

Press Release

UMRC and Port Hope CHCC

Health Canada suppresses study findings: “top radiation scientist” says Port Hope’s uranium contamination “typical of...Canadians”

December 2007

Port Hope Community Health Concerns Committee

www.porthopehealthconcerns.com

At a November 19, 2007 town council meeting in Port Hope, Ontario, Dr. Jack Cornett, Director of Radiation Protection, Health Canada, suppressed findings of an independent study revealing human uranium contamination in the town. Dr. Cornett, according to local press, is Canada’s “top radiation scientist”. He told the town they had nothing to worry about as the study’s findings showing contamination are “typical of ... Canadians”.

Faye More, Chair of the Port Hope Community Health Concerns Committee, a volunteer local organization, said, “The position of Health Canada stated by Dr Cornett is inaccurate and irresponsible. Instead of investigating Port Hope’s contamination, Health Canada is trying to dismiss the important findings by saying everyone in Canada has these radioactive materials in their bodies. Once again, we see Health Canada’s unwillingness to deal with our realities and fully investigate possible health impacts of 75 years of exposure to nuclear contaminants in Port Hope,” More says.

A week earlier, on November 13, 2007, the Health Concerns Committee announced the outcomes of Uranium Medical Research Centre’s (UMRC) Port Hope study showing nuclear contamination in the bodies of former Port Hope nuclear industry workers and residents. UMRC is a Toronto and Washington DC based independent clinical research group headed by Dr. Asaf Durakovic MD, PhD, FACP.

The study of 11 samples included two controls and 9 representative samples of residents and former workers, showed radioactive contaminants and anomalies in 100% of the Port Hope samples, including a child under age 14. The identified nuclear reactor waste, depleted uranium, and enriched uranium 234. It found workers eliminating radioactive industrial heavy metal toxins in their urine as late as 23 years after retirement.

In a surprising response to the study, Dr. Jack Cornett, Health Canada, told the Port Hope town council and local press the findings are not significant. He said that if all residents in Port Hope were tested or if all Canadians were tested they would have the same radioactive materials in their bodies.

Tedd Weyman, Deputy Director, Uranium Medical Research Centre said Health Canada’s staff have misunderstood the basic physics in the findings made public two weeks ago. “Health

Canada attempts to attribute the contamination to current daily intake of naturally occurring uranium in water. The lab data shows a very different picture,” says Weyman. “They show chronic internal contamination from inhaling airborne radioactive toxins. What we found is not naturally occurring; the contaminants are manmade, commercial nuclear materials, referred to as “dirty uranium”.

UMRC expressed surprise at Cornett’s statement that the findings are “typical” for Canadians. Weyman agrees the contamination profile is most likely typical for Port Hope. However, says Weyman “there are no scientific literature or government reports agreeing with Dr. Cornett’s statement that it is typical of Canadians’ bodies to contain spent nuclear reactor fuel, Depleted Uranium or enriched 234Uranium”.

Weyman noted that the study’s two control samples, taken from persons who don’t live or work in Port Hope, are not contaminated. “The Controls show none of the contaminants Dr Cornett says are “typical” in Canada.”

Health Canada told the Port Hope Council the doses of radiation are too low to be important. Weyman says Health Canada is making up its facts. Health Canada, just like the patients and UMRC, has no idea how much radioactive contaminant has been incorporated into the patients’ bodies. It is impossible to calculate the radiation dose without historical reconstruction of the exposure history of each subject.

During its Port Hope appearance, Health Canada criticised the Health Concerns Committee and UMRC, saying it contacted them many times and was unable to acquire a copy of the study. Neither the Health Concerns Committee nor UMRC have been contacted by Health Canada.

The Health Concerns Committee wants comprehensive, multidisciplinary health studies and an investigation into health and regulatory agencies’ denials of Port Hope’s real health issues and allowing on-going contamination of the town.

The study is posted on the web sites of both organizations:

www.porthopehealthconcerns.com

www.UMRC.net

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