

Community Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)  
For the Cancer Cluster Investigation  
January 19, 2011, 7:00pm-9:00pm  
Frederick County Health Department

**TAC Purpose: a).** To provide assistance in determining what questions should be examined regarding cancer numbers – geographic region, time period, types of cancers, etc. and then and **b).** To identify options for how to answer the question(s)/hypothesis(es).

**Working Hypothesis:** There is an increased rate of cancers (gather data on all, possibly narrow down later based on confirmed exposures) within a ¼ mile radius around Ft. Detrick (Area A and B).

I. Introductions

Members present included: J. Bee (via phone); B. Brookmyer; J. Hahn; K. Harbaugh; G. Pauly; B. Roberson; J. Sawitzke and R. Watkins toward the end. A new participant was greeted, Ed Kruse, a UMD doctoral student with experience in water quality and environmental health issues. Fox 5 News reporter Roby Chavez and a cameraman were present for about the first 25 minutes. Tried to connect via phone with Rachel Pisani from the KRF.

II. Review of Notes from December 15 meeting

No changes noted.

III. Update on DHMH Analysis as presented January 3

Reviewed Dr. Mitchell's slide presentation on the FCHD cancer investigation website –more recent activities included looking at the distribution of age at diagnosis for various cancer types, Look at spatial clustering; and Look at possible expansion of area of concern from original 3 census tracts and then future plans to 1) Compare age at diagnosis in Frederick areas with Maryland data, 2) Look in more detail at ages at diagnosis - further break down into specific cancer types and look at cases that were "outliers" with young ages, 3) Expand space and time of analysis – look at additional census tracts and go back and include data to diagnosis year 1992 and forward to include 2008 when that year's data is available.

It was also note that the State's updated annual cancer report is available online through the links sent in an e-mail the day before the meeting. The 2007 all cancer sites age-adjusted incidence rate for Frederick is lower than the Maryland incidence rate and the US SEER rate at 426.8cases/100,000 population in 2007. As a result, the 5-year incidence rate for Frederick also dropped and at the same time some of the other Maryland jurisdictions that have been historically high in cancer incidence are once again high (see the CDC NCI interactive map referenced in yesterday's e-mail) for the most recently available 5-year period.

IV. Update on KRF Data Collection and Analysis

Not available – plan to add to agenda for next meeting. There was discussion about whether there is a need to standardize the one-mile radius maps referenced by various persons. If the cancer data is to be analyzed by the radius boundaries, then yes, definitely, the one-mile radius boundaries should be standardized. If the data is analyzed on a census tract or zip code boundary basis then the one-mile radius determinations serve more of a

general guide and reference point rather than being linked to specific data and uniformity is not as necessary.

V. Technical Assistance Updates and Discussion

a. National Academy of Science announcement today

Reviewed Fort Detrick's press release announcing that the "National Academy of Sciences' Committee on Toxicology (NAS-COT) has been engaged by Fort Detrick to conduct a peer review of key public health reports and studies concerning environmental contamination and remediation efforts at Fort Detrick, Md., and potential public health effects." It was reported that "[c]entral to NAS-COT's review are three reports based on independent studies by public health agencies: "Evaluation of Drinking Water Well Exposures via Confirmed Off-Site Contamination, Fort Detrick Area B Groundwater, Frederick, Maryland, EPA FACILITY ID: MDD985397249," by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Public Health Assessment, published Dec. 9, 2009; "Interim Progress Report: Cancer Investigation," by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, published October 2010; and "Final Cancer Investigation Report," by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, tentatively scheduled to be published later this year."

b. UMD doctoral student project proposal description

Ed Kruse described his intentions to build upon research previously conducted by Nancy Thorpe in Maryland looking at herbicide use, herbicide concentrations in drinking water, and then cancer cases. See the earlier work at this site -- <http://proceedings.esri.com/library/userconf/health03/papers/pap3006/p3006.htm> . The prior research conducted by Thorpe did not include Frederick County. Ed reported that he is interested in adding Frederick to the areas being analyzed.

VI. Review of Sources to Answer Hypothesis

a. Chart developed last meeting

b. Any new sources?

Other possible sources of historic household number data to explore relevant to a ¼ mile radius of Ft. Detrick are school enrollment data in Waverly and Yellow Springs Elementary Schools. Property tax records were mentioned but the lack of information of household numbers makes it an incomplete source. The historic network knowledge was again discussed as source for historic household numbers especially if the geographic area of concern is limited to a small area like ¼ mile radius from Fort Detrick's fence line.

VII. Next Steps

a. Next Meeting: Tentatively scheduled for February 2 pending the availability of UMD guests

b. Homework –

- i. To figure out the streets and addresses within ¼ mile radius and
- ii. To identify how the census tracts and zip code boundaries have changed over time – inquiries already in the works.