



Cancer is Not Our Destiny

The People's Cancer Incidence Screening Tool (PCIST)

A Citizens' Project in Support of Dignity-Based Epidemiology in Pennsylvania

Community Cancer Incidence Report for Blaine Township, Washington County, PA

Prepared 28-August-2025. Available at: www.pcist.net



People's Cancer Incidence Screening Tool (PCIST)

1

We calculate the average annual crude incidence of 23 different types of cancer over a 20-year (2002-2021) period in a PA town, borough or municipality

2

We compare the local cancer incidence numbers to the national, state and county numbers to identify significant "cancer signals" with elevated rates

3

We take the median age of onset of each type of cancer and compare it with the median age of the town, county, PA and US populations to assess the effect of differences in population age on the cancer rates

4

We investigate and address probable causes of elevated "cancer signals", including heavily polluting industries; infections associated with cancer development; and predatory marketing of addictive toxins to vulnerable EJ communities

Cancer	U.S. Median Age of Onset
Brain and Nervous	61
Breast (F only)	62
Cervical	50
Colon and rectal	66
Esophageal	68
Hodgkin's Lymphoma	39 (bimodal, 20 and 55+)
Kidney and renal	65
Laryngeal	66
Leukemia	65-74, varies by type
Liver and bile	62 (liver) and 70 (bile)
Lung and bronchial	71
Melanoma (skin)	(skin, 66)
Myeloma	60
Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma	67
Oral and pharyngeal	64
Ovarian	63
Pancreatic	70
Prostate	66
Stomach	68
Testicular	33
Thyroid	51
Uterine	60
Urinary and bladder	73

Cancer Rates Vary By Age

The U.S. national, PA state, PA county, and municipal/township/borough cancer incidence rates used in PCIST are crude rates. We derive these by taking the total number of invasive cancer cases that occurred in a specific population (<20 yrs, <30 yrs, adults 20+, and All ages — total, females & males) in relation to the total number of people in that specific segment of the population. This produces a value that represents the amount of cancer in a community relative to its relevant population size. These values are then compared to generate incidence ratios. In our community reports, we flag municipal “cancer signals” with a percentage rate equal to or more than 10% higher than the US, PA and County numbers.

It is important to note that most cancer rates increase with age. To help interpret the effect of a population’s age distribution on its crude incidence rates, the following is provided:

- 1) A reference table (at left) with the median age of onset of each type of cancer in the U.S. as per the American Cancer Society
- 2) The relevant median population age for each municipality/ township/borough, the county, PA state, and the US nation
- 3) A chart that shows the precise population age distribution in 5-year increments, derived from the 2010 US Census figures that are used in PCIST’s 20-year calculations

When analyzing cancer signals, it is important to note that (with the exception of Hodgkin’s lymphoma and testicular cancer) a younger population’s crude cancer incidence rates will be under-represented when compared with an older population.

PCIST uses publicly available data sources from the American Cancer Society; the PA Cancer Registry via the PA Department of Health; the CDC SEER and WONDER databases; and the U.S. Census’ American Community Survey. None of these providing institutions are responsible for PCIST calculations, interpretations and reports.

Please visit www.pcist.net or contact PCIST@pm.me for a detailed explanation of the PCIST project and more information about the People’s Cancer Incidence Screening Tool.

MORE Air & Water Pollution: OUR CONTEXT for RISING CANCER

In the community of Blaine Township, residents have faced **elevated cancer rates for at least the past 20 years.**

WHY? CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Blaine Township is located in the most heavily fracked county in Pennsylvania, which is itself part of a large and growing **environmental justice zone** above the Marcellus Shale. Since 2004, thousands of oil and gas wells have been **hydraulically fractured**. Many residents now live within a few miles of dozens of active wells and multiple compressor stations. Energy companies often abandon unplugged oil and gas wells and contaminate drinking water sources with **fracking wastewater** – a toxic slurry of “industry secret” chemicals, radioactive particulate matter such as radium, and PFAS “forever chemicals”.

Residents also face significant legacy and contemporary pollution due to the long history of bituminous **coal mining** in southwestern Pennsylvania. Blaine Township has an extensive, ongoing history of coal mining, including longwall mining that causes the ground above it to sag. Acid mine discharge and drainage contaminates residents’ groundwater and streams. Due to environmental health concerns, Blaine residents previously passed ordinances to ban all coal mining, including longwall mining. However, the township was sued by Penn Ridge Coal and Allegheny Pittsburgh Coal Companies on the grounds that that the ordinances violated their corporate rights. Blaine continues to be a site of local government and legal activism against the damaging health consequences of coal mining.

Intensive agriculture with **chemical pesticides and herbicides** also widely contaminates residents’ soil and water supplies. A network of state and inter-state highways, including the I-70 and I-79, brings a steady flow of trucks and **diesel emissions** into Washington County. The heavy pollution from all of these activities compounds and travels, producing **significant cumulative impacts** on residents’ health.

Additionally, Blaine Township residents require adequate medical screenings and treatments for **infections that can contribute to cancer**, such as HPV (cervical cancer), EBV (Hodgkin’s lymphoma), Hepatitis B and C (liver cancer), H. pylori (stomach cancer), and HIV (many cancers). In pursuit of profit, companies also sell already vulnerable residents **addictive products** that contain carcinogenic substances, such as tobacco and alcohol.

TOTAL CANCER IN BLAINE

During **2002-2021 (20 years)**, the average annual crude cancer incidence rate among all ages of the population of **Blaine Township** is greater than the corresponding rate for the **US; PA; & Washington County** by:

All Age Cancer in Blaine	> US	> PA	> WashCo
Hodgkin Lymphoma	263%	208%	168%
Brain and Nervous System	186%	148%	133%
Thyroid	131%	64%	54%
Liver and Bile	128%	110%	99%
Pancreatic	115%	74%	69%
Lung and Bronchial	105%	70%	41%
Leukemia	98%	71%	55%
Esophageal	88%	47%	28%
Melanoma (skin)	77%	65%	95%
Colon and Rectal	74%	43%	20%
Kidney and Renal	67%	48%	29%
Oral and Pharyngeal	54%	41%	10%
Urinary Bladder	33%	-2%	-17%

2010 Median Population Age:

Blaine’s population (45.3) is **older than** the US (36.9), PA (39.8) & Washington County (43).

◆ Please visit www.pcist.net or contact PCIST@pm.me for more information about the People’s Cancer Incidence Screening Tool

FEMALE CANCER IN BLAINE

During **2002-2021 (20 years)**, the average annual crude cancer incidence rate among females of all ages in **Blaine Township** is greater than the corresponding rate for the **US; PA; & Washington Co** by:

All Age Female Cancer in Blaine	> US	> PA	> WashCo
Esophageal	685%	522%	457%
Hodgkin Lymphoma	652%	522%	427%
Urinary Bladder	392%	256%	205%
Brain and Nervous System	191%	151%	128%
Kidney and Renal	169%	139%	97%
Oral and Pharyngeal	138%	110%	54%
Lung and Bronchial	124%	85%	55%
Thyroid	85%	32%	28%
Uterine	79%	31%	18%
Leukemia	41%	22%	9%
Pancreatic	31%	6%	5%
Breast	24%	10%	1%
Colon and Rectal	23%	-2%	-16%

2010 Median Female Age: The total female Blaine population (44.2) is **comparable to** the US (38.1), PA (41.2) & Washington County (44.4)

MALE CANCER IN BLAINE

During **2002-2021 (20 years)**, the average annual crude cancer incidence rate among males of all ages in **Blaine Township** is greater than the corresponding rate for the **US; PA; & Washington Co** by:

All Age Male Cancer in Blaine	> US	> PA	> WashCo
Testicular	323%	281%	198%
Liver and Bile	261%	225%	228%
Laryngeal	258%	202%	153%
Thyroid	242%	142%	112%
Melanoma (skin)	241%	221%	281%
Pancreas	216%	158%	147%
Brain and Nervous System	191%	153%	143%
Leukemia	157%	123%	103%
Colon and Rectal	137%	97%	61%
Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma	97%	66%	52%
Lung and Bronchial	88%	55%	27%
Prostate	33%	17%	18%
Oral and Pharyngeal	23%	15%	-9%

2010 Median Male Age: The total male Blaine population (48.4) is **significantly older than** the US (35.6); PA (38.3) & Washington County (41.7)

◆ Please visit www.pcist.net or contact PCIST@pm.me for more information about the People's Cancer Incidence Screening Tool

CANCER IN BLAINE

PEDIATRIC CANCER

During **2002-2021 (20 years)**, the average annual crude cancer incidence rate among **children aged 0-19 years** in **Blaine Township** is greater than the corresponding rate for the **US; PA; & Washington County** by:

Pediatric Cancer in Blaine 0-19 years of age	> US	> PA	> WashCo
None	0	0	0

YOUTH CANCER

During **2002-2021 (20 years)**, the average annual crude cancer incidence rate among **youth aged 0-29 years** in **Blaine Township** is greater than the corresponding rate for the **US; PA; & Washington County** by:

Youth Cancer in Blaine 0-29 years of age	> US	> PA	> WashCo
Testicular	1548%	1482%	1315%

◆ Blaine Township is located in the most heavily fracked county in Pennsylvania, which is itself part of a large and growing **environmental justice zone** above the Marcellus Shale.

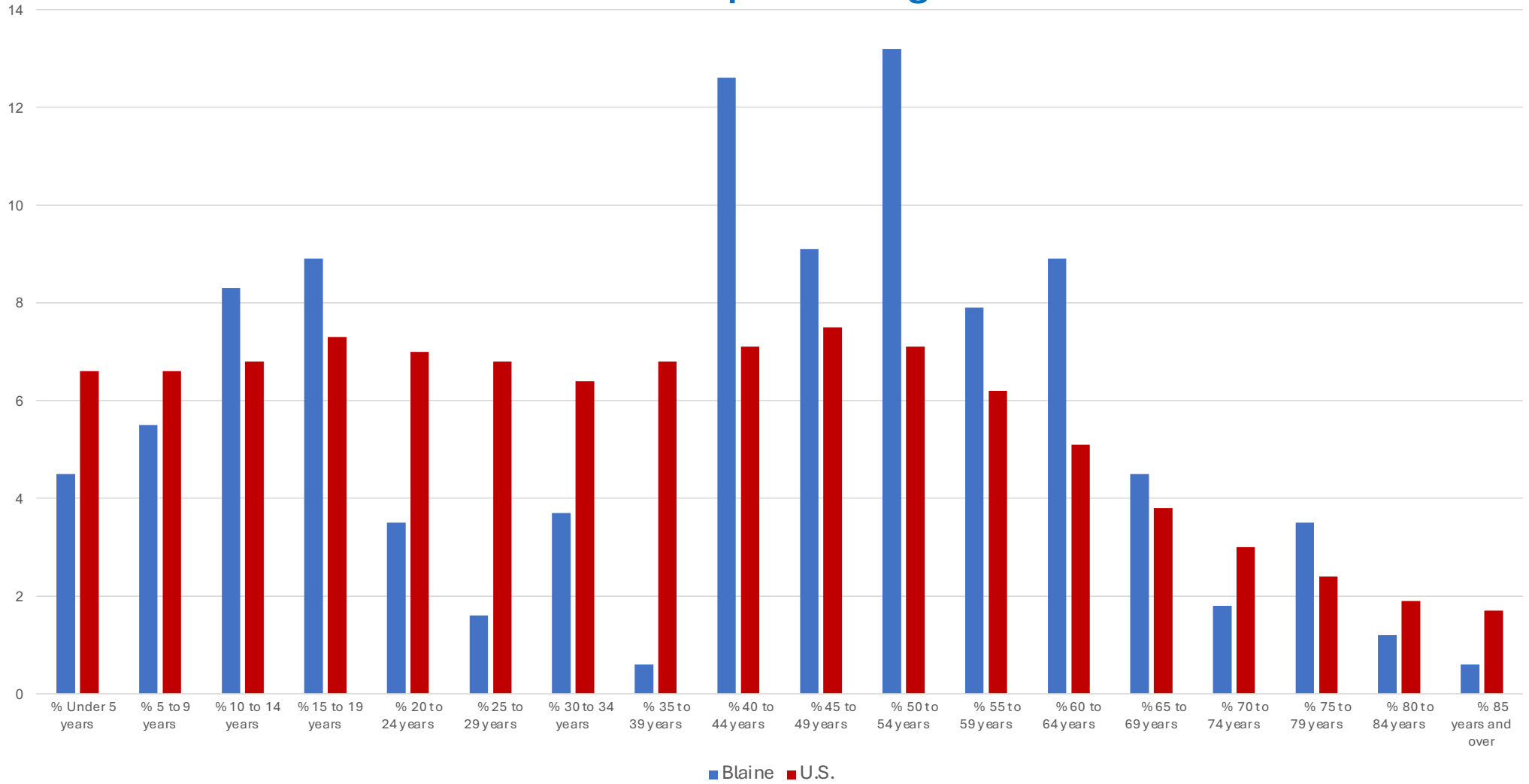
◆ Please visit www.pcist.net or contact PCIST@pm.me for more information about the People's Cancer Incidence Screening Tool

ADULT CANCER

During **2002-2021 (20 years)**, the average annual crude cancer incidence rate among **adults aged 20+** in **Blaine Township** is greater than the corresponding rate for the **US; PA; & Washington County** by:

Adult Cancer in Blaine 20+ years of age	> US	> PA	> WashCO
Testicular	330%	299%	219%
Hodgkin Lymphoma	324%	257%	209%
Brain and Nervous	229%	195%	172%
Laryngeal	159%	118%	84%
Thyroid	138%	73%	64%
Liver and Bile	133%	121%	111%
Pancreatic	117%	80%	78%
Leukemia	116%	107%	72%
Lung and Bronchial	108%	76%	48%
Esophageal	91%	52%	34%
Uterine	88%	36%	28%
Melanoma (skin)	80%	73%	106%
Colon and Rectal	77%	47%	26%
Kidney and Renal	70%	56%	37%
Oral and Pharyngeal	57%	47%	15%
Urinary Bladder	34%	2%	-13%
Breast	29%	17%	10%

2010 Blaine Total Population Age Distribution



PCIST's TIPS to Help Protect Our Families

1. RUN AIR PURIFIERS IN OUR HOMES. These machines **remove toxic particles** so that we don't inhale them into our lungs. This helps to prevent both cancer and asthma. The best ones have an **activated carbon filter** that also removes VOCs (volatile organic compounds). An air purifier handles a set amount of space, so we may need more than one (or to move the one we have when we go to bed). Found on Amazon and Walmart, Lowes, and Home Depot.

DID YOU KNOW? We can inexpensively build our own air purifier with a box fan and furnace filters. Google "How to make a Corsi-Rosenthal box" for directions. Try to use MERV activated carbon filters, which are available on Amazon and at Lowes and Home Depot.

2. REPLACE GAS STOVES WITH ELECTRIC ONES. Natural gas and propane stoves release invisible, odorless and toxic gases (including radon, benzene, nitrogen dioxide and methane) into our homes. These gases affect air quality throughout our homes, including in the bedrooms, and are known to cause asthma and cancer. It is much safer to cook with an electric stove.

3. USE A WATER FILTER, ESPECIALLY IN THE KITCHEN. These filters **remove harmful particles and toxic chemicals from our drinking and cooking water**. Some come as a pitcher that we fill with water from the tap, while others attach directly to the faucet. The **best filters also remove PFAS/PFOS – forever chemicals – which are known to be in the fracking waste that often contaminates drinking water sources**. Found on Amazon and in a wide range of department and home supply stores.

4. AVOID ADDITIONAL FACTORS that put addictive toxins in our bodies and increase cancer risk, such as **smoking**; breathing **second-hand smoke**; and **drinking alcohol**. Some **infections also contribute to causing cancer** such as **HPV** (cervical cancer), **EBV** (Hodgkin's lymphoma), **Hepatitis B and C** (liver cancer), **H. pylori** (stomach cancer), and **HIV** (many cancers). If you were exposed or have symptoms, ask a doctor for **testing and proper treatment**. All girls and women can also **get vaccinated against HPV** between the ages of 9 and 45.

5. FIND AND JOIN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE GROUPS IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO LEARN HOW TO FIGHT BACK against the pollution that is causing asthma and cancer, among other diseases. Take a few minutes to **call local political leaders** and tell them that we **need clean air and clean water**. Use your voice to speak up – together we are very strong and loud!

See links on www.pcist.net for suggested environmental health organizations that you can join **to get connected and learn more**.