

Texas PSR Fracking Position Statement

As healthcare professionals, we are deeply concerned about hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") and its potential threats to public health.

Fracking operations pose potential public health risks due to several factors:

- Fracking slurry contains a variety of hazardous and toxic chemicals such as benzene, toluene (Btex compounds), formaldehyde, and many unknown chemicals (1-5)
- Fracking "flowback" and "process" water may be more hazardous as these slurries can contain a combination of the initial fracking fluids with the additions of salts, heavy metals, and even radioactive elements (6-7)
- Fracking has the potential to contaminate public water supplies during drilling, with surface leaks, and with the improper storage of used fracking fluids (8-12)
- Fugitive emissions of methane via leaks and venting, and on-purpose emissions via burn offs and flaring endanger air quality and contribute to global climate disruption (13-15)
- Emissions from equipment used in the drilling, capture, transport, and maintenance for fracking is significant, endangers air quality, and contributes to global climate disruption (16)

Therefore, Texas PSR calls on federal, state, and local officials to create strong standards to monitor and manage the entire life cycle of the drilling, extraction, maintenance, and disposal of all fracking-related operations.

These standards should include the following:

- Disclosure of all chemicals used in the process including chemicals currently exempted from the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and other hazardous waste laws
- Provide baseline data and sustained water testing to ensure resources are protected
- Publish the results of all testing data on a website accessible to the public
- Avoid drilling in areas that are crucial to public water supplies
- Prohibit drilling within 1,500 feet of residential areas
- Document and publish spills and leaks
- Eliminate emissions from leaks, burn-offs, and the flaring of natural gas
- Provide the most effective pollution controls for ancillary equipment
- Provide adequate disposal of all waste products

In addition, Texas PSR asks the oil and gas industry to generate and disseminate data to conclusively prove that hydraulic fracturing can be done without material impacts on public health. Furthermore, Texas PSR asks this industry to take a primary role in adopting and legally promulgating strong "best management practices" to ensure public health-protective measures including pollution controls, waste management, and drilling site mitigation with no cost borne by the public.

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