

May 1, 2006

Mayor James Ruberto
City Hall
70 Allen Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Dear Mayor Ruberto,

Recently, a Berkshire Eagle article (dated Tuesday, April 25) declared the Allendale School "safe" from PCBs. We are writing to clarify the pediatricians' position on this issue. We have been working with you and other city officials, the EPA, and the DPH to increase monitoring of the Allendale site. However, we continue to have concerns and urge the community to become involved and educated about this important issue.

Our concerns are based on the following: While it is true that the most likely way to become exposed to PCBs is through our food supply (and that probably holds true even for those of us who live next to a PCB contaminated site), those who live or go to school next to a PCB hazardous waste site face an additional threat from airborne PCBs. This may occur from breathing PCBs, both in the form of suspended particles in the air (dust) and as an invisible vapor (volatilized). Average "background" PCB air levels in uncontaminated regions are about 1 nanogram/m³. A number of PCB air levels measured at GE's On Plant Consolidation Areas have been substantially higher than that.

The EPA claims that PCB air levels less than 50 nanograms/m³ (that is 50 times higher than background) do not expose children to excessive health risk. We do not share their comfort level. We feel that the EPA's risk assessments are based on limited data. This data does not consider the latent health effects of endocrine disruption nor the fact that children will be exposed to additional PCBs through their food. In addition, no safe PCB exposure level has yet been determined for children. We also believe it is important for City officials to remember that Hill 78 is unlined and contains a number of hazardous pollutants besides PCBs. These toxic materials have not been as well monitored or quantified.

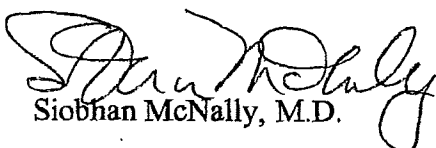
We recognize that risk is relative. We agree that the Allendale Elementary School is safer now than it was in 1999 before the actual property was remediated; and, recognize that the consent decree helped make that a reality. But given what is now known about airborne PCBs as well as the uncertainties of potential health effects from being so close to an unlined hazardous waste site, we believe that children and their families deserve a more cautious and preventative approach.


Everyday, we talk to parents about how to make their environment safer for their children to grow up in. We ask them to keep household chemicals locked up and out of reach, to put safety latches on doors and safety plugs into outlets, and to make sure they wear


helmets when riding their bikes. But the Allendale school issue is something that individual parents have no control over. We urge the community to aggressively pursue options that will further reduce or eliminate the risk to our children. Choices to halt the dumping of hazardous PCB waste now and properly cap the site, to move the Allendale children to a safer school, and to press for new and alternative means of remediation that may degrade PCBs to less toxic end products are all worthy of consideration.

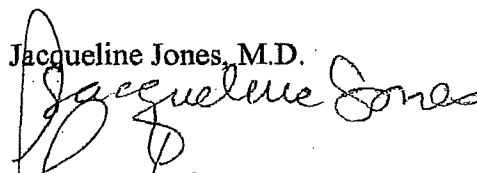
We close with one final thought. Constant monitoring of an elementary school for hazardous waste contamination is not normal, and should be viewed only as the first step toward finding safer solutions. As pediatricians, we are committed to making our community and schools safe places for children to grow and thrive, and we urge community leaders to continue to search for ways to make this possible.

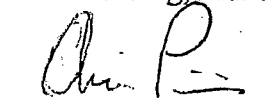
Sincerely,


Siobhan McNally, M.D.

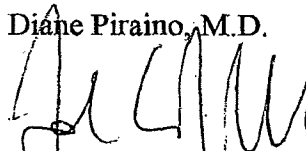

Richard Rosenfeld M.D.


Alan Kulberg, M.D.

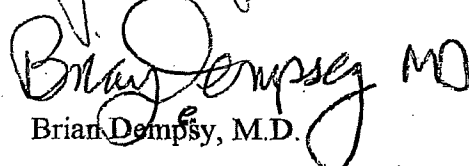

Jacqueline Jones, M.D.

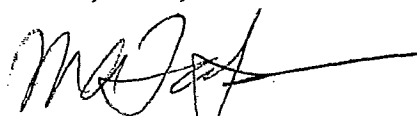

Diane Piraino, M.D.



Gary Shalan, M.D.


John Dallenbach, M.D.


Julia Feudo, M.D.


Brian Dempsey, M.D.


Michael Fabrizio, M.D.


Vicki Smith, M.D.

The above names represent all the practicing pediatricians in Pittsfield

cc: Allendale School Task Force, City Council, State Representatives, State Senators, School Superintendent, EPA, DEP, DPH, BHS Administration, Berkshire Eagle