

December 2, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honourable Mark Holland
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Holland,

November is Radon Action Month and Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington (KFL&A) Public Health is reminding our community of the health risk caused by radon gas. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer for non-smokers and is linked to approximately 16% of all lung cancer deaths in Canada. There is no known safe level of radon exposure and Canadians can be exposed to radon in residential homes and other buildings because of the soil upon which the building stands.¹ In confined spaces, radon can accumulate to harmful levels and cancer risk is directly related to radon concentration and length of exposure.^{2,3}

We urge KFL&A residents to test their homes for radon. While Health Canada recommends mitigation of residential homes, public buildings and indoor workplaces if radon levels are above 200 Bq/m³, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends mitigation at 100 Bq/m³. Differing radon guidance can impact informed decision making and cause confusion when taking action to lower radon levels, as was observed in a radon testing study of residential homes in KFL&A.⁴

Exposure to radon is a significant health risk. If all residential homes in Canada above 100 Bq/m³ were lowered to as reasonably achievable, it is estimated that 28% of radon-attributable lung cancer deaths could be prevented each year. That is, a reduction of approximately 200 lung cancer deaths in Ontario and 700 deaths in Canada.^{5,6}

To that end, the KFL&A Board of Health strongly urges Health Canada to establish a new radon guideline for residential homes, public buildings and indoor workplaces that aligns with the WHO's radon limit of 100 Bq/m³ and to continue recommending a reduction in radon levels to as low as reasonably achievable below this new guideline.

Sincerely,



Wess Garrod
KFL&A Board of Health Chair

Copy to: Dr. Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer
Mark Gerretson, Member of Parliament, Kingston and the Islands
Shelby Kramp-Neuman, Member of Parliament, Hastings – Lennox and Addington
Scott Reid, Member of Parliament, Lanark – Frontenac – Kingston
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
All Ontario Boards of Health

References:

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