

## More chilling cancer news

■ Our view: Public must report cases.

Within one week of a community meeting about cancer cases at Southside High School, the count of current or former students with the disease has reached at least 24, dating back to when the school opened in 1979.

The number comes from reports to the Chemung County Health Department and independent research done by the Star-Gazette's team of reporters covering this

**CONCERN** on the  
**SOUTHSIDE**

ongoing story. As of the public meeting held at Southside on May 8, there were 13 current or former students reported with cancer. But that number cov-

ered the period from 1997 to the present.

Public health officials pleaded for community cooperation in finding out about other cases, and apparently they got it, as people have contacted the county health department.

This is the kind of crucial information health and environmental investigators must have as they continue to look into the cancer occurrence among Southside students and try to determine whether they are related to industrial pollution at and near the school.

The escalating number adds to the growing concern over why Southside students and alumni have developed cancers of all types, including ovarian, testicular, colon and brain.

So far, officials are standing by their assertion last week that the school is safe. However, they still face the task of trying to explain significant number of Southside cancer cases, and with the count now double what it was a week ago, there's even more urgency for state Health Department officials to make sense of this mystery.

There also continues to be a demand on the public to report cases to the public health department.

Only through a thorough accounting can officials determine whether there is a pattern of cancer, either in the high school or Southside Elmira.

Without public cooperation, any investigation will be incomplete.

■ **Where to call:** To report additional cancer cases, call the Chemung County Health Department, 607/737-2019.

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