Perfluorinated Compounds Drinking Water Health Advisory

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced on May 19, 2016, that it had established the lifetime Health Advisory for certain perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) including perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) also known as c8, and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in drinking water at 70 parts per trillion. The EPA health advisory provides guidance to federal, state and local officials about substances that are not otherwise regulated by the Safe Drinking Water Act. PFCs are human-made chemicals that do not occur naturally in the environment. Water systems are not required to routinely sample for or remove PFCs from drinking water. Periodically, the EPA requires water districts with 10,000 or more customers to sample for contaminants of emerging concern.

In West Virginia, three public water systems were immediately impacted by the new EPA health advisory levels based upon recent test results found to be above the new advisory levels. Those communities were Vienna, Parkersburg and Martinsburg. The cities of Parkersburg and Martinsburg discontinued use of the water supply that had elevated levels of PFOA or PFOS without disruption being reported to the Bureau for Public Health.

The City of Vienna water customers were subject to a Do Not Drink Advisory issued by the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department and City of Vienna Water System after consultation with the Bureau for Public Health as it learned that no alternative source of water was available to their customers. Immediately, the Bureau for Public Health began to work with partners at the State and local level to generate support for helping make drinking water available to the community while a permanent solution is sought.

The Bureau for Public Health is committed to following EPA guidance to protect the public health of affected communities. The Bureau for Public Health will continue to monitor the situation of PFOA/PFOS in West Virginia along with other State and local partners.