Michael Lanoue, Chair Peter Stanton, Vice Chair Ruby Chang, M.D.



Town Hall, 334 Main Street Great Barrington, MA 01230

Phone: 413-528-0680 Cell: 413-717- 2010

Rebecca Jurczyk riurczyk@townofab.org

TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF HEALTH

November 4, 2022

Public Health Advisory: High Levels of Manganese

- 1. Manganese is a mineral found in rocks, soil, groundwater, and surface water. Excessive amounts of Manganese is currently present in Housatonic Water Works, Co. water. These elevated concentrations of manganese cause the slight to dramatic discoloration of water provided to HWWC customers.
- 2. People, especially babies 12 months and under, who drink water containing high levels of manganese may experience harmful effects. Exposure to high concentrations of manganese could produce neurological effects with some variation in sensitivity between individuals. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a contamination limit for lifetime exposure to Manganese in drinking water at .3mg/L. The EPA considers any amount under this level of exposure safe from potential neurological impacts over a lifetime. In the short term, the EPA considers any exposure under 1mg/L to be safe. In addition, the EPA advises that infants should not drink water that contains above .3mg/L of Manganese at any time, especially if formula fed.
- 3. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recommends that children under the age of three years should also not be given water with levels containing more than .3mg/L. Children 12 months and younger are most susceptible to excessive manganese exposure because of their developing neurological and gastrointestinal systems. Infants appear to absorb more manganese than older children and adults but excrete less.
- 4. If Infant formulas are prepared with water that contains manganese at concentrations greater than the guidelines outlined above, the infant may get a higher amount of manganese than necessary. This presents a greater potential for adverse effects in the very young. Thus, it is very important to know what the levels in drinking water are when using it to make formula.