

Hello, My name is Doctor Bo Bergman and I work at West Mountain Animal Hospital, a local veterinary hospital. I am here this evening to provide a veterinary perspective on how the PFOA situation impacts our community. I have two points to share - the first is related to the medical side of things. The second is related to the impact on my clients and community of animals.

We are all well aware of the reported impact of PFOAs on human health. Experts suggest PFOA exposure may be related to cancer and organ injury - however it is difficult to perform double blind experiments and tests on humans, for obvious reasons, to observe direct cause and effect. Unfortunately for animals, this is not the case - there are long lists of experiments and many papers that show evidence that lab animals exposed to PFOA increases the risk of certain tumors of the liver, testicles, mammary glands, and pancreas. There is evidence that there are toxic effects on the immune system, the liver, the endocrine system, and on neonatal health. This evidence has been seen in rodents, birds (such as chicken and quail), fish, beef and dairy cows, arctic seals, and other species. There have been a number of cases of pet bird deaths related to the inhalation of fumes from overheating of cookware made with PFOA. For better or worse, animals have been used as the "canary in the coalmine" regarding the health effects of PFOAs.

My second part of this is related to being a veterinarian in a small town. I was frequently questioned during the time when PFOAs were just being discovered in our water system - Will my cat get sick from drinking the tap water? Is my dog's liver cancer because I have high levels of PFOA's in my well? Did my cat get diabetes from PFOAs? I am unaware of a commercial PFOA blood testing facility for dogs and cats, and even if there was I'm not sure if I could answer yes or no to these questions. I am not a PFOA expert and I don't have a list of cases that may or may not have been related to PFOA. But as a general practitioner, I can talk about the stress and strain the PFOA toxins have caused my clients and their families. I can tell you that I talked about PFOAs daily with clients. I have clients who are already so cautious about what vaccines, or what monthly preventatives are given to their pet, or what food they feed - and then to have it come to light that the water they've been providing them for years has a toxin in it is heartbreaking. Many of the animals I see are members of the family and the toll it took on my clients can't be calculated.

The impact the PFOA situation has had on our community is beyond human health - it reaches to animal health and the human-animal bond.

I hope this brief summary helps provide perspective - I'm happy to answer any questions.