

Fact Check of WebMD and Georgia Health News Story

A recent media story from [WebMd and Georgia Health News](#) contained information about our Covington facility that was not accurate. We have provided a fact check of the story below.

As Reported by WebMD	Fact Check
<p>The story cited NATA (National Air Toxics Assessments) data that estimates that ethylene oxide causes 214 cases of cancer in Covington for every million people exposed, presumably without checking with U.S. EPA to verify accuracy of this estimate. (paragraph 10)</p>	<p>Georgia EPD issued a statement on July 25 to clarify that “The EPA evaluation of Georgia’s recent modeling analyses indicates that risk from ethylene oxide concentrations in residential areas does not exceed 100-in-1 million (1 in 10,000). The EPA uses that number in regulations as a general guide for determining the maximum acceptable lifetime cancer risk.”</p>
<p>The story stated multiple times that EtO emissions in the Covington area exceeded the state’s annual levels. (Paragraphs 16 and 18; Sterigenics in Georgia, paragraphs 4 and 12; Longtime Company, paragraph 7; Resident’s Asthma, Breast Cancer, paragraph 1)</p>	<p>The July 25 statement from Georgia EPD stated, “Both Sterigenics and BD are in compliance with current federal requirements for control of ethylene oxide emissions. Both facilities conduct periodic testing, which is monitored by EPD. Also, both facilities are currently emitting significantly less ethylene oxide than assumed in the 2014 NATA.”</p>
<p>Throughout the story, specific cancer patients were inferred to have contracted cancer from ethylene oxide. (Headline; Paragraphs 4, 6 and 10; Longtime company, paragraph 4; Resident’s Asthma, Breast Cancer, all paragraphs)</p>	<p>Their own story quotes the Department of Public Health as saying “Department of Public Health cautions that it is extremely difficult to find out if an environmental exposure has caused cancer. The department says its data shouldn’t be seen as a link between any particular environmental exposure and a specific type of cancer.” In addition, the U.S. EPA noted that EtO levels in Covington and Smyrna were not likely high enough to cause immediate harm to health. (Cancer Risks Around Medical Sterilizers, paragraph 10)</p>