

Something in the Water: The Confluence of Lead, Children's Health, and Democracy in Flint, MI

Andrew Meshnick, Anna Buttaci, Rosa Cuppari

POSTER PRESENTATION

ABSTRACT: Our project explores the bioethical issues surrounding the water crisis in Flint, Michigan. Specifically, we focus on two topics. The first topic is how a physician stepped out of the clinic and into the spotlight to tell the world that Flint's children were being poisoned by contaminated drinking water. We look at the American Academy of Pediatrics position on the role of physicians as activists for the health of children. The second topic is the intersection of poverty, health, and democracy. Due to fiscal insolvency, Flint was placed under a State appointed emergency manager. This effectively meant that the citizens of Flint could no longer vote for their local leaders. The community could not directly influence decisions that affected its own health and safety. We question whether the State could modify its emergency manager law to better balance its dual mandates to restore fiscal solvency and protect the public health. Our poster draws upon government sources, a news article, and an American Association of Pediatrics position paper. We hope that our conclusions will enable policy makers and clinicians to help the children of Flint as they deal with the ramifications of this multi-generational crisis.