



EMBARGOED Until May 22, 2024, 7 p.m.

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SWPA Air Quality Town Hall #14 Releases Mortality Study That Shows "Our Air Pollution is Killing Us"

Far too many people in Allegheny County, especially residents in our most vulnerable communities of color and those living below the federal poverty level, are dying from diseases related to particulate air pollution.

The SWPA Grassroots Town Hall #14 will release an extensive study on our region's mortality from poor air quality on **May 22, 2024 during a Zoom webinar at 7 p.m.** Presenting the facts and sharing their own stories will be Mon Valley residents Qiyam Ansari, of Clean Water Action & Valley Clean Air Now (VCAN); Ebony Flowers with New Voices for Reproductive Justice and Germaine Patterson of Women for a Healthy Environment.

Together they will highlight data that shows that Allegheny County residents suffer higher death rates from air pollution than other parts of the U.S. This is in addition to Allegheny County's distinction of being among the worst 1% of counties in the country for cancer, lung and heart disease with environmental Justice communities bearing the worst of this burden, according to the American Lung Association.

"The message remains the same. Far too many people are dying from particulate pollution in Allegheny County every year," says Howard Rieger, convener of the Resident-Led Town Halls. "The time is right to bring this forward with voices from the Mon Valley community. We have a friendly EPA, PM2.5 standards have been tightened and we have a new county administration."

The "Fine Particulate Matter and Mortality in Allegheny County, Pa." (PM Mortality Report) was created in June 2018 and directly estimated premature mortality in the county attributable to exposure to fine particulate matter. The mortality calculations relied on two widely accepted studies ([Krewski](#) and [Lepeule](#)) that calculate the concentration-response function between PM2.5 and premature mortality. The study relied on detailed health data at the local level and spatially refined estimates of annual PM2.5 for 2009-2011. Among the key takeaways:

- The PM Mortality Report estimates that during the reporting period of 2009-2011, exposures to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) from air pollution generated by man-made sources resulted in 900-1,920 deaths each year.
- **Updated estimates during 2020-2022 show that while air pollution has improved and been reduced by 28.5% during the past decade in Allegheny County, an estimated 640 -1,373 people died each year from PM2.5 pollution.**
- In Allegheny County, 3.5 to 7 times more people are dying of air pollution than Covid-19. [Covid-19 deaths stood at around 230 people in 2023](#), according to the Allegheny County Dept. of Health.
- Mortality rates from PM2.5 pollution were 33% higher in Allegheny County communities with more than 20% of residents living below the federal poverty level than in communities with less than 10% of residents living below the federal poverty level. These numbers were calculated for the study period 2009 - 2011 with likely extensions to 2020 - 2022.

The Mortality Report

Kheirbek, Iyad, "[Fine Particulate Matter and Mortality in Allegheny County, Pa.](#)," 2018.

