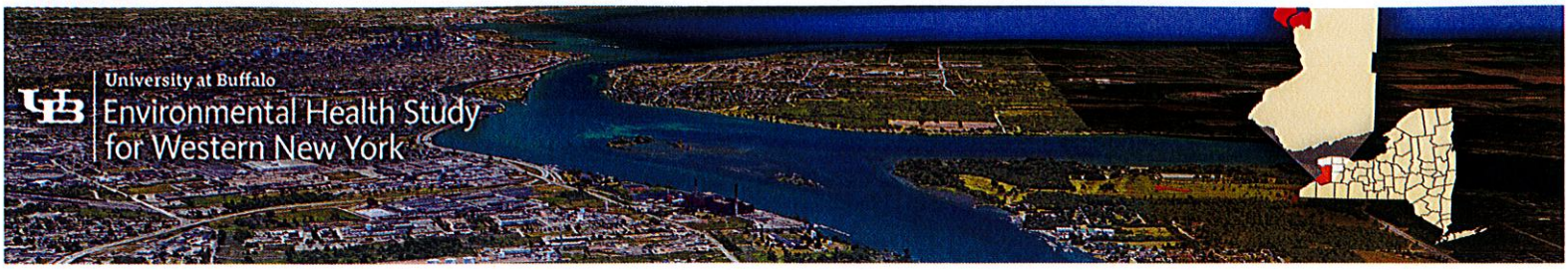



# Welcome!

***You are one of the first participants in the Environmental Health Study for Western New York.***

*Thank you for participating, and welcome to the study!*

*Your commitment to this important research study will allow for better understanding of how pollutants from coke oven emissions and other sources have impacted the health of residents in your area.*

*Regular newsletters will be on the Website with updates on the study's progress and any new developments.*

*More study information is available at ehstudy.buffalo.edu.*

University at Buffalo
Environmental Health Study
for Western New York

Department of Epidemiology and
Environmental Health
University at Buffalo
270 Farber Hall
Buffalo, NY 14214-8001

## The Study

**BACKGROUND**

The Tonawanda Coke Corporation was convicted of violating the Clean Air Act and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act by releasing coke oven emissions, a complex mixture of hazardous air pollutants, into the environment. In 2016, a federal judge ordered Tonawanda Coke to fund an $11.4 million study.

**OVERVIEW**

**A main goal of the health study is to understand how pollutants emitted by the Tonawanda Coke plant and other sources have affected the health of residents in surrounding communities.** The University at Buffalo research team is using scientifically established methods to understand the types of health problems community members are experiencing and how these conditions may be linked to exposure to chemicals found in coke oven emissions and other sources.

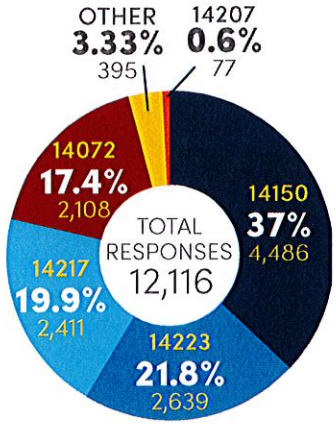
The study officially began last summer with a small test mailing to some residents of Grand Island and the City and Town of Tonawanda, followed by a mailing to the rest of the residents in September. This study will take place over several years and there will be many ways for you to participate.

## Participants

Over 12,000 people have participated in the study to date! Over 10,000 people completed the paper questionnaire and over 1,800 responded online.

### Environmental Health Study for WNY Participation by Zip Code

January 22, 2019

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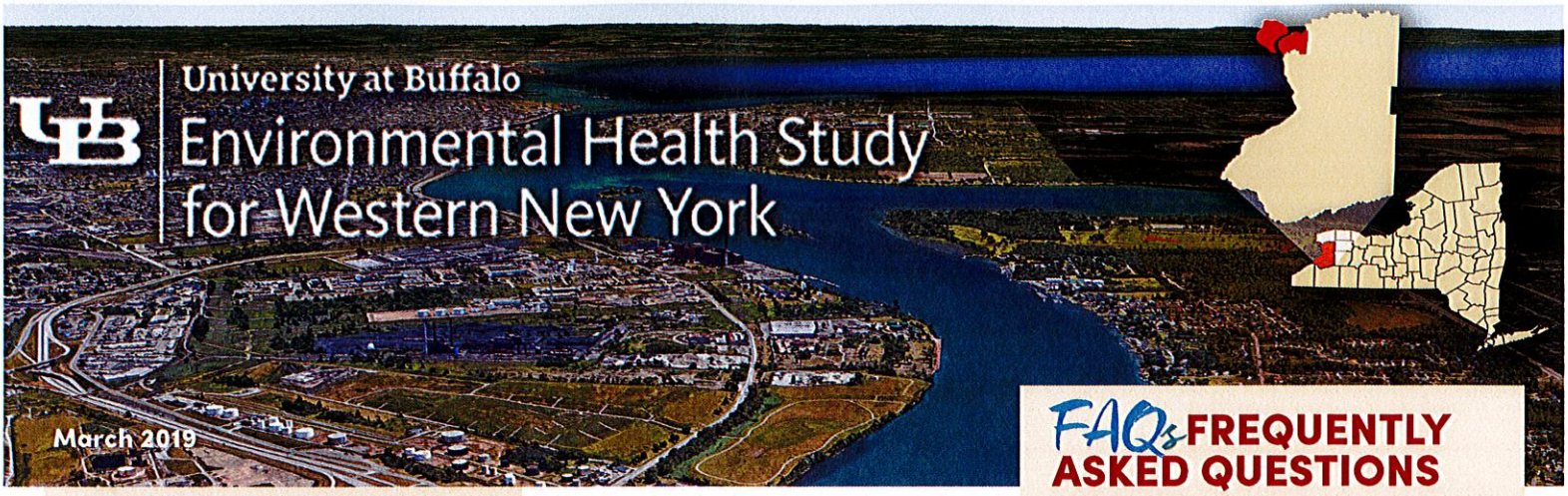


**The data collected for this study will be used only for scientific and public health purposes, including:**

- **To understand the health status of the residents** of Grand Island and the City and Town of Tonawanda
- **To explore how lifestyle behaviors affect the risk of disease** associated with environmental pollution
- **To document new cases of diseases** that arise over the study period
- **To provide insight on how exposure to emissions may be continuing to impact residents' lives today.** Even after coke plant emissions end, diseases may not emerge until decades after exposure.

## The Research Team

Researchers at the University at Buffalo's School of Public Health and Health Professions are running the study. The principal investigator is Matthew Bonner, PhD, MPH, associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health. He has studied the health effects of workplace exposure to environmental pollutants in locations around the world. He is participating in the ongoing, federally funded, Agricultural Health Study and has led several local studies including the NYS Angler Cohort Study.

- Meet the rest of the team, visit **https://ehstudy.buffalo.edu/about/our-team**
- Learn about the Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health, visit **https://sphhp.buffalo. edu/epidemiology-and-environmental-health.html**
- For the School of Public Health and Health Professions, visit **https://sphhp.buffalo.edu/**

## How will the Study Benefit the Community?

The study results will give residents of the City and Town of Tonawanda and Grand Island important new information about the health of their community, that will:

- Give an increased understanding of how prevalent multiple diseases are within the communities, and how these diseases may be linked to pollutants found in coke oven emissions and other sources;
- Shed light on how lifestyle behaviors, like diet, exercise, and smoking affect a person's risk of developing disease following exposure to pollutants;
- Inform decision-making, helping community residents and leaders decide how to focus public health policies and community-driven initiatives to improve community health through education, awareness, and clinical care.

## Community Voice

The research team has reached out to many community leaders and members to discuss the study and get feedback on the project. Community advisory committees are being established with residents and community leaders who will provide input to help guide the project and play a key role in deciding how research findings can best be shared with the communities.

***If you are interested in participating on a committee, please contact us!***

## FAQs FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

by Study Participants

**How did you get my name and address and why did I get mail for someone who doesn't live here?**

We purchased a commercial mailing list that included the names and addresses for everyone age 18 and over, living in the City and Town of Tonawanda, and Grand Island.

The mailing lists are not perfect and rely on updates from several sources. We apologize if you received a survey for a deceased relative or someone who no longer lives at your address. We appreciate those who called to help us clean up our list!

**Why did you pick me?**

We invited every resident 18 and older to participate.

**Where is my participation check?**

Our grants office processes the checks and they are working to send out over 12,000 checks to study participants. It is taking up to eight weeks to process the payments.

**Important: Please email us if you did not send us a signed, white payment form or did not provide contact information – we may not have been able to process a check for you.** If you completed the survey online, you should have already received your check.

**Why did I get so many copies of the survey?**

If your survey was received in our office and wasn't opened and logged in until after we sent the next mailing, you would have received another copy. We apologize for this - over 10,000 paper surveys took time to process.

University at Buffalo
Environmental Health Study for Western New York

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**Do you want to participate?** Do you know anyone who would like to participate in the study? If they are over 18 years old, lived or worked in Grand Island or the City or Town of Tonawanda, they can visit ehstudy.buffalo.edu, click on "Sign Up."