

EDITORIAL

Cancer study findings should spur public outcry

The long-awaited study concerning cancer incidence in our area has finally been released by the New York State Department of Health (*Sentinel*, Sept. 20). A meeting has been called at Lew-Port High School on Monday, Sept. 29, at 7 p.m. to explain the results of the study.

I obtained a copy of the study and after reading it want to make some observations.

The study concludes that from 1991 to 2000 in the area near the Lewiston-Porter schools, the number of cancer cases in males was statistically significantly greater than expected. These cancers were primarily prostate cancer or testicular cancer. It says that a statistically significant excess of cancers was found in the number of

females with breast cancer or urinary bladder cancer.

I will not try to summarize the entire study in this brief letter. The study also deals in other sections with the Town of Porter and includes Youngstown and Ransomville. I do want to point out that the study says that in the area near the Lew-Port campus, there was a statistically significant excess in the number of children diagnosed with cancers falling into the category germ cell, trophoblastic, and other gonadal neoplasms. It also says that when expected numbers of cancers were calculated for 5-year age groups, the number of cancers diagnosed in children age 10-14 was statistically greater than the number expected.

As the report continues, it makes

a number of statements that throw doubt on the results of its own study. It speaks of the fact that "some" of the children did not attend Lewiston-Porter schools, but does not say how many. It talks about better diagnosis and screening for prostate cancer today, which may account for more being found. It tells of the number of cancers that can be caused by cigarette smoking or eating high fat foods, or physical inactivity. In other words, it warns against jumping to conclusions.

Here is my point: the bottom line is that there are more cancers than expected. Therefore it would seem prudent to avoid anything that might contribute to this. We certainly will not increase the risk of cancer if we stop importing truckloads of toxics to this

area for burial every day! We might, in fact, lessen the risk if we stopped doing that.

If you know you have a problem, even if you can't prove in a court of law what causes the problem, there is no reason you have to act in ways that may increase the problem. Why not act instead in ways that may decrease it?

Protecting our children is more important than profits. That's the bottom line. The evidence of the cancer surveillance program should result in more and more public insistence that importation of toxic wastes for burial here be stopped.

The Rev. Charles Lamb