

Oil Disaster and Public Health

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The Institute of Medicine, an independent, nonprofit advisory group for researchers, government agencies and scientists, will hold a free workshop in New Orleans to explore public health issues resulting from the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.



The workshop, "Assessing the Human Health Effects of the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill," is scheduled from June 22-23 at the Hotel Monteleone, 214 Royal St. in the French Quarter. Dr. Maureen Lichtveld, Freeport McMoRan Chair of Environmental Policy for Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, is one of the event's organizers.

Today (June 17) is the deadline to register for the conference. The agenda and registration information are available [online](#).

"The workshop draws on the best scientific expertise available to examine a broad range of short- and long-term health issues that may result from the oil spill," Lichtveld says.

She says that the workshop will be an important opportunity for Tulane researchers who will be studying the public health implications of the disaster. Those who cannot attend may watch a [video webcast](#).

The agenda includes sessions that will:

- Review the current knowledge about the effects on human health of exposure to oil, weathered oil products and dispersants, and identify gaps in this knowledge;
- Identify and discuss the populations most at risk for health problems as a result of the oil spill;

- Review and assess ways to monitor the spill's potential negative effects on health in the short- and long-term;
- Explore methods and strategies for gathering data to further understanding of the risks to human health; and
- Consider effective ways to communicate with those at risk for health problems, taking culture, understanding of health information, language, technology and geography into account.