



**For Immediate Release:**  
Tuesday, February 11, 2014  
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## **News Release**

### **Study Shows No Increased Environmental Cancer Risk in South Davis County**

(Salt Lake City, UT) – At the request of the Davis County Health Department (DCHD) and under the direction of Governor Gary R. Herbert, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) has completed an analysis of 35 years of cancer data in the the area surrounding the Stericycle facility in Davis County.

The UDOH Environmental Epidemiology Program (EEP) looked at all reportable cancers in south Davis County (the cities of Bountiful, Centerville, North Salt Lake, West Bountiful and Woods Cross) for the years 1976 through 2011. The results did show some elevated cancer numbers, none of which are attributable to environmental exposures.

DCHD Director Lewis Garrett says he requested the study several months ago in reponse to resident concerns. “A number of Davis County citizens called the Department worried about a Notice of Violation lodged against Stericycle by the Utah Division of Air Quality,” said Garrett. “I wanted to know if our residents have suffered quantifiable health effects from Stericycle operations.”

Cancer rates in the study area that are higher than the state average for at least two consecutive six-year periods are considered meaningful. The study found two cancer types that met that definition: breast (2000-2011) and prostate (1988-1999). Six cancer types were found to be higher than the state average in the last six-year study period, so it cannot be determined if those rates are evidence of the beginning of a cluster, or simply random variation of the data, until another study period elapses. The study can be found at

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Those cancers are:

- o Colon cancer
- o Prostate cancer
- o Cutaneous melanoma (a type of skin cancer)
- o Bone and joint cancer
- o Breast cancer
- o Anal cancer among women

None of the cancers are typically associated with environmental exposure.

“These cancers are all highly preventable through lifestyle choices and regular health screenings,” said Allyn Nakashima, MD, State Epidemiologist. “No links to air, water, or soil have ever been established for these types of cancer.”

Garrett says the initial study establishes a baseline for future investigations into the health of Davis County residents.

The full report is available at

[http://health.utah.gov/enviroepi/cancerstudies/Documents/SouthDavisCountyCancerStudy\(Final29Jan2014\).pdf](http://health.utah.gov/enviroepi/cancerstudies/Documents/SouthDavisCountyCancerStudy(Final29Jan2014).pdf)

Also as part of the investigation, UDOH collected soil samples to check for levels of dioxin and heavy metals near the Stericycle plant. EEP is also conducting a statistical investigation of adverse birth outcomes in south Davis County. Results of both studies will be available in a few months.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*