
SUMMIT COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT

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MARTHA D. NELSON, M.D.
Health Commissioner

REPORT ON 950 BEY ROAD, SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO

On January 21, 1993, the Summit County Health Department received its first call from **the complainant** with a concern about testing for lead in water at 950 Bey Road, Springfield Township. There were several telephone calls in which **the complainant** was told to have her physician contact the Health Department so the investigation could be focused and decisions made as to what tests needed to be done.

On February 8, 1993 at 2:30 a.m., **the complainant** took her children to Summa Hospital Emergency Room because the two youngest children had history of seizures. Subsequent blood tests for lead and mercury were negative. Emergency Room physician recommended family to avoid reexposure to environment until evaluation was obtained.

In rapid succession, **the complainant** contacted news media (Akron Beacon Journal, TV 23, TV 3), Congressman Tom Sawyer's office, Governor's office, Ohio Representative Tom Seese, and Springfield Township Trustees. Each, in turn, called the Summit County Health Department and/or Ohio EPA offices.

Summit County Health Department Health Commissioner Dr. Martha D. Nelson met with **the complainant** with her three children present. She subsequently contacted all physicians involved with **complainant's** family. Dr. Nelson insured all environmental evaluations were completed and results forwarded to each physician involved (as determined by **the complainant**). There was a consultation with the occupational medicine staff at Summa Hospital. It was suggested that the family complete an environmental questionnaire to attempt to focus on possible hazards before testing. A site visit to the residence was scheduled on February 25, 1993.

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On February 25, 1993, water sample was taken at 950 Bey Road. Two bacteriological samples were both negative. Analysis, by Betz Analytical Services, and received at Ohio EPA on March 24, 1993, showed all "primary contaminants" to be non-detectable or well within established standards for public water supplies except the semi-volatile organic analysis found an unknown at 7 ppb.

On February 25, 1993, staff from the Akron Regional Air Quality Management District completed carbon monoxide testing and mold spore sampling at 950 Bey Road, Springfield Township.

Carbon monoxide readings were taken in the basement and master bedroom. All readings were taken while the furnace was operating with one reading of 28-ppm carbon monoxide from a hole in furnace exhaust free pipe and 1 ppm in all other readings. The assessment was that there is no apparent carbon monoxide problem in the home.

A pollen/mold sampler was set up in the master bedroom and operated continuously for 15 minutes resulting in a mold count of 328 spores per cubic meter. The number and type of mold spores found in the sample was considered typical for a home.

On April 15, 1993, citizens from the neighborhood met at Springfield Township Hall and presented Township Trustees with a list of "medical problems" and the number of residents experiencing each problem.

On April 19, 1993, Springfield Township Trustees Twyla Roman and Al Schrader along with Ohio House Representative Tom Seese met with Mike Bolas and Steve Love (Ohio EPA) as well as Dr. Martha Nelson, John Gabele and Boyd Marsh (Summit County Health Dept).

After a good deal of discussion concerning citizen concerns and how best to, proceed, it was agreed that the following would be done:

1. A plan for water sampling and surface water assessment would be drafted by the Summit County Health Department in consultation with the Ohio EPA and Ohio Department of Health.
2. Water samples for primary contaminants will be taken at a sampling of homes (not all) including a confirmation sample at 950 Bey Road and an initial sample at the MARS group home at 3958 Waterloo Road.
3. The Ohio EPA, through their water quality and assessment group, will evaluate for the presence of industrial wastes.

4. The Summit County Health Department will evaluate for untreated sewage running into creek.
5. All results will be reviewed and evaluated by the Summit County Health Department in cooperation with the Ohio EPA and Ohio Department of Health.

A plan for water sampling was developed and 10 homes were selected. All homes had well logs available. Sample sites included 950 Bey and a MARS home for Developmentally Disabled Adults on Waterloo Road, and 8 homes on Bey and Ellen Roads. Bacteriological water samples and water to be tested for primary contaminants were taken on May 3, 1993 by two teams consisting of one individual each from the Ohio Department of Health and Summit County Health Department.

The ten bacteriological water sample results were returned the next week and all were negative. Results were mailed to the respective property owners.

On April 23, 1993, an investigation was made of the Sewage Treatment Plant at 3530 Waterloo Road. Orders were sent to the property owner to pump the system so that there would be no unacceptable discharge to the receiving stream. This was required because the building was abandoned and the sewage system not operating. The owner sent us a copy of the bill showing the system was pumped on May 7, 1993. A subsequent inspection by representatives of this department on May 18, 1993 revealed this to be the case.

Dr. Martha Nelson reviewed the list of medical concerns provided by Springfield citizens from "28 homes in the Bey Road, Ellen Drive, and Waterloo Road Neighborhood," then sent that list to Dr. Kim Mortensen, Ohio Department of Health Chief, Bureau of Epidemiology and Toxicology, for his review and assessment.

Dr. Mortensen responded to Dr. Nelson on April 23, 1993, with the following letter:

"I have reviewed the available information concerning the health in Bey Road, Ellen Drive and Waterloo Road neighborhood and have a suggestion of how we might proceed. The primary issue is the concern about potential exposures to chemicals dumped in soil near the complainant's residence. The complainant's concerns arise from the seizure disorders in her two children. We have limited environmental data now but ODH and OEPA are collecting additional information about well water and the soil in question. At this time we have no reason to believe that there is or has been significant exposure in neighborhood residents to chemicals dumped in soil.

The 'summary of medical problems' from a survey conducted by the complainant in 28 homes represents a sincere effort to find health problems plausibly related to the alleged dumpsite. There are several problems with the way the survey was conducted and the information from the survey. Anyone of these problems greatly reduces the value of the information in assessing whether a chemical dump might be responsible for some of the reported symptoms; to name a few serious problems:

These are reported but not medically verified symptoms. Long experience with this kind of survey has shown that this kind of data is not a reliable index to disease.

The reports are numbers not rates of occurrence. This might well be the normal rate of occurrence of these problems in a population.

People tend to greatly over-report problems in a survey when they are concerned about a waste site, and the nonspecific nature of questions may inflate the reporting of trivial problems.

In any group of 100 people one is sure to find many of the reported problems, so I am not at this time alarmed by these findings. Given your and our limited resources to respond to significant health threats, I suggest that we wait for the results of the environmental testing to see if there is any indication of a chemical dump that could be exposing residents of this neighborhood."

Results of the May 3, 1993 water well sampling of ten homes for possible chemical contaminants are as follows:

Completed results for all water samples, taken from the Bey Rd./Ellen Rd. area were received from the Ohio Department of Health Laboratory by the Summit County Health Department on July 23, 1993. These samples included water that was tested for primary contaminants, including inorganics (heavy metals, nitrogen compounds), VOC's (volatile organic compounds), and SOC's (semivolatile organic compounds). Copies of the results were sent to the respective home owners/occupants. The results may be summarized as follows:

1. No VOC's were detected in any of the ten homes that were sampled.

2. No SOC's were detected in nine of the ten homes sampled. In a tenth home (not 950 Bey Rd.), traces of four semi-volatile compounds were found. However, during the time of sampling, the well pump at this location had overheated and tripped the circuit breaker twice before failing to continuing to run. After discussing the situation with representatives from the Ohio EPA and the Ohio Department of Health, it is believed that the traces of SOC's found may have been a result of burned pump seals, leaking pump fluids, or perhaps something else associated with the pump problem. The Ohio Department of Health has been asked to resample for those specific compounds at the address in question and plans to do so in August of this year. All agencies involved concur that this sampling should not delay the completion of this report.

3. Results for primary contaminants, inorganics, heavy metals, nitrogen compounds, showed that no comparable Federal Drinking Water. Standards were exceeded in any of the ten homes.

4. In ALL cases, for ALL the water samples collected, there were no instances where any comparable Federal Drinking Water Standards were exceeded.

As of this date, there have been no environmental findings that could' be considered causative for the childrens' seizures or any related family illness. All drinking water samples at 950 Bey Road specifically and in the neighborhood have been negative. Indoor air sampling at 950 Bey Road has been negative.