

# Assessment of Cancers in Houston 2000-2016: Summary

## Background

The state health department recently analyzed cancers in 10 census tracts in Houston, Texas. At a community meeting in April 2019, residents expressed concern about specific types of cancers in a neighborhood by the Union Pacific Railroad facility.

## What We Did

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality told us about the health concerns of people living in these areas. To figure out if the number of cancer cases in this area were higher than normal, we did the following:

- Analyzed six types of adult (ages 20 years and older) cancers using Texas Cancer Registry.
- Looked at those diagnosed with cancer from 2000 to 2016 in the 10 census tracts.
- Adjusted for differences in age, sex, and race/ethnicity, which are related to cancer risk.
- Compared number of cases in this area to the number of expected cases.

## What We Found

Adult cancers in expected range:

- Acute myeloid leukemia (blood and bone marrow)
- Urinary bladder
- Nose and nasal cavity

## What We Found (continued)

Adult cancers above expected range:

- Lung and Bronchus
- Esophagus
- Larynx (throat)

This analysis cannot tell us about the causes of cancers in this area. It only lets us compare the number of cancer cases to what we expect based on cancer rates in Texas. These results might be due to random chance alone. The health department could not account for lifestyle factors such as smoking or diet in this analysis.

The health department will continue monitoring cancer in the area, upon request, when new data is available.

## Resources and More Information

About Cancer Clusters

[cdc.gov/nceh/clusters/about.htm](http://cdc.gov/nceh/clusters/about.htm)

What Causes Cancer?

[cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/index](http://cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/index)

For questions, comments, or requests for the full report:

Environmental Surveillance and Toxicology Branch

1-800-588-1248

[epitox@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:epitox@dshs.texas.gov)