

Board Statement regarding Smith Family Center

Some CMS employees have raised concerns that the Smith Family Center (“Smith”) building has produced a cancer cluster among people who worked there. We are taking these concerns seriously and recognize how upsetting they are to our employees who worked at Smith.

When the matter was first brought to executive attention, Superintendent Earnest Winston moved employees out of the site. We then began to explore how best to assess the building’s safety and to investigate if employee health has been compromised by it.

To date, here are the steps we have taken: researched the Centers for Disease Control (“CDC”) guidelines¹ for investigating cancer-cluster concerns; met with experts in the field; met with employees of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; and last week, met with the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH).

The Board of Education has opened a Health Hazard Evaluation with NIOSH to explore whether there is an occupational cancer cluster at Smith Family Center. Although Smith has been declared surplus property, it will not be demolished until we have completed any and all tests recommended by NIOSH.

These are serious and frightening issues for our employees, and we share their concerns. Once we receive the results from the NIOSH evaluation, they will be shared with the employees and the public in compliance with the North Carolina Public Records Act.

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6208a1.htm?s_cid=rr6208a1_w