

# Study funding unclear.

## NO SIGN FEDS WILL HELP PAY

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The Observer

Health Canada says it is willing to assist with a study into local environmental health but the community will have to take the lead role.

The federal government will be at the table at an ongoing series of discussions, said Paul Duchesne, a Health Canada spokesman.

"Environmental Impacts on the health of Canadians is an issue that Health Canada takes very seriously," he said.

But there is no indication Ottawa will foot the bill, which the medical officer of health has indicated could be in the millions.

In fact, Duchesne said local industry, as well as any other participant, should share in the funding.

Already representatives from the Occupational Health Clinic for Ontario Workers have said a study financed even in part by industrial dollars would lose credibility.

Federal bureaucrats were in Sarnia-Lambton last week to meet with local mayors and the Aamjkwang First Nation after the Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association invited them here.

The association, which represents 19 local industries, is urging the government to conduct a comprehensive community-wide study to determine if the health of Sarnia-Lambton residents differs from the rest of the province.

"Industry had approached Health Canada about doing a health study in Sarnia because they perceived that the community had concerns that industrial releases were affecting their health," Duchesne said.

"Health Canada is available to assist the community should it decide to conduct a study."

He emphasized that no specific areas of concern have been identified yet and no decision has yet been made to move forward.

However, Duchesne said Health Canada officials expect to attend another meeting with a broader range of local stakeholders.

The agency responded to a similar request in the 1990s from Sydney, Nova Scotia. In that case, the federal government assisted with a study to see if there was an association