



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 Chester Heights Borough, PA

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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 **Chester Heights Borough**, residents have faced some **elevated cancer rates for the past 20 years**.

WHY? CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Chester Heights is an affluent suburban township in western Delaware County and the home of Wawa HQ. It is an area of former agriculture and industrial mills, and it now sees significant suburban pesticide and herbicide use. PFAS and industrial “forever chemicals” have been found in Delco’s ground-soil and drinking water sources and there are superfund sites in neighboring townships. Chester Heights is home to the Allegheny Pipeline Company and it has large pipelines with oil and natural gas running underground. It is also not far from heavily polluting facilities along the Delaware river, including a large oil and petro-chemical tank farm in Aston; oil and LNG refineries in Trainer and Marcus Hook; and the largest trash incinerator in the U.S, Delco’s sewage treatment plant, and multiple chemical plants in Chester. Petrochemical plants and refineries to the east in Philly and across the Delaware river in NJ add more air and water pollution. **The heavy pollution from all these industries compounds and travels**, affecting residents.

Chester Heights residents are also affected by **infections** that contribute to cancer, such as **HPV** (cervical cancer), **EPV** (Hodgkin’s lymphoma), **Hepatitis B and C** (liver cancer), **H. pylori** (stomach cancer), and **HIV** (many cancers). Companies also target people to sell addictive products that contain carcinogenic substances, such as **tobacco** and **alcohol**.

CANCER IN CHESTER HEIGHTS

During **2002-2021 (20 years)**, the average annual crude incidence rate among adults aged 20+ **in Chester Heights Borough** is greater than the rate for the **US; PA; and Delaware County** by:

All Age Cancer in Chester Heights	> US	> PA	> Delco
Melanoma (skin)	35%	30%	15%
Oral and pharyngeal	25%	16%	23%
Myeloma	21%	16%	34%
Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma	12%	-4%	3%
Urinary and bladder	11%	-16%	-12%

2010 Median Population Age:

Chester Heights (42) is **older than** the US (36.9), PA (39.8) & Delco (38.5).

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FEMALE CANCER -CHESTER HEIGHTS

During **2002-2021 (20 years)**, the average annual crude incidence rate among females aged 20+ in **Chester Heights Borough** is greater than the corresponding rate for the **US; PA; & Delaware Co by:**

All Age Female Cancer –Chester Heights	> US	> PA	> Delco
Ovarian	155%	119%	111%
Urinary and bladder	143%	77%	70%
Melanoma (skin)	42%	33%	17%
Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma	40%	16%	26%
Breast	25%	13%	7%
Myeloma	15%	8%	15%

2010 Median Female Age:

Chester Heights (42.3) is **slightly older than** the US (38.1), PA (41.2) & Delco (40.0)

MALE CANCER -CHESTER HEIGHTS

During **2002-2021 (20 years)**, the average annual crude incidence rate among males aged 20+ in **Chester Heights Borough** is greater than the corresponding rate for the **US; PA; & Delaware Co by:**

All Ahe Male Cancer –Chester Heights	> US	> PA	> Delco
Thyroid	56%	14%	18%
Oral and pharyngeal	29%	23%	26%
Hodgkin's lymphoma	26%	9%	15%
Melanoma (skin)	28%	26%	12%
Myeloma	23%	21%	49%
Liver and bile	21%	2%	-9%
Pancreatic	18%	-1%	3%
Stomach	13%	-1%	-1%

2010 Median Male Age:

Chester Heights (41.9) is **older than** the US (35.6); PA (38.3) & Delco (36.7).

◆Please visit www.pcist.net or contact PCIST@pm.me for more information

CANCER IN CHESTER HEIGHTS

PEDIATRIC CANCER

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

Ped Cancer in Chester Heights 0-19 years of age	> US	> PA	> Delco
Hodgkin's lymphoma	739%	571%	657%

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

YOUTH CANCER

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

Youth Cancer in Chester Heights 0-29 years of age	> US	> PA	> Delco
Melanoma (skin)	547%	458%	443%
Hodgkin's lymphoma	167%	119%	149%
Brain and nervous	105%	76%	87%
Leukemia	58%	62%	68%

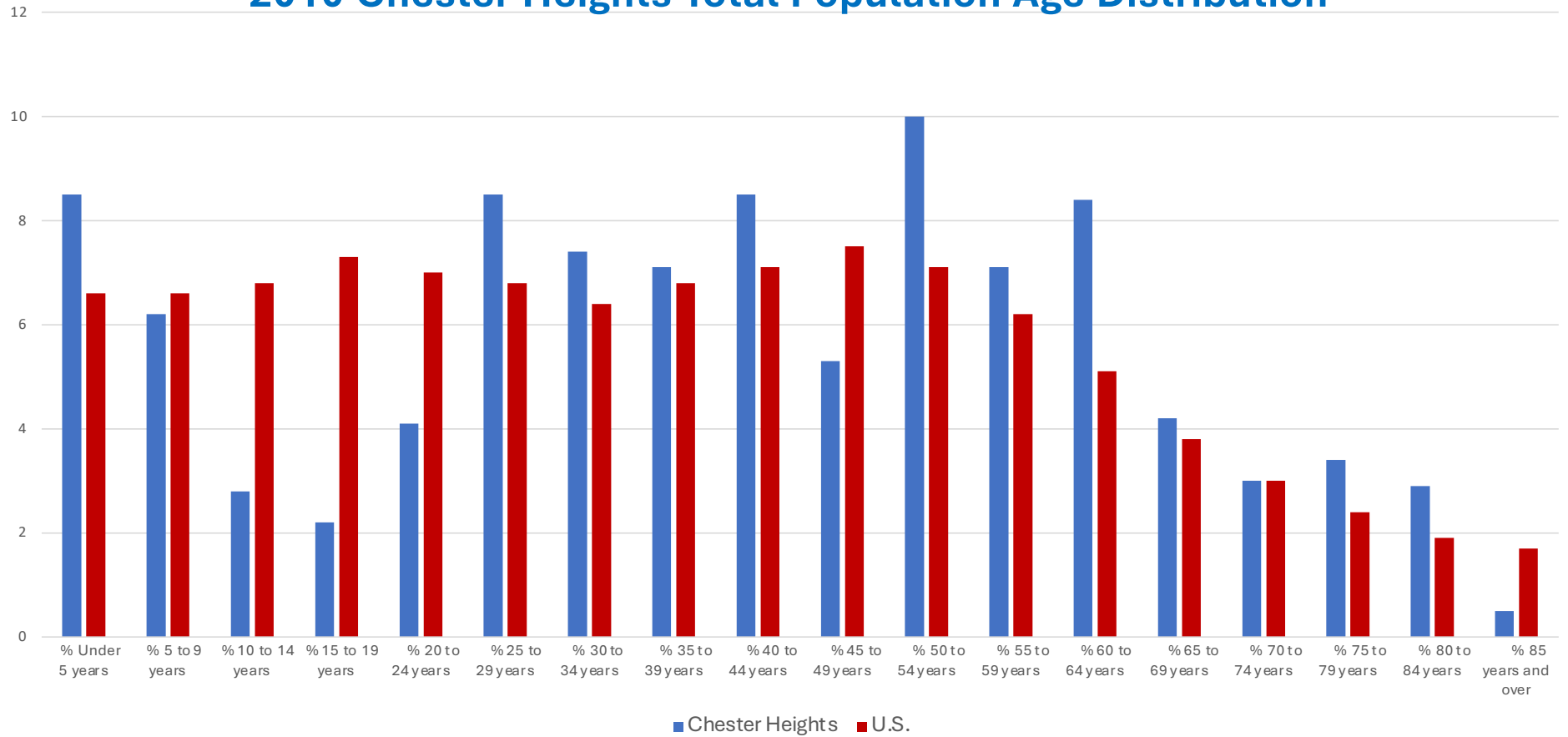
✦ Chester Heights is situated near the Southeastern Delaware County environmental justice region that centers around Tinicum, Eddystone, Chester city, Trainer and Marcus Hook – a heavily industrialized and polluted residential area along the Delaware river. The Mariner East pipeline that serves the Marcus Hook natural gas liquids refinery also passes through it.

ADULT CANCER

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

Adult Cancer in Chester Heights 20+ years of age	> US	> PA	> Delco
Ovarian	155%	119%	111%
Melanoma (skin)	35%	30%	15%
Oral and pharyngeal	25%	16%	23%
Breast	25%	13%	7%
Myeloma	21%	16%	34%
Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma	12%	-4%	3%
Urinary and bladder	11%	-16%	-12%

2010 Chester Heights 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 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](#) – that are known to be in Delaware County's water supply. 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 polluters that are killing us with 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](#).