

## **GILBERT: Public needs to know smart meter health risks**

By [Glenn Gilbert](#), The Oakland Press

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If physicians have differences of opinions over the health dangers posed by such devices and appliances as cell phones, smart meters and microwave ovens, how does that make you feel?

Do you trust government studies, such as those cited by the federal Food and Drug Administration and Federal Communications Commission, which say electromagnetic and radiofrequency field exposures are too low to worry about?

Not to paint with too broad a brush, but who appoints bureaucrats at such agencies? Politicians. Who funds political campaigns? That would be, in many cases, makers of cell phones, microwave ovens and the executives of utilities like DTE Energy, which has completed the smart meter installations throughout most of Southeast Michigan.

As a result, the lobbyists for such enterprises carry far too much clout with government. In many cases, government is relying on decades-old research claiming the low risk of such devices.

But an Ann Arbor physician who is an expert on the subject said “much peer-reviewed research has been published that proves EMF and RF emissions are linked to genetic defects, cancer, developmental abnormalities, neurological and cardiac disease, as well as other diseases.”

Dr. Amy Dean said there are clear cases that indicate smart meters pose significant health risks.

“The claim has been made that smart meters are safe and that no health risks exist,” Dean said.

“However, industry has not conducted independent studies or investigations to verify that claim.”

Dean is president of the American Academy of Environmental Medicine. She is board certified in internal and environmental medicine.

AAEM summarized studies on the subject in a report published last year that called for caution in installing smart meters.

“Recently, the AAEM received a 92-case series from outside the United States for review regarding smart meter health effects,” Dean said. “Based on this research, it appears that there is a direct correlation between smart meter installation and the development of health conditions such as insomnia, fatigue, headaches, cognitive disturbance and other symptoms. Many of these are the same symptoms correlated with EMF and RF exposure found in the scientific literature.

“It was clear to me when reviewing the scientific literature that these fields have a definite impact on the human body and can cause disease,” Dean said.

AAEA’s position statement is available at [aaemonline.org](http://aaemonline.org).

Dean said patients began reporting to environmental physicians that they began to develop symptoms after smart meters were installed on their homes. They report fatigue, chest pain, headaches, heartbeat irregularities, pain and other debilitating symptoms.

“For example, one of my patients developed palpitations and a heart arrhythmia following the installation of three smart meters on her condo. After two of the three meters were removed, her heart condition improved significantly. There are many patients like this in Michigan and throughout North America. There is clearly some type of physiological process occurring. Electromagnetic (EMF) and radiofrequency (RF) field measurements will often confirm that patients’ symptoms are indeed real,” Dean said.

She said the risks apply to the general population as well as specific classes of people. The World Health Organization has classified RF emissions, like those from smart meters, as a group 2 B carcinogen.

“Environmental pollutants, including EMF and RF, generally impact the weakest link in the body. So, if a person is prone to heart disease, cancer or neurological disease, the EMF/RF exposure will likely result in symptoms related to that vulnerable system. Clinical observations of environmental physicians are also showing that exposure to certain pollutants in the past or present can make an individual more susceptible to electromagnetic hypersensitivity,” Dean said.

Physicians who are members of conventional medical groups like the American Medical Association have not been trained to look at their patient’s environment for the cause of a disease, Dean said.

“Doctors in the current health care environment are so limited on the amount of time they can spend with patients, they don't have the opportunity to ask the questions that lead to the environmental cause. If they had any idea how much EMF and RF are affecting their patient's disease process, I am certain they would be issuing warnings,” Dean said.

Minimizing exposure is difficult, she said. There are components of the EMF and RF fields that cannot be shielded.

“Avoidance of exposure is truly the key. At a minimum, people should have the RF wireless component of their smart meter turned off. However, patients are reporting that the digital meter with wireless component switched off also provokes symptoms,” Dean said.

“Having the option to maintain an analog meter on the home or workplace is critical to protect patients’ health. Although it seems old-fashioned, analog meters allow people to create a safe living space and protect their health until alternative technology can be substituted that is both state-of-the-art and safe,” Dean said.

In Michigan, smart meter opponents are focusing their attention on House Bill 4315, introduced by Rep. Tom McMillin, R-Rochester Hills, which would allow DTE customers to keep using their analog meters without incurring an additional charge.

The horse is probably out of the barn on the smart meter issue. But people still deserve to know the risks.

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