

NH Department of Health and Human Services  
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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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## **NH DHHS Invites Residents and Officials of Seacoast Towns to March 15 Meeting on Cancer Cluster Report**

**Concord, NH** – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is holding a public meeting in Rye, NH, at 6:30 p.m. on March 15, to discuss the recent report on an investigation into Rhabdomyosarcoma (RMS) cases in the Rye area. Five Seacoast towns were investigated – Rye, Greenland, New Castle, Portsmouth and North Hampton – and town officials, residents and others are encouraged to attend the meeting and have questions about the report answered.

The public meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm at the Rye Elementary School, 461 Sagamore Road, Rye, NH 03870.

“Cancer is becoming increasingly common, and it is especially upsetting when we see it impacting our children. I sympathize with the families that have been affected,” said Dr. Benjamin Chan, State Epidemiologist. “We want to provide an opportunity for those who live in the area to share their insights and discuss the report’s findings as we continue to gather information. The report we’ve published provides a baseline evaluation of the number of RMS cases and other cancers in the area. Based on our research and review of the science, the investigation found no clear environmental connection to RMS.”

DHHS was asked by residents of Rye in March 2014 to investigate due to a number of cases of RMS among children living in or connected with the Rye area. The investigation, which included an analysis of the NH State Cancer Registry data and a thorough review of the available scientific literature looking at environmental causes of RMS, did not reveal an environmental connection. The small number (fewer than 5 total cases) of excess cases of pediatric RMS in the five-town region that was identified were above what would be expected when compared to the rest of Rockingham County. Because of the findings outlined in the report, DHHS will continue to monitor the area for new cases of RMS.

To read the report entitled *2016 Investigation of Rhabdomyosarcoma (RMS) Cases in the Rye Area*, visit the DHHS website at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/hsdm/cancer/publications.htm>.

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