

Testimony of Karen S. in the
DTE Advanced (Smart) Meter Opt-Out Case, U-17053

What follows are the relevant portions of the testimony Karen S. offered in the DTE opt-out case, [U-17053](#). The judge refused to allow any of this health testimony, stating that it was impermissible because the only thing to be decided at the hearing was whether DTE's proposed radio-off smart meter opt-out fulfilled cost-of-service principles. An appeal has been filed an appeal with the Michigan Court of Appeals.

TESTIMONY OF KAREN S.

Q. What are your qualifications to testify?

A. The electricity on my house comes from Detroit Edison. I live in a neighborhood that has been installed with smart meters. Both my health and my ability to earn an income have been affected by the smart meter installation, as have various other rights and privileges.

Q. How long have you lived at your current residence?

A. My husband and I have lived here for 19 years. We own our home.

Q. What do you do for a living?

A. I'm working in finance for clinical trial research at a public university.

Q. Have you been diagnosed with EMF sensitivity, also known as electromagnetic hypersensitivity, electrosensitivity, or electromagnetic hypersensitivity syndrome?

A. Yes. I was diagnosed with EMF sensitivity on May 11, 2012 by Gerald Natzke, D.O. who is an Environmental/Allergy physician.

Q. How did you receive this diagnosis?

A. For about 2 years prior to my diagnosis, I was on a quest to determine the cause of some escalating and unusual symptoms. I had suffered for years with chronic neck pain and TMJ issues stemming from a blow to my jaw from a horse when I was a teenager. Wearing a dental appliance and getting occasional physical therapy and chiropractic treatment had kept this in check.

However, in December of 2010 I noticed increasing difficulty with my singing voice as well as my speaking voice and had to quit my choral activities, which was my prime hobby and passion. I also had increased head and neck pain and noticed that in certain environments both the voice

problems and neck pain got much worse. When I attended day-long conferences for work that were held in hotel banquet halls, my whole body ached. I blamed it on sitting all day in an uncomfortable chair.

My primary care doctor ordered MRIs of my neck and thoracic regions and no significant findings were found. I was referred to a rehab doctor, who could offer no help except to refer me to a pain clinic. I refused. I knew there was something else going on. Being a registered pharmacist, I knew I would be masking the pain with drugs and injections without addressing the root cause, which remained a mystery.

I was diagnosed with several food allergies in 2011 by Dr. Natzke, and eliminating these foods from my diet seemed to help some of the muscle and joint pain. I was also diagnosed with chemical sensitivities. I began buying unscented skin-care products and asked friends who would visit at my home to not wear fragrances. However, the neck and head pain persisted

In February 2012, I was diagnosed with a visual impairment called *vertical heterophoria*. It could have stemmed from the kick in the head by the horse. The new prescription lenses corrected my vision with prisms and relieved some of the neck and head pain. But I still had symptoms in certain environments, and these were becoming more intense.

Q. What were those symptoms?

A. In the spring of 2012, whenever I would enter the office at work, I began to feel facial tingling and burning [from fluorescent lighting and cell phones], increased neck pain, and a clamping sensation in my upper throat that made swallowing difficult. I also recognized this sensation when I would enter a drugstore, or in certain churches I attended, in restaurants, and even in the eye doctor's office. I asked myself, "What do these places all have in common?"

Q. What did you find they had in common?

A. In April of 2012, I was able to put the pieces of the puzzle together after attending two different churches and noticing a decrease in symptoms in one church compared to the other. One church had wi-fi, the other did not. I had my husband turn off the wi-fi router in our home and noticed immediate relief of head and neck pain and the clamping sensation in my upper throat. We then removed all wireless technology in our home, such as cell phones and our cordless phones and hard-wired our Ethernet connection. I've since learned that the burning sensation occurs when I am in proximity to certain types of lighting (such as Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), fluorescent lamps, or halogen lamps) which can emit a radio frequency and/or magnetic fields. Cell phones also cause this burning sensation as well as head/neck pain.

Q. Were you sensitive to other wireless devices prior to your diagnosis of EMF sensitivity?

A. Yes.

Q. When did this sensitivity begin, and how acute was it?

A. A year or more, at least. I am certain I had some of this sensitivity for years, and it just got more intense as time went on. In the spring of this year, I attended a concert at the church my husband works at, and my neck was screaming at me the whole time. A month later there was another concert at his church. My husband disabled the wi-fi, and I enjoyed the concert free of neck pain.

Q. Were you sensitive to other electromagnetic fields, for instance fluorescent lights, prior to your diagnosis of EMF sensitivity? If so, when did this sensitivity begin, and how acute was it?

A. Yes. In the spring of this year I began noticing the facial tingling, mostly at work, then also in other locations. I've deduced that this is due to radio frequency emissions from cell phones and certain types of lighting fixtures. At work, the fluorescent lights and certain cell phones caused my face to burn and tingle. I notice it also in certain stores that have a high level of fluorescent lighting.

Q. Once you determined that the problems you experienced seemed to be dependent on exposure to wi-fi, what did you do?

A. As I said, I saw my environmental/allergy physician, Dr. Natzke, in May, and he diagnosed me with EMF sensitivity.

Q. What was your health like once you turned off the wi-fi in your home?

A. I felt much better in my home: a decrease in my head and neck pain, and a decrease in the aching in my body. However, since I worked in an office with 30 others who used cell phones, and where wi-fi was used, this presented a huge problem.

Q. What do you experience when at work?

A. Within about 5 minutes of entering the office I begin to experience facial tingling, a clamping sensation in my throat, head pressure, head pain, and neck pain. I work in a large office with 30 people who all have cell phones. Even if just one or two of my coworkers are present I still feel these sensations, though they may not be as intense. It also depends on how close in proximity I am to the cell phone. I also notice a reduction in my symptoms if I turn off the overhead lighting in the office.

Q. What did you do about your work situation?

A. My supervisor at work was very understanding and allowed me to work most of my hours in my home. I now come into the office only if necessary during the day for brief meetings. Each day I come into the office after hours so I can work without the presence of multiple cell phones and I keep the overhead lights in the office turned off.

Q. You took additional steps to mitigate your home. What were those steps?

A. During the spring of 2012, when doing research on-line about EMF symptoms, I came across reports of something called a *smart meter* that was being installed in various parts of the

country. The meter used pulsed radio-frequency emissions to transmit energy-usage information back to the utility company. The meter deployment was currently taking place in Michigan. This was definitely something I needed to protect myself from. I researched various materials that could be used to shield my home from RF. Several types of metal, aluminum, for instance, does a good job of shielding against RF. We completely covered the first floor windows with aluminum screening. Our home was already aluminum-sided on the three sides that faced the backyards where the electrical meters are. I sewed curtains made of a fabric that shields against RF for the upper-floor windows of our .home

Q. Your diagnosis of EMF sensitivity was in May 2012, and you had begun mitigation of your house in April 2012. That means you had about 6 months before the smart meters were installed in your neighborhood. Between the time you began mitigation and the time smart meters were installed, how was your health both within your home and in other places? Please be specific about what improved, stayed the same, or got worse.

A. Before the meter install my home was the place where I felt the best. Now, after the install, I feel ill effects (nausea, headache, malaise) on the second floor. Before the install I was able to walk in my neighborhood symptom-free. Now, I get headaches and feel a general malaise when I walk in my neighborhood ,

Q. When were smart meters installed in your neighborhood?

A. On October 12, 2012 they were installed on my street. I watched the installers from the second-story window of my home as they went door- to-door to my neighbors'. I felt confident that all of the preparations we did to shield our home from the microwave radiation would be sufficient for me to remain at home and live comfortably. I continued to work in our upstairs office.

Q. What happened next?

A. After a couple of hours after the installation of my neighbors' meters I began to feel a general malaise, nausea, and headache.

Since that day I have had to sleep on the first-floor level of my home. My office had to be moved to the first floor as well. Both of these impact my husband's piano studio, where he teaches privately.

I cannot use the second floor of my home for more than 30 minutes before feeling ill.

Since the meter install, I feel ill in my backyard and cannot work or spend time there due to the location of my neighbors' meters.

I feel the effects when walking through my neighborhood. Walking is my primary exercise. I now drive to a remote and secluded portion of our subdivision where the lots were never developed and walk there.

Q. Have you been in houses with smart meters?

A. On November 3, 2012, my neighbor invited me inside his home to see the improvements he had made, as he was preparing to sell his home. Within about 10 seconds of stepping inside, I felt intense head and neck pain and a consuming, painful pressure on my body from all sides. This extremely alarming sensation allowed me to stay for only 4 or 5 minutes before I quickly left. I felt physically traumatized. After this experience, I know I will no longer be able to visit at the homes of family, friends or relatives who have one of these meters.

Q. Prior to this experience at your neighbor's, had you been in houses with smart meters?

A. Yes, before I knew what a Smart meter was, we visited relatives on Harsen's Island a few summers ago. This was a cottage where I had visited many times during my life. I was talking with my cousin in the kitchen when the strange and extremely painful sensations began. Every minute or two it felt like an electric current was being injected into my neck. I didn't mention it to anyone because it was so odd. I also felt it outside the cottage about 60 feet away. In retrospect, I have deduced that these sensations were due to the Smart Meter installed. The electrical box is on the wall of the kitchen. This past spring when doing research on the DTE site I read that Harsen's Island was one of the first places in Michigan where these meters were deployed. From this experience I knew I had to take drastic measures to shield my home from the pulsed RF that these meters emit, and that I would not be able to live in my own home if one was installed there.

Q. How has this affected you in terms of going to other buildings with smart meters?

A. Knowing these meters are deployed in Southeast Michigan, I am extremely cautious about visiting businesses, shopping malls, doctor's offices, churches, the post office, the library, etc. due to the possible presence of smart meters or other sources of microwave radiation, such as Wi-Fi, WLAN networks, and cell towers. Since I've become electrically hypersensitive, I spend most of my time in my own home, don't go shopping, or out to eat, or to a movie, etc. I remained at home and could not travel with my family this summer to visit relatives in another state, because they have these meters on their home. I make only trips that are essential, such as doctor's appointments, brief trips to the grocery, or to places that I know don't have the meters yet or if they do are in a distant enough location where I am not affected. The drug stores have these meters, and I feel absolutely terrible in there. I have to know exactly what I'm getting, get it, and get out as quickly as possible (I try to keep it at 5 minutes max).

Q. Have you been in public buildings / businesses you know have smart meters? How has this affected you?

A. Several of the public and federal buildings in Ypsilanti are now equipped with antennas on their roofs that broadcast and receive radio signals. If my visit to the downtown Ypsilanti Post Office this past summer is any indication of the environment of any of these buildings, I will not be able to conduct business transactions of more than 10 minutes before feeling extremely ill..

Q. What happens to you if you are in a building for more than 10 minutes? Please be specific, and tell us how long these symptoms last?

A. I immediately experience all of the symptoms I've mentioned above: painful facial tingling, neck pain, head pressure, difficulty speaking, clamping sensation in my throat. If I'm there longer than 10 minutes my arms begin to go painfully numb. My whole body feels as if it's going to go into some sort of crisis...I've never had a seizure, or stroke, or lost consciousness, but these come to mind, in terms of the severity of the physical consequences that possibly could occur to me. My gut instinct says "Get out now!" These symptoms begin to subside when I remove myself from the environment, but depending on the length of exposure it can take a few hours to feel better, physically. It's emotionally disturbing as well

Q. Please list all health effects and symptoms you experience when in the presence of smart meters or subsequent to exposure to smart meters?

A. See above.

Q. Had you experienced any of these symptoms prior to the installation of smart meters?

A. Yes, I have similar symptoms when in close proximity to cell towers and WLAN broadcasting equipment.

Q. If the answer to the previous question is yes, did the severity of the symptoms lessen or increase after smart meter installation?

A. Same.

Q. Have the health effects you experience as a result of smart meters affected your ability to interact socially with others? If the answer is yes, describe how.

A. Yes, The impact is quite significant..I can no longer meet socially in my neighbors homes. If my mother gets one of these meters I will not be able to visit her in her own home. I anticipate problems going out to eat at restaurants, and if there are family events in banquet halls or hotels this will also be a problem. I'm even concerned about visiting loved ones at the next funeral., if the funeral home has one of these meters.,

Q. Have the health effects you experience as a result of smart meters affected your ability to access public services, such as the public library, government offices? If the answer is yes, describe how.

A. Yes. I am immediately in pain when entering the post office. I am not certain if it is due to a Smart Meter, or to the radio signals from the tower on the roof. I have not visited the library or other government offices yet. Any place where I am required to wait and stand in line could potentially be problematic, as my time is very limited before I become extremely ill.

Q. Have the health effects you experience as a result of smart meters affected your ability to freely assemble outside? If the answer is yes, describe how.

A. If the location of the assembly is near a building with Smart Meters, then, yes, it would affect my ability to freely assemble in that location. I would have to move quite a distance away.

Q. Have the health effects you experience as a result of smart meters affected your ability to access religious or spiritual services? If the answer is yes, describe how.

A. My church's office has these meters, so I am unable to attend meetings there.

Q. Have the health effects you experience as a result of smart meters affected your ability to freely access health services? If the answer is yes, describe how.

A. Yes. When I make the first appointment with a new health practitioner, there is always a question as to whether or not they will have a meter on their building or not. I try to give them notice that I am extremely sensitive to these meters so they know I may have to cancel the appointment and look elsewhere for a different person. This is happening tomorrow as I go to see a new dentist. Another case in point: a certain physical therapist was recommended to me. However, she worked out of her home, and her home had both an electric as well as a gas Smart Meter. I had to look elsewhere for PT services.

Q. Is there anything else you wish to say about how smart meters have affected your ability to perform major or minor activities of daily living?

A. I am convinced that if my home was not aluminum-sided and if we had not taken the other measures to cover windows with shielding material I would have been forced to find another place to live when the smart meters were deployed in my neighborhood (even though a smart meter has not been put on my home) .

I am grateful that after years of searching, I was able to solve the mystery as to the source of my pain and voice difficulties, and that this revelation occurred before smart meter deployment in my area, so that I could actively work with DTE to avoid having a smart meter installed on our home. I thank Elaine Curtis, DTE representative, for her understanding of my health concerns and assisting me in this process. Even though I don't have one of these meters on my home, I am still affected in my home by the pulsed RF signals from my neighbors meters such that I can't sleep on the second floor of my home, or spend time in my backyard, or take walks through my neighborhood. I live in constant fear that DTE will remove my analog meter and then I will have to move from my home to another location

My heart goes out to those who are caught unawares and have no clue as to why they feel ill and are trying to figure out why. It is getting increasingly difficult to find places that are free of electrosmog so that it can be ruled out as a possible cause of illness. It is extremely tragic for those who become ill in their own homes after a smart meter has been installed. The general public, without knowing how the new meters work, have no reason to suspect it as being a possible cause of illness, and weeks and months of harmful radiation exposure occurs before the cause is figured out, if it ever is.

In closing, I would like to cite David Carpenter, MD, Public Health Physician in the State of New York, who, having studied electromagnetic radiation and its effects on human health is uniquely qualified in this area. He warns that the meters are not safe, and actually can cause serious

health issues, including electrical hypersensitivity. His brief video at <http://www.electricsense.com/2225/smart-meter-radiation-3-things-you-must-know/> is very good . The human suffering these meters have caused and will cause in the future is unconscionable.

Since when is the utilities' need to control power usage put above the public's right to live in a safe and healthy environment?

Q. Given your sensitivity to voltage transients, also called *dirty electricity*, do you think that you would be able to tolerate on your home a meter that generates dirty electricity, whether or not that meter is a smart meter?

A. Definitely not. I need to be able to keep my analog meter.

Q. What do you feel is a reasonable accommodation to allow you to perform major activities of daily living--working, sleeping, gardening, going to church, shopping, etc.?

A. As long as these Smart Meters are deployed I will have significant issues performing these activities . In the very least I should be able to keep my analog meter, and even neighboring meters be removed if need be. If I move, request that Smart meters be removed and replaced with an analog meter,. If I happen to move to a condo or apartment building, then those Smart meters in the vicinity (even on my neighbors condos/apts) should be removed as well so I can at least live safely and without pain.

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