

## ONGP — Frequently Asked Questions

### ONGP in Pennsylvania

ONGP is a significant industry in Pennsylvania. The latest wave of ONGP activity in the state began in 2005 with the start of unconventional oil and natural gas development (UONGD). Unconventional wells differ from conventional wells by the geologic formation being tapped. They use horizontal and vertical drilling and hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) to access traditionally unavailable reservoirs of oil and natural gas.

There are approximately 10,200 active unconventional wells in the state, with an average of 70 wells added each month. Thirty-four of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties have active unconventional wells, primarily in the northeast and southwest parts of the state. Seventeen percent of the state’s active unconventional wells are in Washington County, followed by 15 percent, 13 percent, and 12 percent in Susquehanna, Greene and Bradford counties.

Pennsylvania also has more than 116,600 active conventional wells located in 40 counties. Sixteen percent of the state’s conventional wells are in Warren County, followed by 12 percent, 10 percent, and 9 percent in McKean, Indiana and Venango counties.\*

### ONGP Health Registry

The Pennsylvania Department of Health’s (DOH) Division of Environmental Health Epidemiology has developed a confidential, voluntary ONGP health registry to better track and respond to public health complaints related to ONGP. Those who wish to make a complaint will be interviewed over the phone by a DOH employee. The Environmental Health team, including the state toxicologist, can then assess environmental testing results and/or clinical records to determine if a health risk is present.

\* Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Spud Report, Wells by County, 1/2/2019

### Q: Where can I find the location of ONGP activities?

A: ONGP activities are occurring throughout Pennsylvania. Unconventional and conventional oil and natural gas wells are in the northeast, northcentral and southwest parts of the state. Pipelines run across the entire length of the state, and oil refineries can be found in the southeast corner. The following resources provide maps of ONGP infrastructure in Pennsylvania:

- Wells: DEP Oil and Gas Mapping  
<http://www.depgis.state.pa.us/PaOilAndGasMapping/>  
Locations of unconventional, conventional, injection and storage wells
- Pipelines: USDOT National Pipeline Mapping System  
<https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov/>  
Locations of pipelines regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)

### Q: What chemicals are used in fracking?

A: Pennsylvania participates with FracFocus as the official chemical disclosure registry which lists most chemicals used in hydraulically fractured wells in the state. Hundreds of chemicals are searchable on [fracfocus.org](http://fracfocus.org). The registry is mandatory for operators, but some chemicals used in fracking are considered proprietary, meaning the operators do not have to disclose them.

### Q: Will DOH sample my water, air or soil?

A: No, DOH is not able to sample at this time. DEP is the state agency that conducts environmental sampling related to ONGP (per guidelines available at <http://www.depgreenport.state.pa.us/elibrary/GetDocument?docId=7758&DocName=STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFYING, TRACKING, AND RESOLVING OIL AND GAS VIOLATIONS.PDF>). Also, Penn State Extension has a useful guide for testing private water wells (available through <http://extension.psu.edu/water>) and an iPhone app called H2O Solutions.

### Q: Who regulates my drinking water?

A: If you receive water from a public water system, DEP’s Bureau of Safe Drinking Water regulates your water in accordance with the federal and state Safe Drinking Water Act. The federal drinking water regulations and standards developed by EPA are available at <https://www.epa.gov/dwstandardsregulations>. Please note that in Pennsylvania, most private water supplies (e.g., private well, spring water, etc.) are not regulated. EPA regulations are not legally enforceable in this situation.

### **Q: Who regulates air quality?**

A: DEP's Bureau of Air Quality regulates ambient (outdoor) air in accordance with the federal Clean Air Act and the Pennsylvania Air Pollution Control Act. EPA has developed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six common air pollutants (<https://www.epa.gov/criteria-air-pollutants/naaqs-table>). Current ambient air monitoring may not detect short-term air pollution, even at high levels.

### **Q: Where can I learn about the health effects of different contaminants I may be exposed to in my drinking water or air?**

A: Select fact sheets on common environmental contaminants are available on the DOH website. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) publishes fact sheets for a wider range of chemicals that are available at <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/>. And EPA has a website for Chemicals and Toxics Topics available at <https://www.epa.gov/environmental-topics/chemicals-and-toxics-topics>. Also, EPA recently released its report on hydraulic fracturing chemicals and impacts on drinking water (<https://www.epa.gov/hfstudy>).

### **Q: What research has been done on the health effects of ONGP?**

A: Research on the health effects of ONGP, specifically unconventional shale development, has been growing over the last five years. You can find the research online using the following resources:

- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's "Systematic Review of Human Health Effect Studies," in their *Assessment of Potential Public Health Effects from Oil and Gas Operations in Colorado* (<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/oil-and-gas-health-assessment>)
- Concerned Health Professionals of NY's *Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking* (<http://concernedhealthny.org/compendium/>)

### **Q: What can I do if my drinking water or air is contaminated?**

A: If your drinking water is found to be contaminated, find an alternative water source like bottled water. Consider installing a proper water treatment system as indicated by your water test results. If possible, connect to a public water system.

If the air outside of your home is found to be contaminated, keep windows closed and use air conditioning or central heat with a high-efficiency air filter, if possible.

If you have not already done so, contact DEP, county or local officials, the oil and gas drilling companies, emergency services, and DOH. In addition, an environmental health physician and/or toxicologist may be able to provide information about the health risks of your current water or ambient air given up-to-date environmental test results.

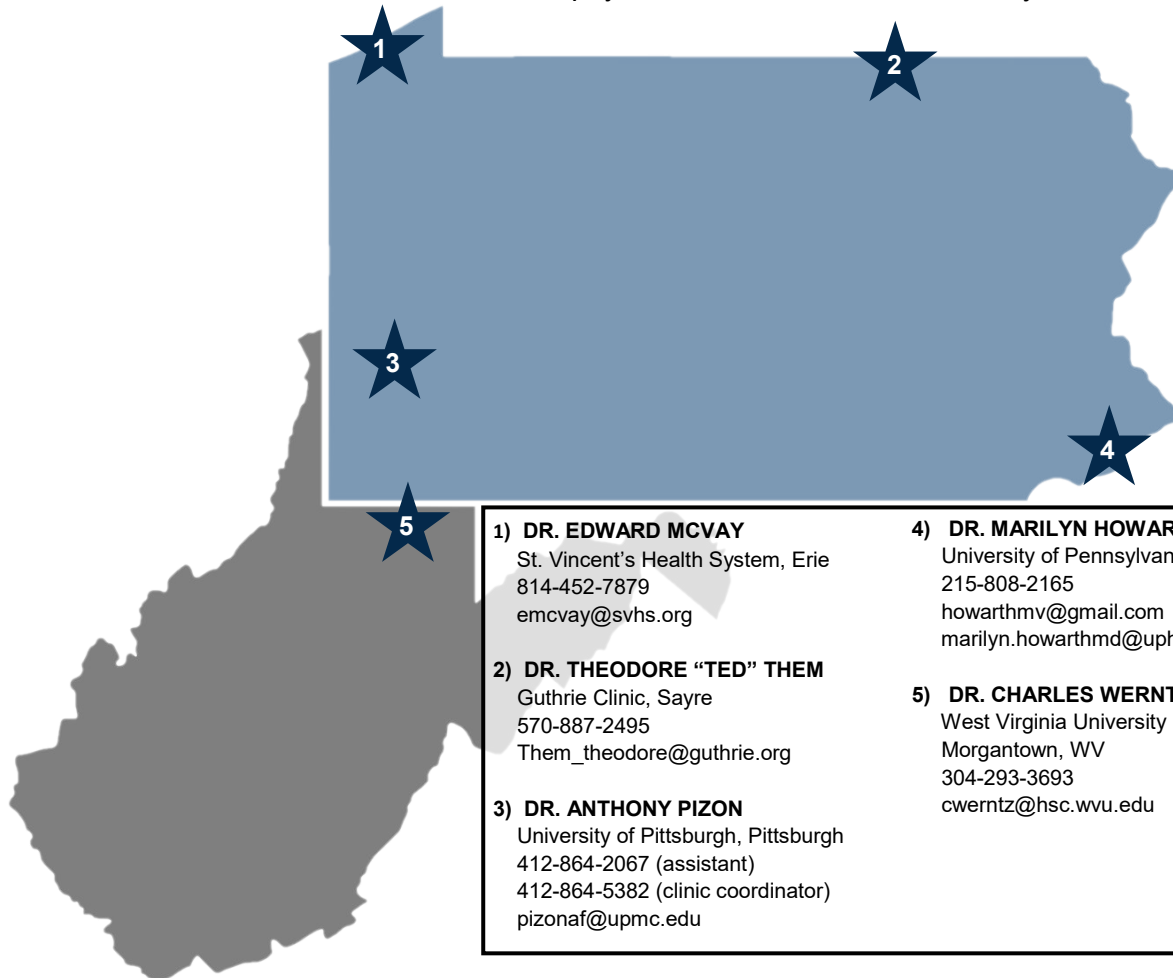
### **Q: What resources are available to me if I want to connect to a public water system?**

A: Contact your local borough to learn about the availability of municipal water systems in your area. The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) provides grants to low-income municipalities for small water and sewer infrastructure projects. Although not available for individual homeowners, this grant could be used by the municipality to connect multiple homeowners to a public water system. Consider approaching your municipal officials about applying for the Small Water and Sewer Program. You can find information about the grant at <https://dced.pa.gov/programs/pa-small-water-sewer/>. You can also find a list of all Pennsylvania state grant opportunities at <https://boroughs.org/subpage.php?link=State%20Grant%20Opportunities>.



**Q: Can you refer me to an environmental health physician?**

A: Yes, here are some environmental health physicians around and near Pennsylvania:



1) <b>DR. EDWARD MCVAY</b> St. Vincent's Health System, Erie 814-452-7879 emcvay@svhs.org	4) <b>DR. MARILYN HOWARTH</b> University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 215-808-2165 howarthmv@gmail.com marilyn.howarthmd@uphs.penn.edu
2) <b>DR. THEODORE "TED" THEM</b> Guthrie Clinic, Sayre 570-887-2495 Them_theodore@guthrie.org	5) <b>DR. CHARLES WERTZ</b> West Virginia University Morgantown, WV 304-293-3693 cwerntz@hsc.wvu.edu
3) <b>DR. ANTHONY PIZON</b> University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 412-864-2067 (assistant) 412-864-5382 (clinic coordinator) pizonaf@upmc.edu	

An appointment with an environmental health physician does not replace a visit with your primary care provider. Please check with your health insurance before making an appointment to determine your financial liability.

**Q: What can I do about an abandoned well on my property?**

A: Act 13 (2012) of Pennsylvania's oil and gas law established the Marcellus Legacy Fund to plug orphan or abandoned wells that have the potential to impact human health. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) administers the program that allows municipalities, higher education institutions, for-profit businesses, watershed organizations and other authorized organizations to apply on behalf of themselves or private citizens. For more information, see <http://community.newpa.com/programs/orphan-abandoned-well-plugging-program-oawp/>.

**Q: What do I do if I have another question that hasn't been answered?**

A: Please contact the Division of Environmental Health Epidemiology at DOH. We will update this document periodically. The next page provides contact information for DOH and DEP.

# Contact Us

## Division of Environmental Health Epidemiology

### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Room 933, Health and Welfare Building  
625 Forster St.  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0701

717-787-3350  
env.health.concern@pa.gov  
<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/envirohealth>

To be part of our ONGP health registry, contact the Environmental Health team above

Our district and county health offices may be able to connect you to additional resources in your area:

#### **Northwest District**

19 McQuiston Drive  
Jackson Center, PA 16133-1635  
724-662-6068

#### **Northcentral District**

Water Tower Square  
1000 Commerce Park Drive, Ste 109  
Williamsport, PA 17701-5475  
570-327-3400

#### **Northeast District**

655 Carey Ave.  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18706-5485  
570-826-2062

#### **Southwest District**

233 West Otterman St.  
Greensburg, PA 15601-2305  
724-830-2701

#### **Southcentral District**

30 Kline Plaza  
Harrisburg, PA 17104-1530  
717-787-8092

#### **Southeast District**

Room 442, Reading State Building  
625 Cherry St.  
Reading, PA 19602-1152  
610-378-4352

#### **Allegheny County**

542 Fourth Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-2111  
412-687-ACHD (2243)

#### **Erie County**

606 West Second St.  
Erie, PA 16507-1111  
814-451-6700

## Office of Oil and Gas Management

### DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

16th floor, Rachel Carson State Office Building  
P.O. Box 2063  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2063

717-772-2199  
ra-epoilandgas@pa.gov  
<https://www.dep.pa.gov/oilandgas>

For oil and gas complaints, call 1-866-255-5158

For general environmental complaints, call 1-888-723-3721 (OR 1-800-541-2050 for emergencies)

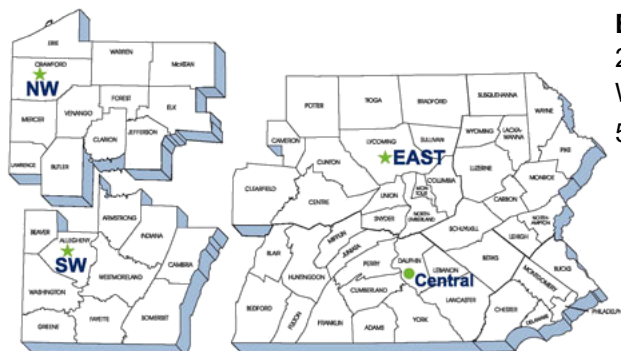
The oil and gas district offices may be able to connect you to additional resources in your area:

#### **Northwest District**

230 Chestnut St.  
Meadeville, PA 16335-3481  
814-332-6860

#### **Southwest District**

400 Waterfront Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4745  
412-442-4024



#### **Eastern District**

208 West Third St.  
Williamsport, PA 17701-6448  
570-327-3636