

**Project: Radon, From the Ground into Our Schools: Parent/Guardian Awareness of Radon Levels in Vermont Schools**

**Community Agency: American Lung Association**

**Abstract:**

**Introduction:** Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Exposure to radon in schools may be harmful to schoolchildren, faculty, and staff, but there is currently no legislation mandating testing or mitigation of radon levels in Vermont schools.

**Objectives:** The goal of our study was to assess Vermont parents' awareness of radon's harmful effects on the lung, as well as their awareness of and support for testing and mitigation of radon levels in their children's schools.

**Methods:** We distributed paper and online surveys to Vermont parents of children grades K-12. 126 surveys were received and quantitatively analyzed. We held a focus group of two Vermont parents to gather qualitative data.

**Results:** Most surveyed parents demonstrated general knowledge of radon, but only 51% believed that radon affects the lungs. 8% were confident that their children's schools had informed them about radon levels. 91.2% believe their children's schools should take action to address elevated radon levels and 87% would support mandated mitigation. There is some concern and lack of knowledge about the financial implications of radon mitigation.

**Conclusions:** Most Vermont parents of children grades K-12 are unaware that radon is a lung carcinogen and do not know their children's school's radon levels or mitigation status. However, most are in favor of legislation that would require testing and disclosure of schools' high radon levels. Educating parents about school radon levels and their association with lung cancer could be a foundation for community support of legislation that mandates testing and mitigation of radon in Vermont schools.

**Students:** Katie Grenoble, Florence Lambert-Fliszar, Kirsten Martin, Scott Neary, Kyle Remy, Shawn Sanford, Ethan Witt

**UVM Faculty Mentor:** Dr. David Kaminsky, MD

**Community Faculty:** Rebecca Ryan