

## Wingate Road Municipal Incinerator & Landfill Health Consultation on Cancer Rates

### Background

The Wingate Road Municipal Incinerator and Landfill operated from 1954 until 1978. The plant burned garbage and put the ash into a landfill. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) listed the site on the Superfund National Priority List in 1989. EPA and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are working on clean up plans. Our office, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) Office of Environmental Toxicology, wrote a health assessment in 1990. At that time, we found no health threat from current levels of chemicals in the water, soil, or air. In 1994, EPA finished a risk assessment for the site. They found the levels of chemicals measured in 1992 were not a significant health threat to people living around the site.

### Health Concerns

Our office tries to find out whether people's health is affected by Superfund hazardous waste sites. Wingate is a Superfund site. We look at past, present, and future health effects.

**Today**, you are not in danger from air or soil pollution on the Wingate site. We do not have much information about what happened in the **past**. There are no data on chemical levels in the air or soil from the plant while it was operating. We need that type of data to see if health effects are possible from past exposures. We do have cancer information from the area. This cannot tell us if the Wingate site caused cancer. It can only give us preliminary information on how the Wingate area compares to statewide cancer rates.

### Am I in Danger Now?

No. Chemicals in the air and soil are not a health threat right now.

### Looking at Cancer Rates

DOH looked at Wingate area cancer data from the Florida Cancer Data System (FCDS). We published the results as a health consultation in April 1996. This summary sheet explains what we found.

### What is the Florida Cancer Data System?

The FCDS is a way of keeping track of cancer cases in Florida. Hospitals report all types of cancer they treat to the FCDS. This data system does not have data on cancers treated in doctors offices, such as most skin cancers. We examined ten years of data, from 1981 through 1990, for four groups. These were 1) nonwhite females, 2) nonwhite males, 3) white females, and 4) white males. We looked at cancer rates for an area **within one mile** of the Wingate site.



Census tracts used for cancer data

### How did DOH decide which cancers to look at?

We listed all the chemicals found at the site that could reach nearby residents through eating, breathing, or touching the skin. From this list, we chose all cancers that might be linked to those chemicals. We compared local cancer rates to statewide rates.

### What did the data show?

The FCDS data suggest that the rates of some cancers in the Wingate area may be higher than the Florida average. Five cancers appeared higher in some race-sex groups. These are cancers of the breast, prostate, pancreas, kidney, and eye. Our look at these data was preliminary. We could not account for important influences on cancer rates in our study. These include how long people have lived in the area, contact with chemicals at work, or lifestyle (diet, smoking, etc.). Because we can't be sure if the cancer rates are truly higher than average, we recommend an in-depth health study.

**Could further study show that these cancers are caused by past Wingate actions?**

No. A health study might be able to identify certain cancer risk factors in the community. It may also strengthen the suggestion that the cancers have an environmental link. However, we do not have any data on past chemical releases from the site. We also do not have data showing people had contact with chemicals from the site. Without this kind of information, we **cannot** link any cancers with past Wingate Road actions.

**Do the five cancers have other causes besides chemicals?**

Yes. Cancer can be caused by many things. Breast and prostate cancer rates increase as people get older. In the US, prostate cancer occurs more often in African-American men than in men of other races, and at a younger age. Risk factors for breast cancer are a family history of breast cancer, never having a baby or having the first baby after age 30, menstrual periods starting early and ending late in life, and a high-fat diet. The eye cancer we found can run in families. Risk factors for kidney cancer include smoking, being overweight, and breathing in asbestos. Not much is known about the causes of pancreas cancer. Smoking might be a risk factor. Drinking lots of alcohol, having diabetes, or eating a poor diet might also be risk factors for pancreas cancer.

**What should I do?**

If your blood relatives have had cancer, tell your doctor. African-American men who are 40 or older should talk to their doctors about screening for prostate cancer. Men of other races should talk to their doctors about prostate cancer screening by age 50. All women should examine their breasts each month. The American Cancer Society or your doctor has information on how to do the breast examination and what to look for. Women can also ask their doctors about other screening methods for breast cancer. Remember - early detection is the key to successful cancer treatment. If you have more questions about cancer, call the National Cancer Institute's Information Service at 1-800-4CANCER (1-800-422-6237) or the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 (1-800-227-2345).

**Where can I get more information?**

We have compiled a packet with this fact sheet, other health consultation information, and cancer information. You may get the packets from the DOH Broward County Health Department.

**Where can I get a complete copy of the health consult?**

Copies of the complete health consultation are in the Wingate Road Superfund Site Repository at the Broward County Main Library Government Documents Department, 100 South Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale. Your city commissioner and the Broward County Health Department also have copies. If you would like your own copy, please contact Carolyn Voyles at the address below.

**Whom can I call?**Copies of Health Consultation

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Site Clean up Information

John Zimmerman  
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Judie Kean  
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Health Education Materials

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