Mid-Ohio Valley Residents Needed for Air Pollution Survey

CINCINNATI—University of Cincinnati (UC) environmental health researchers are asking residents of the Mid-Ohio Valley to share their concerns and opinions about pollution and air quality in their region through an anonymous survey.

Led by Erin Haynes, DrPH, this community air pollution survey is being conducted through UC’s environmental health department. It is part of ongoing research related to the health effects of metal exposures in the Mid-Ohio Valley region, including Marietta, Ohio, and Parkersburg, W.Va.

“Information about Mid-Ohio Valley residents’ environmental health concerns is critical to help guide our future research efforts,” says Haynes, assistant professor in UC’s environmental health department and principal investigator of the study. “This survey will also tell us where people go to get environmental health-risk information so we know how to best communicate our findings about metal exposure to them once the research is complete.”

In November 2006, Haynes’ team conducted a pilot study that evaluated about 140 residents from Marietta and nearby communities for potentially dangerous exposures to manganese, chromium and lead.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, all three metals are being emitted from Marietta’s Eramet facility, the leading manganese refinery in the United States and Canada.

Haynes is now looking for about 600 people to complete an anonymous survey that will help her team gauge the community’s current knowledge and concerns about air pollution and its potential health effects.

Information from this community survey on air quality—combined with data from the pilot study—will help researchers design a much larger study of the Marietta population to determine if these metal emissions are causing health problems.

Anyone living in the Marietta-Parkersburg metro area is eligible to participate in the survey. The 40 questions about air pollution and air quality can be completed in 15 to 20 minutes.

Survey answers can be submitted online at www.eh.uc.edu/ches. People who do not have access to the Internet can request a hard copy of the survey by contacting Elizabeth Kopras at koprasej@uc.edu or (513) 558-3625.