Engaging communities and policy makers about near highway pollution and health

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Abstract

The Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health study is a community-based participatory research effort collecting data to test associations between ultrafine particle levels near highways and blood markers of inflammation in people living closer and farther from the highways. As a CBPR project, we have a deep commitment to engaging the community, public and policy makers and have developed a number of communication strategies. We have a website that has recently been reformed and updated. We have published two issues of a project newsletter and plan to publish at least two more. The newsletter audience includes the project team, a list of interested people, including Advisory Committee meeting attendees and participants in the study who participated in the clinical appointment. Four educational sessions about the project with school children (Boston and Somerville Public Schools, Museum of Science, and Tufts Community Day) have been held and they generated a lot of excitement and interest. A group of Tufts undergraduate film students made a short film about the study which premiered on the New York Daily News and Physicians for Social Responsibility. Finally, we have an advisory board that meets twice a year that is attended by 35-45 people. Attendees include project team members, community leaders, study participants, municipal, state and federal agency staff, and elected officials. The meetings include presentations, mostly by our graduate students, of recent findings as well as presentations and discussion about policy and practice relevance of the study.

New Website:

http://sites.tufts.edu/cafeh

Images Above are indoor HEPA Air Filters and a sample floor plan used in the HUD CAP Study.

Images Above from HCOP Boston Museum of Science and Somerville High School Events

CAFEH In The News

Doug Brugge, a professor of public health at Tufts University School of Medicine who studies air pollution and cardiovascular disease, said that the study’s methods appeared to be sound and that it reinforces similar research.

“"This study fits into a much broader literature that convincingly shows there are risks below the current EPA standards for fine particulate matter,” he said. “Particulate matter is the biggest environmental risk we face.”

CAFEH Team Presentations

- Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) - Wig Zamore
- Transportation Research Board (TRB) - Ellin Reisner & Wig Zamore
- American Public Health Association (APHA) - Ellin Reisner
- Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) - Ellin Reisner & Wig Zamore
- Boston Museum of Science - Christine Rioux
- Boston and Somerville Public Schools - Chris Rioux, Allison Patton & Luz Padro-Martinez
- Tufts Community Day - Chris Rioux & Doug Brugge