survey report summarizes more than 1,800 responses. Results will help NCDHHS and others tailor health education activities and outreach to better meet the community’s needs.

As part of follow up, NCDHHS is working with partners to create and implement a community involvement plan to improve outreach and communication. This plan will be shared with other state agencies to ensure all communications are timely, relevant, and effectively communicated.

DHHS has established a repository of PFAS related information at Annie Hubbard McEachern Public Library at 223 W Broad St., St. Pauls, NC, about nine miles from the plant. Information available includes a paper copy of the community survey report, GenX and PFAS factsheets, and other PFAS updates from NC DHHS. Information may also be viewed online at bit.ly/surveyresults2019.

For more information contact NCDHHS at 919-707-5900.

