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Impacted Families, Backed by Dozens of Groups, Urge Governor Wolf to Attend Cancer Crisis Meeting in Washington County

Letter to Wolf, signed by over 50 groups and 350 individuals, urges him to hear from communities impacted by cancer outbreak

Dozens of environmental and community groups are joining impacted families to call on Governor Tom Wolf to attend a meeting in Washington County next week about the alarming spike in rare childhood cancers.

The October 7 meeting at Canon-McMillan High School in Washington County, organized by the state's Department of Health, is just the latest public forum to examine the cancer crisis in southwestern Pennsylvania. The existence of the astonishing youth cancer outbreak was revealed in a major investigative series in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in May.

Local residents and environmentalists have been pressuring the governor to take more determined action in response to the crisis. In June, more than 100 groups wrote a letter to Governor Wolf urging him to conduct an investigation. The governor declined, [responding with a letter](#) saying that his administration would "continue to monitor and study cancer incidents in this area." Wolf also claimed that the public health effects of fracking were still "inconclusive," a dubious assertion completely at odds with the hundreds of studies showing a range of public health risks associated with drilling.

The [letter urging Wolf to attend the October 7 forum](#) states, "You have a responsibility, both to your constituents who are battling cancer or have lost loved ones and to the parents of all children who need to know what they can do to protect them from becoming cancer patients by the time they are young adults.... To date, you have refused to listen to the science, to tour the area, or to meet with the families who have been directly affected. It is time for you to witness the impacts firsthand and hear directly from the people who have already suffered so much or are living on edge, unsure of what they can do to avoid being next. They cannot wait years for further study."

"Governor Wolf must stop ignoring the people he has placed in the crosshairs of the shale gas industry with his reckless pro-fracking agenda. Children are paying the consequences for his actions. The unfolding public health crisis in Pennsylvania's shale fields demands his attention and swift action. There is no more important for Governor Wolf to be on October 7 than the Canon-McMillan High School," said **Karen Feridun, co-founder of the Better Path Coalition**.

“Any leader of a community experiencing high rates of rare childhood cancers, including Ewing Sarcoma, would be expected to arrive in-person, on-site and launch an immediate, thorough, unbiased, and transparent investigation. If it was a natural disaster, Governor would be there on-site and in-person at least for the photo-op,” said **Tammy Murphy, Medical Advocacy Director, Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) Pennsylvania**. “Something deadly is happening and the state's leadership needs to step up, and to show up.”

“There is more than enough scientific medical information for Governor Wolf and Health Secretary Levine to take precautionary measures to protect public health by calling for a halt on shale gas extraction until a thorough, unbiased, and transparent investigation is completed on the high rates of rare childhood cancers, including Ewing sarcoma,” said **Ned Ketyer, a pediatric physician and consultant at the Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project**. “There is no need to wait for even more damning evidence to pile up in yet another edition of the fracking science Compendium to further confirm the inherent dangers to public health and safety posed by shale gas pollution in Pennsylvania.”

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