
From: Priem, Wesley F. (DCH)
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2015 9:37 AM
To: Miller, Corinne (DCH); Robinson, Mikelle (DCH)
Cc: Groetsch, Kory J. (DCH); Dykema, Linda D. (DCH)
Subject: RE: Flint Water FAQ Document

Flint to issue lead in water warning after push from doctors, health officials







Flint resident Ruth Blaasingame listens during a town hall meeting as Virginia Tech researchers present evidence after water testing in Flint showed high levels of lead on Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2015, at Saints of God Church in Flint, Mich. Danny Miller | MLive.com

[Danny Miller | dmiller17@mlive.com](#)

[PrintEmail](#)



by [Ron Fonger | rfonger1@mlive.com](#)

on September 24, 2015 at 5:50 AM, updated September 24, 2015 at 6:51 AM

0

[Reddit](#)

FLINT WATER

- [Flint to issue lead in water warning after push from doctors, health officials](#)
- [GoFundMe page created by Virginia Tech researcher to buy filters for Flint residents](#)
- [U.S. congressman calls for more testing of Flint water](#)
- [Lead levels in Flint water spiked after switch to river, state records show](#)
- [Appeals Court rules that lowered Flint water rates will remain in place](#)

[All Stories](#)



Flint Journal file photo

FLINT, MI -- The city of Flint is expected to advise its water customers on ways to minimize exposure to lead in its tap water -- particularly for children -- after a group that includes doctors and health officials strongly suggested the step.

Flint Mayor Dayne Walling confirmed the move on Wednesday, Sept. 23, after The Flint Journal-MLive learned the Greater Flint Health Coalition approved a resolution two days prior urgently asking the city to issue the advisory.

Representatives of the coalition met privately with Walling and other city officials to express their concerns about the safety of Flint water, and issued a statement saying "not enough was being done to alert the public to potential risks of consuming Flint city water that could lead to elevated levels of lead."

Walling's statement said the city "will be issuing an advisory" on the matter "in cooperation with health partners promoting ways to minimize the exposure to lead such as flushing pipes when the water has been sitting." He did not specify when the advisory would be issued.

Walling, who earlier this month asked Gov. Rick Snyder for \$30 million for Flint's infrastructure, including \$10 million to replace lead service lines to homes, said in an email that he "will continue to pursue funding for a comprehensive healthy homes initiative that addresses lead in paint and pipes."

"We have to get the lead out of our community to eliminate the threat of childhood lead poisoning," the statement says. "I am extremely concerned to hear from doctors about any elevated blood lead levels in Flint's children."

The Journal could not immediately reach Walling for more information on the concerns expressed to him by doctors about lead.

Kirk D. Smith, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Flint Health Coalition, and state Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich, the chairman of the group's board of directors, issued a statement to The Journal about the coalition's recommendation on issuing precautions.

"As a coalition of concerned physicians, health care professionals and county leaders, we are compelled to inform the public when there is a possible threat to their health so they can take appropriate precautions and actions to protect themselves and their families," the joint statement says.

"At our last meeting and in recent days we have heard from numerous physicians who shared strong concerns that not enough was being done to alert the public to potential risks of consuming Flint city water that could lead to elevated levels of lead."

A resolution approved by the nonprofit coalition's board of directors, which includes representatives of Flint area hospitals, universities, physicians and unions, comes after researchers from Virginia Tech University reported their testing here shows a far-reaching problem with lead in water.

Ten percent of Flint homes tested by Virginia Tech had 25 parts per billion of lead or more, far more than the allowable level -- 15 ppb -- set in federal guidelines, according to the university researchers.

City and state officials have said their testing shows Flint's water supply meets all health and safety regulations, never rising above 11 ppb in more than 10 percent of homes during the last 16 months, but data from the state Department of Environment Quality shows lead levels have spiked since the city began using the Flint River as its water source in April 2014.

At the urging of state and federal officials, the city announced three weeks ago that it would speed up the development of plans aimed at making Flint water less corrosive.

Professor Marc Edwards of Virginia Tech has said treated river water is currently far more corrosive than water the city had used for decades -- Lake Huron water that was treated and piped here by the city of Detroit.

Edwards has criticized the city and the state for not having developed a plan for reducing the corrosiveness of Flint's water because an estimated 15,000 homes in the city have lead

or lead solder in service lines and plumbing, making the homes much more susceptible to lead leaching into water.

City Councilman Scott Kincaid, also a member of the GFHC, said he supported the organization's request for further action -- particularly after physicians raised concerns about how high lead levels could affect infants and young children.

"I'm supporting the resolution. I think we need to advise people that there is a potential concern," Kincaid said. "Lead isn't good for anybody, but the effect on infants" is especially disturbing.

Although the city has yet to issue its lead advisory, Walling's mention of allowing water to flush through pipes is the same advice given by Virginia Tech earlier this month.

Researchers at the university have also recommended that infants not be fed formula made with unfiltered Flint tap water and that residents who are not flushing water for five minutes before using it for drinking or cooking should use a filter certified to remove lead.

The Journal could not reach Dr. Lawrence Reynolds, president and CEO of Mott Children's Health Center, for comment Wednesday. Other coalition members said Reynolds led the push for additional, quick action by the city.

Lead is a toxic metal that was used for many years in products found in and around homes, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Even at low levels, lead may cause health effects such as behavioral problems and learning disabilities.

Current regulations for lead in water began in 1992 and require a limited amount of testing to measure the degree to which lead leaches into tap water after flowing through lead service lines and lead solder in home plumbing.

Flint has struggled with its water quality since switching to the Flint River as its primary water source in April 2014. Previously, the city had purchased water through the city of Detroit, which got its water from Lake Huron.

Flint was required to step up its testing of water in homes after it shifted to the Flint River, which is intended to be a temporary move as the city and Genesee County are partners in building a new water pipeline to Lake Huron through a partnership called the Karegnondi Water Authority.

The city has been using -- and Walling and state emergency managers have supported continuing to use -- the Flint River as a stopgap water source until the KWA pipeline is expected to be completed in 2016.

In state testing of city water samples, Flint has stayed below the federal threshold for lead, with less than 10 percent of tap water samples exceeding 15 ppb.

Water systems can be required to take steps like making water less corrosive or replacing lead service lines if sampling shows such elevated lead levels.

But after the Virginia Tech testing showed lead was much more prevalent than Flint's testing showed, Edwards and U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee each raised doubts about the water testing by the city and DEQ.

Kildee said in a news release Sept. 21 that "the city, DEQ and (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) have not adequately answered my questions on their testing methods to ensure the safety of Flint's water."

Reddit

From: Miller, Corinne (DCH)
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2015 8:54 AM
To: Priem, Wesley F. (DCH)
Subject: RE: Flint Water FAQ Document

Yes!

From: Priem, Wesley F. (DCH)
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2015 8:52 AM
To: Miller, Corinne (DCH)
Subject: RE: Flint Water FAQ Document

Thank --you... This is what we have been saying....if only our hirer ups would listen.

From: Miller, Corinne (DCH)
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2015 8:46 AM
To: Priem, Wesley F. (DCH)
Subject: FW: Flint Water FAQ Document

Fyi only

And from Gongwer this am.....

Officials have found lead in Flint's water system, but it is coming from final service connections, Department of Environmental Quality officials said in response to a push from U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee for additional water testing in the city.

Mr. Kildee (D-Flint) called Tuesday for the DEQ and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to have independent testing conducted on the city's water system after the lead findings and complaints of murky water in the system (See Gongwer Michigan Report, September 22, 2015).

Brad Wurfel, spokesperson for the DEQ, said there is a federal rule calling for converting lead pipes to copper, but that the rule is designed to reduce the problem, not eliminate it.

"We felt we were clear that the lead detected in Flint's water is strictly the product of lead in home plumbing," Mr. Wurfel said of the meeting with Mr. Kildee and staff from other elected leaders. "It doesn't come from the river, or the plant, or the cast iron pipes employed for most of the delivery system. It comes from water passing through lead service connections - more than 15,000 of them in Flint, and it comes from home plumbing in older homes."

But he noted that Mr. Kildee is in the best place to push for change because much of what he would like to see happen would require federal funds.

From: Robinson, Mikelle (DCH)
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2015 5:04 PM
To: Miller, Corinne (DCH); Dykema, Linda D. (DCH)
Cc: Moran, Susan (DCH)
Subject: FW: Flint Water FAQ Document

Hi Corinne and Linda,

Geralyn and Elizabeth requested a call with DEQ today in order to brief Nick and respond to some legislative inquiries. Below are my notes from the call that I sent to brief Sue and Mark as well as a Q & A document that DEQ developed and is currently being vetted by the Gov's office. Just wanted to be sure to keep you in the loop on this.

The DEQ PIO (Brad Wurfel) gave a long summary about the Flint water issue. He said bottom line is that the water itself is safe but they have an old water treatment plant and old cast iron pipes that haven't been upgraded in more than 40 years. 15,000 homes have old connections with varying levels of lead. Flint is not in violation of the lead standards however they could optimize the water supply by adding phosphate. Flint is also working on a meaningful optimization plan that will be completed sometime next year. He said that DEQ briefed the Mayor and some legislators on Monday on the situation. **He said Flint's water supply is not an imminent public health problem but a public confidence problem due to the many groups getting involved and controversial reports/media coverage on it.**

Some data from a local group of Peds is showing an uptick in blood lead levels which seems to contradict the data that CLPP collects. I've asked Rashmi to follow-up with Nancy P on a) the issue of the lead testing that a group of pediatricians did in Flint? b) messaging about lead, where it is found in the environment c) a brief explanation in writing that explains the results from the blood lead tests that Nancy's program has access to. I found the charts a bit hard to read/interpret. d) availability of any local programs that might be relevant, and e) anything else that might be useful for us to share with Genesee CHD. I'll also check with Linda D. on this. *(Linda, any thoughts on what might be useful?)*

DEQ developed a Q & A document that is being reviewed by the Gov's office and they will share with us. They will post this on their website after it is approved. DEQ would like the local health department to get involved in the messaging about what can be done such as running the water before using or get a filtration system. **Mark or I will need to follow-up with H.O. Valacak once we have some suggested talking points and information that can be provided to the public.**

The city owns only the first couple of feet of pipes in connections with homes, the rest is privately owned by the homeowner therefore it would be their expense to replace. The longer water sits in lead pipes, the higher the lead readings. DEQ's testing protocol produces consistent results across the state and matches the EPA's protocol. There are other areas of the state with the same problem. He estimated it would take \$60 M to replace the city's

infrastructure. The city has request \$30 M from the state to help with the situation. The state told them to check with Congress. But we are calling on EPA to assist along with our Congressional delegation.

Brad said they are hoping to have their director submit an op ed to the Flint paper (and perhaps have Nick co-sign) with a message such as lead is a serious issue and there are actions that can be taken to minimize exposure. He wants to coordinate our messaging to align. He will circle back with Geralyn on this. Also, they will be reviewing the various water test results and will look at Flint's water treatment protocols. He cautioned that they are receiving FOIA requests every day.

Let me know if you have questions.

Mikelle