

New York State Academy of Family Physicians

NEWS RELEASE

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NYS Academy of Family Physicians Praises Governor Cuomo and State Health and Environmental Conservation Commissioners for Decision on Hydraulic Fracturing

December 19, 2014, Albany, N.Y. The New York State Academy of Family Physicians (NYSAFP) commends Governor Andrew Cuomo, Acting Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker and State Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens for their recent decision to prohibit high-volume hydraulic fracturing in New York State. NYSAFP represents nearly 6,000 physicians, residents and students in family medicine across the State.

“We have long advocated that the decision of whether to allow hydraulic fracturing in the State must be guided exclusively by science and evidence that must prove it would not pose safety or health risks to New Yorkers,” said NYSAFP President Dr. Mark Josefski. “After a very thorough review by the State Health Department, such risks to public health could not be ruled out. As a result the Administration bravely decided not to move forward with this drilling.”

New York State has spent the last six years examining the potential health and environmental impacts that could result from hydraulic fracturing. On December 17th, the State Department of Health released its Public Health Review of High Volume Hydraulic Fracturing for Shale Gas Development. The report identified dozens of potentially adverse impacts of hydraulic fracturing based on the experience of other states that currently allow it and other peer reviewed studies. Among its many findings, the presented data indicated associations between negative birth outcomes like low birth weight, congenital heart defects and neural-tube defects and the proximity of the mother to well pads during pregnancy. Also it found links to nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, breathing difficulties, headaches, dizziness, skin rashes and other reported health complaints by those living within proximity of hydraulic fracturing.

“We understand and appreciate the aspirations of those who hoped fracking would provide a source of jobs and economic stimulus for New York. But throughout the debate we have always maintained that the health and safety of New Yorkers should be the primary consideration. The recently announced decision will ensure that the air we breathe, water we drink and our public health are protected,” said Dr. Josefski.

The focus and passion of NYSAFP members is to promote and protect the health of our patients and their families. The Governor’s announcement on hydraulic fracturing proves that he and his Administration clearly share this same goal. For this, NYSAFP strongly praises the Governor and Health and Environmental Conservation Commissioners.