

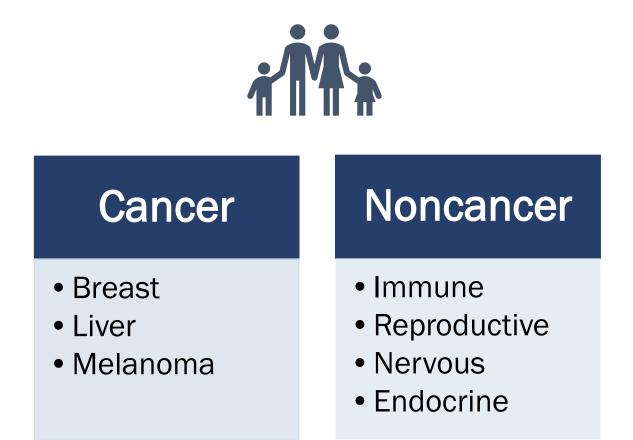
## PCBs in Schools: Health Risks and Framework

#### Mark Levine, MD Commissioner, Department of Health

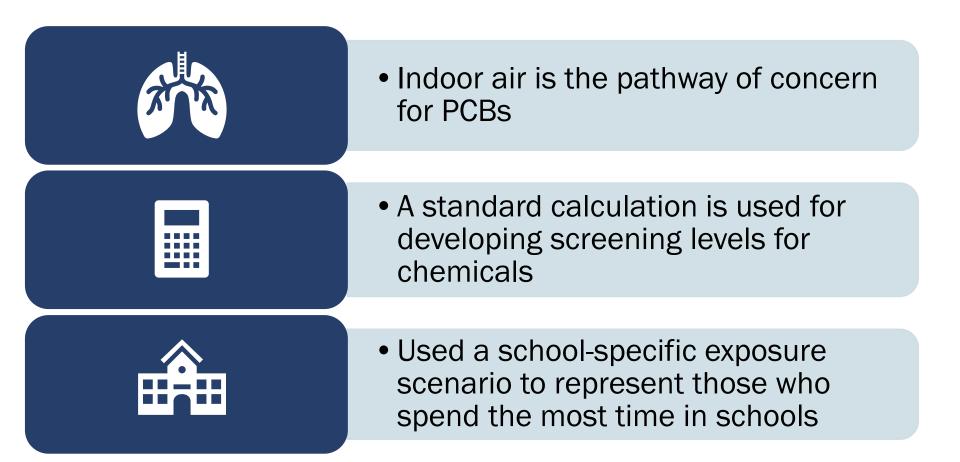
VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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#### **PCBs can affect our health in many ways**



# Vermont used a screening level to evaluate PCBs in schools from 2013 to 2020



# Health and DEC have PCB data from five schools in Vermont

#### Pilot testing 2013-14

- Four schools tested
- 9% of samples exceeded the screening level (7 of 77)

#### **Burlington High School 2020**

- PCBs discovered as part of construction work
- 88% of samples exceeded screening level (38 of 43)
- Extensive contamination of building materials, regulated by EPA

## PCB testing framework includes a building inventory, grouping of rooms, and school action levels

- The screening level is very close to background levels, meaning it could be hard to find and remove the sources of PCBs.
- An inventory and grouping process plus timelines for action led to the development of school action levels.
- School action levels protect the health of students and staff, while recognizing how common PCBs can be in indoor air.
- The school action levels accept a slightly higher cancer risk than the screening level, with the understanding that PCB sources will be identified and addressed.

# Schools will have several options if PCBs are at or above the school action level

- Each school will receive an individualized letter detailing results and next steps.
- Schools can choose from several options to reduce exposures to students and staff while working with DEC to address the sources of PCBs.
- Schools must stop using rooms three times higher than the school action level.
- We will work with schools to find options that work for them, and support schools to communicate the results and health risks to staff and families.

#### Key takeaways about PCB testing in schools:

- We developed a realistic framework to comply with the required PCB testing.
- The framework protects the health of students and staff while keeping schools open.
- We will work individually with each school that has PCBs at or above the school action level.
- We are the first state in the nation to undertake such a program.
- We will reduce PCBs in schools.



### **Questions?**