

## **Understanding Community Needs and Community Dynamics in the Post-remediation phase**

**Background and significance:** The EPA has just completed remediation of the BoRit asbestos superfund site in Ambler PA and is now transferring responsibilities to site owners and state and local government. Following extensive public comment, EPA released its final Record-of-Decision for BoRit in 2017. No further remediation was proposed: the "removal" activities (covering, but not removing the asbestos containing materials) were considered sufficient to protect the health of the public. With the EPA hand-over, site owners and state and local government are faced with the challenges of sustainably ensuring health and safety postremediation while the vast majority of ACM remains on-site. This transitional phase in the remediation process is fraught with uncertainty in the community, changing goals, magnified hazards for vulnerable populations, competing scientific and lay narratives about risk, concerns about stigma and a need for responsible communication about the hazard. In this proposed study, we will examine community and stakeholder perceptions about what issues need to be considered in the short and long-term to maximize a sense of safety and well-being in the community.

**Approach:** In this qualitative study, we will conduct a series of five focus groups with community members and other key stakeholders to identify their perceptions about postremediation issues in Ambler. Focus groups will be conducted with the following groups: 1) CAG members, 2) representatives from the EPA and the ATSDR, 3) local municipal, township and state officials, 4) West Ambler residents, Greater Ambler residents and community groups such as the Sons of Italy, the Boys' and Girls' clubs and the American Legion, 5) local business owners, builders and real estate agents. Each focus group will contain 6-8 people and will be facilitated by Dr. Fran Barg or a trained facilitator from the Mixed Methods Research Lab (MMRL). Focus groups will be audio-recorded, transcribed, de-identified and entered into NVivo 12.0 for coding and analysis. We will use a grounded theory approach to the analysis. The investigators (Barg and Emmett) will conduct a line by line reading of the transcripts to identify key ideas in the data and develop a codebook. Coders from the MMRL will use the codebook to double code all transcripts and use the interrater reliability function in NVivo to ascertain intercoder reliability. Once all data are coded and summarized, the investigators will examine the key codes for patterns and themes that represent community and stakeholder perceptions about what is needed in the post-remediation phase. Final results will be presented in a town hall format for participants in each of the focus groups and at a bi-monthly meeting of the Ambler Community Advisory Group (CAG).