

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 7, 2022

The Honorable Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Rd
Atlanta, GA 30329

The Honorable Patrick Breyse
Director
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease
Registry
4770 Buford Highway NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

Dear Director Walensky and Director Breyse:

On July 28, 2022, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) released their report, *Guidance on PFAS Exposure, Testing, and Clinical Follow-Up*. I am grateful for NASEM's report that works collaboratively with scientists, medical professionals and community members to create a framework that will establish physician guidance. I urge the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to swiftly review the recommendations contained in this report and update ATSDR's physician guidance.

As you are aware, establishing clinician guidance on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), including testing protocols and physician education, has been a longstanding priority of mine. Due to their use in a variety of residential, commercial and industrial products PFAS chemicals have emerged as widespread pollutants in the drinking water sources for communities across New Hampshire. The number of sites with known or suspected contamination from PFAS continues to rise, as do the concerns from those who have found high levels of PFAS in their blood with little information as to what this means for their health and the health of their families.

That is why I was pleased that the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (P.L.116-260) included key provisions from my legislation, the Physician Education for PFAS Health Impacts Act, for the development of voluntary training courses for health professionals to understand the potential health impact of PFAS exposure and best practices for treatment. Moreover, the bill directed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to award multiple grants to medical society organizations, medical institutions with expertise in PFAS and other organizations to develop these training courses.

As NASEM shares in their report, there is sufficient evidence of associations caused by PFAS such as decreased antibody response, dyslipidemia, decreased infant and fetal growth and increased risk of kidney cancer. This report validates concerns about the health impacts of PFAS.

I appreciate ATSDR's ongoing work to investigate the human health implications of PFAS contamination pursuant to Section 316 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018; however, we cannot wait to take action on what we already know: PFAS is

harmful to human health. I urge ATSDR to swiftly review and update your physician health guidance so individuals, communities and physicians can make thoughtful decisions on how to appropriately respond to the harmful effects PFAS has on human health.

I respectfully ask for a response to the following questions:

What is your progress in developing health monitoring protocols and voluntary training courses for health professionals to understand the potential health impact of PFAS exposure, as directed by Congress in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021?

What resources does the CDC and ATSDR need in order to successfully and swiftly review and implement the recommendations in NASEM's report?

Are ATSDR and CDC capable of leveraging data already being collected on PFAS exposure via the Pease PFAS study, the National Multi-Site PFAS Study, ATSDR's PFAS Exposure Assessments or other ongoing studies with the agencies to develop health care protocols and best practices for treatment for those exposed to PFAS?

What plans does ATSDR have to continue physician outreach in light of this new report from NASEM?

I appreciate your agencies' ongoing efforts to advance the science and address the health impacts of PFAS. I look forward to working with you in the future on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeanne Shaheen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate