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Funding for key gas drilling health study stalled

By KEVIN BEGOS Associated Press

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PITTSBURGH—An important study on possible health impacts of natural gas drilling is still looking for additional funding.

Geisinger Health System spokeswoman Amanda O'Rourke said Wednesday the \$1 million grant that was announced in February 2012 remains the only funding for a project that was projected to cost at least \$25 million.

Geisinger plans to look at health histories of hundreds of thousands of patients who live near Marcellus Shale gas wells in Pennsylvania. Geisinger is based in Danville.

O'Rourke says small-scale pilot studies on trauma, births, asthma and pulmonary disease are moving forward. But pilot studies don't provide definitive answers to medical questions.

Geisinger says conclusions about whether drilling is safe are likely years away, though the pilot studies will be done sooner.