Dr Hemmons

8-235-3345

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Chemicals in Fish Spur Cancer Probe

The state Health Department has launched a cancer survey in Warren, Washington and Saratoga Counties in connection with the discovery of relatively high amounts of PCB in some Hudson River fish.

PCB or polychlorinated biphenyls, a chemical discharged into the Hudson by General Electric Co. in Hudson Falls and Fort Edward, has been found in higher levels than allowed in such Hudson River fish as striped bass and, most recently, perch.

Ogden Reid, commissioner of the Environmental Conservation Department, has warned area residents not to eat fish from the Hudson and now the state Health Department announced it is checking the National Cancer Registry for cancer incidents in the three-county area.

A spokesman for the state Health Department said Wednesday that the survey should be completed by next week if all goes well.

The survey will concentrate on liver, pancreas and bladder cancer during the period from 1950 to the present.

General Electric apparently is the only upstate firm that discharges PCB. It had received a discharge permit from the federal Environmental Protection Agency requiring the discharge of less and less PCB as the years go by. An EPA mobile unit reportedly was at GE plants Wednesday.

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