



# ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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## Health Department Response to State of the Air Report

**PITTSBURGH** – Dr. Karen Hacker, Director of the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), provided the following response to the recently issued American Lung Association’s State of the Air Report:

“The Allegheny County Health Department has strengthened our enforcement actions, doing more than we ever have, but we need to – and will – strengthen them further.

“Improving the air quality in Allegheny County is one of the Allegheny County Health Department’s (ACHD) top priorities, as it has a direct impact on the public health. We strive to hold polluters accountable and enforce regulations to the greatest extent possible. Last November, we partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a significant compliance action in the Mon Valley. Our partnership with the EPA also includes working to require significant improvements at sources. We have attained the EPA ozone standards for two years.

“Since 2012, eight of our nine PM 2.5 monitors have met or been better than the standards set by the EPA. Our work is focused on making that nine out of nine. In January, we updated our process for assessing civil penalties to increase deterrence for future violations. We now have some of the strictest regulations for coke plants in the country. Every day and night, inspectors are on site at coke plants in the Mon Valley to quickly identify violations. In addition, our SO<sub>2</sub> and PM 2.5 state implementation plans require significant emission reductions.

“The area is on a long-term trend towards improvement, but we have further to go. We will continue to be aggressive and proactive to improve the air quality in our county, but also recognize that enforcement alone will not achieve our goals. As such, we call upon industry leaders, at both the local and regional levels, to join us in doing what is needed to accelerate change.”

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