

Q: Who is BCCC partnering with?

- The Hoosier Environmental Council (hecweb.org)
- Indiana State Department of Health (in.gov/isdh)
- IU-Purdue Ft. Wayne
- The IU Fairbanks School of Public Health
- Cancer Services of East Central Indiana (<http://www.littlereddooreci.org/>)
- American Cancer Society (cancer.org)

How Can I Help?

1. Stay in touch. Sign up for our email, connect on Facebook.
2. Volunteer. We need help with event planning, fundraising, and data collection.
3. Report problems. For contamination problems or spills contact IDEM's 24 hour hotline: 888-233-7745
4. Spread the word.



Contact Us

Email: BlackfordCountyConcernedCitizens@yahoo.com

Web: BlackfordCountyConcernedCitizens.com

Facebook: Join the "Blackford County Indiana Cancer Action Group"

Mail: P.O. Box 363, Hartford City, IN 47348



**Blackford County
Concerned Citizens**

Creating a healthier community.

Blackford County Concerned Citizens (BCCC)

Frequently Asked Questions



Why?

We're people who have grown up and lived in Blackford County for much of our lives. We call our community home, and we want our kids and grandkids to look upon our community as a safe, prosperous and healthy place to be.

We formed because it seemed that there were too many people getting sick in Blackford County, suffering from cancer and serious neurological illnesses.

Our mission is to improve the quality of life of Blackford County's residents by reducing the incidence of diseases, primarily through citizen action to investigate the diseases that are prevalent and by advocating to have these diseases investigated.

Q: Every community struggles with serious illnesses like cancer. Why is there a need for a dedicated group in our community?

A: Blackford County has a cancer rate higher than the state average and an increased rate of ALS, a serious nervous system disease. For 2003-2007, Blackford's cancer rate was the highest in Indiana. In the most recent data it was higher than 75% of the state.

We don't know what is causing these higher-than-average rates. It could be related to, for example, our smoking and eating habits, our health care practices, the age of our population, contaminants in our environment, or a combination of these. We want to help our community determine if there might be some unaddressed risk factors.

Q: When did BCCC form?

A: The group first met in June 2009,.

Q: What has BCCC accomplished?

A: We've compiled cancer statistics and environmental data from public sources. In 2011 we worked with the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) to get an analysis of the county's cancer data, and in 2014 ISDH agreed to our request for an update. We have engaged the Hoosier Environmental Council, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, the American Cancer Society, and two Indiana universities in helping with research and public education. We have engaged Blackford County citizens through our website, Facebook page, email and in-person presentations. In 2014 we gathered sufficient donations and grant funds to hire an environmental health specialist.

Q: What more do we know about cancer in our community?

A: The data from the Indiana Cancer Registry from 2000-2007 showed that Blackford County had elevated rates of lymphoma, bladder, colon, lung, and thyroid cancers relative to the state average.

Q: Cancer is a very complex disease that might be caused by a variety of factors. Is there any basis for believing that cancer might be in any way associated with our community's environment?

A: Yes. It is plausible that environmental exposures could be contributing to increased risk. The county has a substantial industrial history stretching all the way back to the 1880 gas boom and some of those industries have produced wastes that could be hazardous to health. Hazardous wastes were not always handled safely or as carefully as current regulations require. When not handled properly, wastes can contaminate air, water or soil and potentially come into contact with people.



Q: Won't a group that focuses on cancer and possible links to the environment scare people and hurt the economy?

A: We feel that a stronger community arises when we can speak in a climate of openness – where we can candidly discuss challenges facing our community, and work swiftly and with sound science to solve them. Recent local clean-ups of leaking petroleum tanks, PCBs and heavy metals have reduced hazardous exposures. These clean-ups are also helping restore community confidence and improve local property values. These examples show that addressing environmental issues is good for the community and good for the economy.