

# DARTMOUTH

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contact: David Hirsch | david.s.hirsch@dartmouth.edu | 603-646-9130

### **Dartmouth Research Supports Reduction of Arsenic Levels in New Hampshire**

*Policy change could benefit health of citizens across the state*

HANOVER, N.H. – July 13, 2019 – Research from the Toxic Metals Superfund Research Program at Dartmouth College formed the backbone of technical information used by the state of New Hampshire in its recent decision to reduce arsenic levels in public drinking water.

For over 20 years, Dartmouth has provided lawmakers, regulators and the general public with data on the effects of arsenic on public health. The research has primarily focused on the long-term health impacts and vulnerable populations in the state, including mothers, infants, and those who consume water from private wells.

“Dartmouth’s Superfund Research Program is proud to have played a leading role in helping the state make this move in support of public health,” said Celia Chen, director of the [Toxic Metals Superfund Research Program at Dartmouth](#). “Health policy requires fact-based, long-term research to provide the best outcomes for the general public.”

On Friday, New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu signed a law reducing the maximum level of arsenic in public drinking water to 5 parts per billion (ppb). The previous limit of 10 ppb had been set in 2001 at the federal level with public water systems required to comply by 2006.

New Hampshire’s action makes the state the first in New England and the second in the country after New Jersey to lower arsenic levels to 5ppb.

“Reducing maximum arsenic levels in drinking water is consistent with the decades of research from Dartmouth and others linking the contaminant to negative health effects. This action will help safeguard the well-being of citizens across the state of New Hampshire,” said Chen.

Arsenic is a tasteless, odorless, colorless metalloid that is commonly found in New Hampshire and naturally-occurring in the water supply. About one-third of the public water systems in the state have a detectable amount of arsenic in their water. Research from the labs at Dartmouth and partner institutions have found that long-term exposure to low levels of arsenic increases risk of certain cancers and may also be linked to heart disease and diabetes.

The current legislation refers to arsenic in public water systems. About three in every 10 private wells across the state have arsenic above the state’s new public water limit of 5 ppb.

To support regulators, water authorities and the general public, Dartmouth will continue its research on health effects of arsenic on maternal and child health, the immune system in the lung and how it enters the food supply. Dartmouth’s Toxic Metals Superfund Research Program will also continue to lead the work of the NH Arsenic Consortium.

Additional information on arsenic may be found on the website “[Arsenic and You](#).”

###

Editor’s Notes:

Complete URL to the “Arsenic and You” website: [www.ArsenicandYou.org](http://www.ArsenicandYou.org)

Fact sheet on arsenic: [www.dartgo.org/arsenicfacts](http://www.dartgo.org/arsenicfacts)

More information on the Toxic Metals Superfund Program at Dartmouth: <https://sites.dartmouth.edu/toxmetal/>

For additional information or to interview a technical expert on arsenic and water, please contact:

David Hirsch: [david.s.hirsch@dartmouth.edu](mailto:david.s.hirsch@dartmouth.edu)

### **About Dartmouth**

Founded in 1769, Dartmouth is a member of the Ivy League and offers the world’s premier liberal arts education, combining its deep commitment to outstanding undergraduate and graduate teaching with distinguished research and scholarship in the arts and sciences and its leading professional schools: the Geisel School of Medicine, the Guarini School of Graduate and Advanced Studies, Thayer School of Engineering and Tuck School of Business.

### **About the Dartmouth Toxic Metals Superfund Research Program**

The Dartmouth Toxic Metals Superfund Research Program uses an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the ways in which arsenic and mercury in the environment affect ecosystems and human health. The program communicates research results to communities, public health organizations, and state and federal agencies, and trains students to conduct research from both a clinical and community-based perspective.