

WATER@MICHIGAN –SUMMARY & BIOGRAPHY

BRIANA MEZUK & AMY SCHULZ

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

From Rust to Blue: Challenges from Emerging Contaminants

Subtheme: *From Rust to Blue*

The widespread nature of PFAS contamination has drawn increasing attention, currently affecting tapwater for an estimated 15 million Americans. We describe the history and scope of PFAS contamination in Rockford/Plainfield Township, one of 14 currently documented sites in Michigan. This widespread ground and surface water contamination emerges from over 50 years of dumping of industrial products in landfills and on farm fields in the area. We describe community response as attention has been drawn to the contamination, and its environmental as well as health risks. Our particular focus for future research is in the need for collaborative research that integrates environmental health science, epidemiology and social science expertise with community participation in the development of a risk management and remediation plan for the area. Lessons learned will have implications for other communities facing emergent environmental challenges, with particular attention to processes and procedures for local engagement in planning and response.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Amy J. Schulz, Professor, School of Public Health

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Amy Schulz's areas of expertise include community engagement and in particular, community based participatory research to understand and address environmental contributors to health inequities. I contribute regularly to the literature on engaging community, academic and public health practice partners in participatory research and intervention efforts, including the development and application of scientific knowledge to the development of planned interventions to address environmental challenges and promote health equity

Amy Schulz currently serves as Multi-PI (Schulz, Batterman) for Community Action to Promote Healthy Environments, a community-based participatory research effort that developed a scientifically informed public health action plan to reduce air pollutants in Detroit (Schulz et al 2016), and for the Healthy Environments Partnership, a longstanding community based participatory research project that has examined social and physical environmental contributors to health inequities in Detroit and developed interventions to address them. I also serve as Lead for the Community Outreach and Education Core of the Center for the Community Engagement and Outreach Core for the Michigan Lifestage Environmental Exposures and Disease Center (PI: Loch-Carusio).

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Briana Mezuk, Associate Professor, School of Public Health

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Briana Mezuk is an Associate Professor in the Department of Epidemiology at the UM School of Public Health. She was a fellow with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars Program. Her research focuses on social determinants of mental health in later life. Her reason for attending this workshop is because she lived in Rockford, MI (1994 – 1998) and was likely exposed to high levels of PFAS through the drinking water. She is interested in learning how she can support this community in understanding the health risks of PFAS (and related exposures) in light of uncertain scientific evidence, communicating public health science to a lay audience (e.g., engaging students, residents, city council members), and keeping the community engaged in the remediation effort.

Rick Rediske. Professor, Annis Water Resources Institute, Grand Valley State University

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Rick Rediske is Professor of Water Resources, Annix Water Resources Institute, He is an environmental chemist and toxicologist, who has been involved with speaking with community groups, decision makers and the media about the PFAS contamination in southwest Michigan since it was identified in 2017.