



May 12, 2020

CHAS Health
Spokane, WA 99201

Dear CHAS provider,

As you may be aware, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is conducting an exposure assessment study in your community to look at drinking water exposures to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU) has been asked to provide information on PFAS and guidance to assist in patient care and counseling so physicians and others can better address patient concerns about PFAS. The PEHSUs have expertise in adult, reproductive, and pediatric environmental health/medicine and form a network of health professionals whose services include providing consultative guidance and referral, education, and outreach to health professionals and the public. There is one PEHSU in each of the 10 federal regions based at academic medical institutions. Thank you for teleconferencing with the NW PEHSU on May 13th.

PFAS are a group of chemicals that have been used to make items that are resistant to water, grease, and stains. PFAS is used in non-stick cookware, carpets, clothing, upholstery, paper food packaging and aqueous film-forming firefighting foam (AFFF) used at military bases and airfields. These chemicals do not biodegrade and have migrated into ground water in your community. For more information on PFAS and potential health effects, review the document: "An Overview of the Science and Guidance for Clinicians on PFAS" (link below).

Some of the individuals participating in the PFAS exposure assessment in the community you serve are likely among your patients. These participants will receive letters from ATSDR containing their individual blood test results in 2020. Your patients will likely turn to you to help them understand their health risks. The NW PEHSU is working with ATSDR to prepare you and other clinicians in the US where the ATSDR exposure assessments (see below website link) are taking place to provide resources and information to prepare you for patient visits following the delivery of their respective blood test results.

We are here to review relevant PFAS information and resources and provide suggestions on how these materials can help inform you about PFAS as well as help you address concerns that may arise during patient visits related to PFAS exposure assessment results. The resources emailed (and/or website links) are below. These resources are also available at the NW PEHSU website (<https://deohs.washington.edu/pehsu/>).

- ***An Overview of the Science and Guidance for Clinicians on PFAS:*** This document will provide you an overview of what is known about PFAS and identifies health effects associated with PFAS exposure. It also provides a list of questions patients may have. In addition to these

questions, each one has supporting information for answers to these questions. It is recommended that you review this document to better understand PFAS, ways patients may prevent further PFAS exposure, and recommendations on how to undertake a PFAS-related patient visit.

https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/docs/ATSDR_PFAS_ClinicalGuidance_12202019.pdf

- **PFAS Clinical Visit Guidance:** This document provides steps that clinicians can follow during visits with patients who are seeking guidance and information on their PFAS exposure assessment test results. This short document can be quickly referenced prior to patient visits to remind you of the necessary steps recommended when discussing PFAS exposure and reviewing any PFAS test results.
- **What Patients Need to Know about PFAS:** This document is supplemental to the ATSDR Clinician Guidance and focuses on the patient. It provides answers to questions that patients may have during their clinical visit and can be sent home with them.
- **PFAS Exposure Assessment Participant Test Results Letter Template:** This document provides you with a blank template to serve as an example of what you should expect to see when patients bring you their test results.
 - Your patient's completed letter will have two values: your patient's PFAS level and a level from the NHANES data from 2015-2016. The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) is a program of studies designed to assess the health and nutritional status of adults and children in the United States. The continuous survey examines a nationally representative sample of about 5,000 persons each year. These persons are located in counties across the country, 15 of which are visited each year. Results of NHANES benefit people in the U.S. by providing facts about the distribution of health problems and risk factors in the population. Information collected from the current survey is compared with information collected in previous surveys which allows health planners to detect the extent of how various health problems and risk factors have changed in the U.S. population over time.
 - Source: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes/about_nhanes.htm
- **PFAS Frequently Asked Questions:** This document contains brief, high level information for the public regarding what PFAS are, how they affect human health, and how to reduce exposure. It can be given to patients during their clinical visit to take home with them.
<https://deohs.washington.edu/pehsu/sites/deohs.washington.edu.pehsu/files/PFAS-FAQs-Fact-Sheet-H.pdf>
- **ATSDR PFAS exposure assessments throughout the US** are described at this website.
<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/PFAS-Exposure-Assessments.html>
- **CDC ATSDR: PFAS Exposure Assessment. Airway Heights, Spokane County, WA:** This document describes the PFAS exposure assessment at the Airway Heights, Spokane County, WA site which can inform health professionals and the public.
<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/communities/Spokane-County-WA.html>
- **Spokane Regional Health District's Airway Heights PFAS Exposure Assessment:** This website includes information from Spokane Regional Health District and can inform health professionals and the public. <https://srhd.org/pfas-study>

- **WA State Department of Health PFAS website**. This website includes guidance and drinking-water information by WA State Department of Health and can inform health professionals and the public. <https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Contaminants/PFAS>
- **NW PEHSU website**: This website provides information on NW PEHSU services as well as environmental exposures on which PEHSUs can advise both health professionals and the public. <https://deohs.washington.edu/pehsu/>

When your patient raises his or her concerns about PFAS, please provide an empathic ear. Empathy should be at the foundation of a discussion regarding potential health effects. Key messages to share are:

1. Most people in the United States have some PFAS in their body.
2. Reducing exposure to PFAS is the most important step for families with concerns.
3. When a patient presents with health concerns that may be associated with PFAS exposure, it is appropriate to discuss these concerns and perform a thorough exposure history and physical exam relative to any symptoms reported.

We hope you find this information useful and comprehensive. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the NW PEHSU at any time by calling **1-877-543-2436** or by emailing Cristina Urrutia at **pehsu@uw.edu**.

Sincerely,

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