



*Concerned Health  
Professionals  
of Maryland*

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**Health Professionals Call for Ban on Fracking to Protect the Health of Maryland Residents**  
*No Regulatory Framework Can Reliably Prevent Health and Environmental Harms*

**Annapolis, MD** – Today, over 100 health and environmental advocates gathered together to present [a letter](#) to the General Assembly supporting a ban on fracking in MD. More than 150 health professionals signed the letter. Their announcement came before Maryland legislators held a hearing to discuss the proposed oil and gas regulations published November 14<sup>th</sup> by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

“As a former Commissioner on the Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission, I followed closely the development of the various reports that formed the basis for the current regulations,” said **Dr. Ann Bristow, co-founder of Concerned Health Professionals of Maryland**. “What has been painfully clear to me throughout this process is that public health and safety have never been a priority. If they were, fracking would be off the table in Maryland. That is why over 150 health professionals have signed a letter to the Maryland leadership calling for a fracking ban.”

Researchers at John Hopkins University have conducted a series of studies released over the past two years finding associations between active drilling and fracking operations near people’s homes and significant health problems, including premature births, high-risk pregnancies, asthma attacks, sinus infections, fatigue, and migraine headaches.

“Studies on the health effects of fracking have mounted over the years. We're seeing evidence in the literature of increased risk of adverse birth outcomes and increases in asthma attacks” said **Raimee Eck, President of the Maryland Public Health Association**. “It is important that health professionals lend their voices to this discussion to help decision-makers understand that fracking affects human health as much as it affects our natural environment.”

“As a nurse, I work to prevent disease and help my community be as healthy as possible”, said **Charlotte Wallace, a nurse and member of the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments**. “Fracking in Pennsylvania and other states makes it increasingly difficult for us, as providers, to help our patients be as healthy as possible. Higher rates of asthma attacks and poor pregnancy outcomes are just a couple of the health problems we’re seeing in those living near fracking sites. We need our elected officials to put the health of Marylanders first and keep this toxic industry out of the State.”

“Nurses recognize that hydraulic fracturing is an extreme and unsafe method of extracting fossil fuels that negatively impacts our environment and is a danger to public health,” said **Beth Landry, RN, a Frederick resident and a member of National Nurses United**, the largest union and professional organization of nurses in the country. “Maryland nurses declare fracking a clear and present danger to public health. The General Assembly should follow the lead of several counties and municipalities and ban fracking statewide to protect our patients, our environment, and our communities.”

Last month, *Concerned Health Professionals of New York* and *Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR)* co-released the fourth edition of the [\*Compendium of Medical, Scientific, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking\*](#). This document chronicles the rapidly expanding knowledge base of the many pathways to human and environmental harms.

“There are now over 900 peer-reviewed publications on the impacts of unconventional gas development and production, ranging from human and animal health impacts, to climate effects, earthquakes, community disruption, and environmental contamination. Of the studies looking specifically at public health impacts, the vast majority show risks or actual harms,” says **Dr. Gina Angiola, Board Member of Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility**. Due to the complexity of this industrial process and the inherent engineering and scientific limitations, no regulations can adequately protect the health of Maryland residents so the only rational policy option is a ban.”

“There is no evidence that a regulatory regime can be an effective measure to protect public health,” said **Rebecca Ruggles, Executive Director of the Maryland Environmental Health Network**.” In Maryland, we still have time to protect our communities. A ban on fracking is a unique opportunity to prevent public health harms from happening.”

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*Concerned Health Professionals of Maryland is a project of Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR), with the support of the Alliance of Nurses for Health Environments (ANHE), the Maryland Environmental Health Network (MdEHN), and other health professionals concerned about the health impacts of unconventional gas development.*