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PFAS Exposure Study Coming to Martinsburg Area

(Updated July 17, 2019) - The Martinsburg area has been identified as a location for further study of exposure to Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), a group of chemicals previously identified in a Martinsburg drinking water source. A public information session about the study will be held July 24, 2019 from 5:30 pm–8:30 pm at the Comfort Inn Aikens Center (1872 Edwin Miller Blvd, Martinsburg, WV 25404).

PFAS are a large group of man-made chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s and are now commonly present in the environment. At the local Air National Guard base (Shepherd Field), PFAS has been used as a fire suppressant due their effectiveness at extinguishing fuel-based fires. More information on PFAS can be found on the CDC's website (<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/>).

All of Berkeley County Public Service Water District (District) raw water sources have been tested in the last six months and no PFAS were detected, but because the District purchases a small percentage of its water supply from the City of Martinsburg, a proportionate number of District customers will be invited to participate in the study.

To better understand how much PFAS are in humans, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) selected eight sites from around the US to investigate the extent of exposure from drinking water versus other sources. Since PFAS had previously been identified in a drinking water supply near the Air National Guard base, the CDC and ATSDR selected Martinsburg as one of their eight study sites.

In 2016, when the EPA revised its health advisory level for PFAS from 600 parts per trillion (ppt) to 70 ppt, the City of Martinsburg immediately shut down the contaminated source and installed granular activated carbon treatment, a technology proven effective in removing PFAS from water. The water being purchased from Martinsburg today complies with all health-related regulations and recommendations, as does all of the District's water supplies. Martinsburg conducts routine monitoring to ensure treatment is effectively removing PFAS to levels well below the revised health advisory. The County conducts additional testing above and beyond requirements to ensure that no PFAS compounds are present above health advisory levels.

We will update this space with additional information on the study as it becomes available. Until then, please direct inquiries to ATSDR Region 3, Robert Helverson @ 215 814 3139 or email gsub@cdc.gov.

Additional resources on PFAS and the ATSDR Study:

- <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/basic-information-pfas>
- [ATSDR PFAS Exposure Assessment website](#)
- [ATSDR PFAS Exposure Assessment and Multisite Health Study Factsheet](#)