Collaborative on Health and the Environment

eNewsletter - February 2013

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Mental Health and Environment

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 1 in 5 children under the age of 18 have or have had a serious debilitating mental illness--that is even more than the proportion of children under 18 who have been diagnosed with a learning, developmental or behavioral disorder (which the CDC indicates in 1 in 6). In this light, I was gratified to attend a meeting of the Northern California Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists last month that focused on not only social stressors, but on toxic chemicals. In fact, this may have been the first time chemical contaminants appeared on the primary agenda at any meeting of a psychiatric association across the country. Given the scientific literature associating a number of chemicals--including pesticides, Bisphenol-A, flame retardants, lead and mercury found in products used or ingested every day--with learning and developmental disabilities, it would make sense that at least some of these chemicals could also play a role in mental illness (see: *Scientific and policy statements on environmental agents associated with neurodevelopmental disorders* by Steven G. Gilbert, et al). Afterall, if a chemical can disrupt the neurological system, the result could range from ADHD to depression depending on a number of other factors for that individual.

But why should a psychiatrist or psychotherapist care about possible chemical exposures? Well, if these health professionals understand that certain contaminants might hinder a person's

mental health, then it may be that a patient's suffering could be alleviated by reducing their exposures to certain chemicals. No amount of prescriptions for psychopharmaceuticals nor talk therapy is going to ultimately help if the environment in which a person lives, works, studies or plays is contaminated and thereby contributes to a mental health diagnosis.

The scientific literature on chemicals and mental health is currently sparse, but growing. For example, a study published last year in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* suggested that rats exposed to vinclozolin, a common fungicide used to protect fruits and vegetables, displayed both mental disorders and obesity in the third generation offspring. This epigenetic study conducted by David Crews, professor of psychology and zoology at the University of Texas at Austin, showed that descendants of the exposed rats were less sociable and more anxious than offspring of the unexposed rats. Other studies have indicated that heavy metals have been associated with depression and schizophrenia.

Several years ago, CHE started a mental health and environment working group as part of CHE's Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative. As LDDI outgrew the need for CHE to provide an educational and central organizing role, the mental health group went dormant. We are now pleased to announce that we are reviving that working group, which will now be coordinated by Mary Burke, MD, a child and adolescent psychiatrist who has also been working closely with Mark Miller, MD, MPH, director of the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit at UCSF. She will start posting the emerging science, and we will plan a couple partnership calls in the coming months with researchers in this burgeoning field to discuss their studies. We certainly welcome your participation in this working group listserv as well as your posts on the emerging science in this area of interest. If you would like to join, please email info@healthandenvironment.org.

With warm regards,
Elise Miller, MEd
CHE Director

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CHE Partnership Calls

CHE Partnership call: Chemical Policy: Recent Developments and Controversies: A Discussion with Richard Denison, PhD
Thursday February 14, 2013 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

RSVP for this call

Chemical policy--the overall regulation of industrial chemicals to identify and control known or suspected hazards to human health and to promote safer, more sustainable solutions to their manufacture and marketing--goes to the heart of CHE's mission. Dr. Richard Denison,

longtime senior scientist with the Environmental Defense Fund, is widely acknowledged as one of the leading experts on all aspects of chemical policy. In this wide-ranging discussion we will explore developments in the United States' efforts to update and improve the Toxic Substances Control Act, the state of chemical policy reform elsewhere including Europe's REACH policy, and much more. There will be opportunity for listerners to ask questions after the initial presentation and discussion.

Featured speaker:

Richard Denison, PhD, has 28 years of experience in the environmental arena, specializing in policy, hazard and risk assessment and management for industrial chemicals and nanomaterials.

Richard is a member of the National Academy of Sciences' Standing Committee on Emerging Science for Environmental Health Decisions. Until recently, he was on the NAS Board on Environmental Studies and Toxicology. He serves on the Green Ribbon Science Panel for California's Green Chemistry Initiative.

Richard has testified before various Congressional committees on the need for fundamental reform of US policy toward industrial chemicals and on nanomaterial safety research needs. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences' Committee to Develop a Research Strategy for Environmental, Health and Safety Aspects of Engineered Nanomaterials. He was a member of EDF's team that worked jointly with the DuPont Corporation to develop a framework governing responsible development, production, use and disposal of nanoscale materials.

Richard is a frequent contributor to EDF's *Chemicals and Nanomaterials* blog, where he posts both commentary and detailed analyses of the emerging science and policies affecting chemicals and nanomaterials in the U.S. internationally.

CHE Partnership call: **Transgenerational Effects of Prenatal Exposure to Environmental Obesogens in Rodents**
Wednesday March 20, 2013 at 9:00 am Pacific / noon Eastern

RSVP for this call

This call is hosted by the CHE Diabetes-Obesity Spectrum and CHE Fertility and Reproductive Health Working Groups

Accumulating scientific research suggests that exposure to environmental chemicals early in life can affect the risk of obesity in later life. Chemicals that can increase the risk of obesity are known as "obesogens." Two recently published animal studies take obesogen research one step further: both found that the obesity-related effects of prenatal exposure to environmental chemicals were passed down to the third generation descendants of the exposed animals.

Join CHE to hear the authors of these studies discuss their results. Dr. Bruce Blumberg, who coined the term "obesogen" and has done extensive research on the topic, will discuss his work on prenatal exposure to the obesogen tributyltin and its effects on fat cells in mice and their offspring. Dr. Michael Skinner, who has conducted extensive research on the transgenerational effects of various chemical exposures, will discuss his findings on the transgenerational effects in rats of prenatal exposure to a mixture of BPA and phthalates.

Featured speakers:

Bruce Blumberg, PhD, is a professor in the Department of Developmental and Cell Biology at the University of California, Irvine. Dr. Blumberg's laboratory investigates the role of nuclear hormone receptors in development, physiology and disease. Dr. Blumberg and his

colleagues originated the obesogen hypothesis which holds that developmental exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) can induce permanent physiological changes. EDC exposure elicits epigenetic alterations in gene expression that reprograms the fate of mesenchymal stem cells, predisposing them to become fat cells. Exposed animals develop more and larger fat cells, despite normal diet and exercise, which is likely to lead to weight gain and obesity over time.

Michael Skinner, PhD, is a professor in the School of Biological Sciences at Washington State University. Dr. Skinner's research is focused on the investigation of how different cell types in a tissue interact and communicate to regulate gonadal growth and differentiation, with emphasis in the area of reproductive biology. Recent studies have elucidated several critical events in the initiation of male sex differentiation, testis development and ovarian primordial follicle development. His current research has demonstrated the ability of endocrine disrupting chemicals to promote transgenerational epigenetic disease phenotypes due to abnormal germ line programming in gonadal development.

Special Announcements

CHE's Top 10 Environmental Health Stories, October through December 2012 For our second quarterly Top 10 list, we again selected news articles, journal articles, policy decisions and events that we consider "game-changers" in one way or another: they all have had a significant impact, or are likely to have a significant impact on thinking and action in the field; they've changed the conversation on a topic or expanded the scope of the conversation to a new audience or awareness; and/or they are likely to be pivotal in defining a new trend.

Resources from recent CHE calls:
If you missed any of the following CHE calls, you may listen to MP3 recordings and find supporting materials at the following links:

- February 7, 2013 - Superfund Contaminants and Reproduction
- January 8, 2013 - Breast Cancer and Occupational Health: A Discussion of a Canadian Case-Control Study
- December 13, 2012 - Methods for Screening and Assessing Chemicals

You can subscribe via podcast to receive notifications of new call recordings added to the CHE archives. View a list of past calls and subscribe to the podcast.

CHE Working and Regional Group Updates

Stay in touch with CHE through social media:
Visit CHE's blog to read recent posts including *You Are What Your Great-Grandmother Ate? Transmission of Obesity Across Generations* by Sarah Howard, Coordinator of CHE's Diabetes-Obesity Spectrum Working Group, and CHE's newest quarterly *Top 10 Environmental Health Stories.*

Visit CHE's Facebook page.
Join CHE on Twitter. Update: CHE is now tweeting during our Partnership calls. Join the online conversation by following CHE on Twitter.

CHE Asthma

~ coordinated by Genon Jensen, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ EU Year of Air: strengthening EU legislation to reduce health impacts from air pollution: The 2013 EU Year of Air provides an opportunity to improve public health as the Commission gears up to review EU air legislation and put forward new proposals later this year. HEAL and other stakeholders discussed what needs to be done at an international conference organized by the European Commission (EC), World Health Organisation (WHO) and the US Health Effects Institute.
Read more

~ Indoor air quality: launch of EU health-based ventilation guidelines: On February 20, 2013 the HealthVent consortium will launch health-based ventilation guidelines for Europe. At the event in the European Parliament, participants will also discuss the significance of ventilation guidelines for EU policies on health, air quality, energy, eco-design and buildings and consumer products.
Read more

CHE Breast Cancer

~ coordinated by Michael Lerner and Jeanne Rizzo, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ New report on breast cancer and the environment released: A federal committee of leading breast cancer experts, co-chaired by Breast Cancer Fund President and CEO and CHE Partner, Jeanne Rizzo, released a report, *Breast Cancer and the Environment: Prioritizing Prevention*, on February 12, 2013. This congressionally mandated Interagency Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Coordinating Committee concludes in its report that preventing exposure to environmental risk factors is the most promising path to decrease incidence of the disease, and is the "key to reducing the burden" on individuals, families and society.

In addition to the report's release, The Breast Cancer Fund is co-hosting a public forum in Washington DC this Thursday, February 14th "Breast Cancer Prevention: New Evidence, New Agenda" which will feature Linda Birnbaum (Director, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences), Lynn Goldman (Dean, George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services), Conn Nugent (President, The Heinz Center), Florence Williams (author of Breasts: A Natural and Unnatural History) and Jeanne Rizzo in a spirited and

thought-provoking discussion about the science linking toxic chemicals to breast cancer, and what can be done to turn the tide on this devastating disease.
Event details and RSVP information

CHE Climate Change

~ coordinated by Genon Jensen, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ **Cutting soot mitigates climate change more than previously thought**: Black carbon--otherwise known as soot--has been ranked as the second-largest contributor to climate change, exerting twice as much of an impact as previously thought, according to a new UN sponsored analysis. Cutting soot emissions would have significant benefits for public health and the climate.
Read more

CHE Diabetes-Obesity Spectrum

~ coordinated by Sarah Howard, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ **New study**: A new study from Philadelphia confirms the rising incidence of type 1 diabetes in children, who are now are also developing type 2 diabetes.

~ **Persistent organic pollutants**: This month's issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives* contained a news feature that discusses a review article describing what we know and don't know about how persistent organic pollutants (POPs), when stored in fat tissue, act in the body. Fat tissue, which helps regulate metabolism, accumulates POPs. These chemicals can be chronically released from the tissue into the body and its organs, especially during weight loss. POPs may also affect the fat tissue itself, perhaps a mechanism explaining the associations between metabolic disruption and POP exposures.

~ **Plastics derived EDCs induce epigenetic transgenerational inheritance of obesity, reproductive disease and sperm epimutations**: The current study used doses of a <1% fraction of the oral LD50 dose for bisphenol-A or phthalates DEHP and DBP through intraperitoneal injection. Previous studies have suggested these doses do not produce overt toxicity (changes in litter size, sex ratio, or mean weights) in the F1 generation. The doses selected are considered low for previous rodent exposures but are high in relation to common human exposures. Therefore, the study was designed to examine the potential pharmacological actions of the compounds to influence epigenetic transgenerational inheritance and not designed to do risk assessment analysis. The observations of the current study can now be used to more effectively design risk assessment studies. *PlosOne*.

CHE Working Group on Electromagnetic Fields

~ coordinated by Antoinette Stein, tweil@igc.org

~ **New report on smart meter problems**
The December 2012 report, *Analysis: Smart Meter and Smart Grid Problems--Legislative Proposal* is now available to the public. This 173-page report by activist Nina Beety has extensive referenced information about many of the problems and risks of the Smart Meter program, with information from state, national, and international resources. Originally written for California legislators, this updated report also provides a legislative and regulatory action plan for halting this program, and suggestions for reforming utility regulation so that

the public is protected in the future.
View supplemental documents

CHE Fertility and Reproductive Health

~ coordinated by Karin Russ, karin@healthandenvironment.org

~ New articles and research published in academic and scientific journals

Maternal exposure to particulate air pollution and term birth weight: A multi-country evaluation of effect and heterogeneity. A growing body of evidence has associated maternal exposure to air pollution with adverse effects on fetal growth; however, the existing literature is inconsistent.The objectives of this study were to quantify the association between maternal exposure to particulate air pollution and term birth weight and low birth weight (LBW) across fourteen centers from nine countries and to explore the influence of site characteristics and exposure assessment methods on between-center heterogeneity in this association. Maternal exposure to particulate pollution was associated with low birth weight at term across study populations.

Gestational diabetes and preeclampsia in association with air pollution at levels below current air quality guidelines. Several studies have estimated associations between air pollution and birth outcomes, but few have evaluated potential effects on pregnancy complications. In this study, nitrogen oxide exposure during pregnancy was associated with gestational diabetes and preeclampsia in an area with air pollution levels below current air quality guidelines. *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

Elevated maternal C-reactive protein and autism in a national birth cohort. Autism is a complex neuropsychiatric syndrome with a largely unknown etiology. Inflammation during pregnancy may represent a common pathway by which infections and other insults increase risk for the disorder. Increasing maternal CRP levels, classified as a continuous variable, were significantly associated with autism in offspring. For maternal CRP levels in the highest quintile, compared with the lowest quintile, there was a significant, 43% elevated risk. *Molecular Psychiatry*.

Associations of in utero exposure to perfluorinated alkyl acids with human semen quality and reproductive hormones in adult men. A cohort of 169 adult males (19-21 years old) provided a semen sample that was analysed for sperm concentration, total count, motility, and morphology, and a blood sample that was used to measure reproductive hormones. As a proxy of in utero exposure, PFOA and PFOS were measured in maternal blood samples from pregnancy week 30. The results suggest that in utero exposure to PFOA may affect adult human male semen quality and reproductive hormone levels. *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

Study suggests long-term decline in French sperm quality. New study findings suggest widespread declines in sperm quality in French men between 1989 and 2005, with average sperm counts falling while percentages of abnormally formed sperm rose. These findings are a "serious public health warning," the authors wrote, although they point out the average estimated sperm count is still well above the level deemed normal by the World Health Organization. *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

Sperm counts may have declined in young university students in Southern Spain. Sperm

concentration and total sperm count declined significantly with year of birth in the pooled analysis. Our study suggests that total sperm count and sperm concentration may have declined in young Spanish men over the last decade. *Andrology*.

CHE Healthy Aging Initiative

~ coordinated by Maria Valenti, mvalenti@igc.org

~ CHE's first E-book!: Don't miss the first CHE E-book, *Healthy Environments Across Generations*, highlighting key issues regarding the influences of the chemical, food, built, psychosocial and socioeconomic environments on health across the lifespan. Included are video interviews with experts in many disciplines, as well as recommendations for collaborative initiatives to help promote health, from our gathering at the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) in June, 2012. In addition, check out the 4-minute video summary of the NYAM event on the last page of the E-book.

~ CHE at New Partners for Smart Growth, Kansas City: We collaborated with colleagues from the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program to present a well-received 90-minute panel *Designing Healthy Environments Across Communities and Generations*. CHE's Maria Valenti moderated the panel that included Dr. Ted Schettler, Science and Environmental Health Network and CHE; Angela Russell, Community Engagement Lead on the County Health Rankings project at the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute; Leslie A. Meehan, Director of Healthy Communities for the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; and Dr./CDR Arthur M. Wendel, Team Lead, Healthy Community Design Initiative, National Center for Environmental Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The session was attended by over 100 people, and one participant later wrote that she "found it to be one of the most valuable that I attended."

New Partners for Smart Growth Kansas City 2013 Panelists (L-R) Leslie Meehan, Dr. Ted Schettler, CDR Arthur Wendel, Angela Russell

~ Upcoming conferences and meetings

March 3-6, 2013: Environmental Health 2013: Science and Policy to Protect Future Generations, Boston, Massachusetts. On March 5th, CHE's Healthy Aging Initiative coordinator, Maria Valenti, will present a poster on *Environmental Determinants of Health Across the Lifespan: Opportunities for Health-Promoting Interventions*. Working group coordinators from CHE's Diabetes-Obesity Spectrum (Sarah Howard) and Fertility and Reproductive Health (Karin Russ) Working Groups will also present.

March 12-16, 2013: Aging in America Conference, Chicago. CHE will present two 90-minute panels, including *Safer Chemicals, Healthier Aging: A Prescription for Positive Change* with presenters Medha Chandra, Pesticide Action Network North America; Kathey LaRoche, The Health Councils of Florida; Ted Schettler, SEHN and Collaborative on Health and Environment; and Kathy Sykes, US Environmental Protection Agency. The second panel, *Healthy Environments Across Generations: A Lifecourse Approach to Health* will feature presenters Ted Schettler of SEHN and CHE; Yolanda Savage-Narva, America Walks; Harry (Rick) Moody, AARP; Peter Whitehouse, Intergenerational School; and Jennie Smith, Elders Share the Arts. CHE will also be organizing an Aging and the Environment breakfast with AARP.

CHE Mental Health

~ coordinated by Mary Burke, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ New working group coordinator announced: CHE is pleased to announce that Mary Burke, PhD, with Sutter Pacific Medical Foundation and the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit at the University of California, San Francisco will now coordinate the CHE Mental Health Working Group. The goals of this working group include:

- educating and engaging the mental health community in regards to environmental exposures that may impact mental health and result in psychiatric symptoms;
- developing materials for health professionals and patients regarding how to reduce environmental exposures that may contribute to neurological or behavioral problems; and
- encouraging the mental health community to support chemical policy reform and other efforts to improve environmental health.

The primary activity of this working group is the exchange of new science over the working group's listserv. To participate, please email info@healthandenvironment.org and ask to be added to the Mental Health Working Group.

CHE Regional Working Groups Updates

CHE Alaska

~ coordinated by Pamela Miller, pamela@akaction.org

~ CHE-AK call: Environmental Exposures and Autism: The Interplay Between Genes, Environment and Health Status
Wednesday March 6, 2013 at 9:00 am Alaska / 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

RSVP for this call

Autism is a complex disorder with varying expression in individuals. While genetic research has demonstrated that autism has a strong hereditary component, there is increasing research on the possible role of environmental exposures. Join Dr. Martha Herbert of Harvard Medical School for a discussion of emerging science on how exposures to toxic chemicals may contribute to autism and other health and brain conditions. One way this can occur is through affecting physiology and brain function, starting during early development and continuing throughout the lifespan. Some chemicals that are widely used in consumer products are considered highly likely to contribute to autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders, yet they have not undergone even minimal assessment of potential toxicity. Maureen Swanson of the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) will discuss how you can advocate for policy changes that will protect children from these harmful chemicals.

Featured speakers include:

Dr. Martha Herbert is an Assistant Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, a Pediatric Neurologist at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and an affiliate of the Harvard-MIT-MGH Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging, where she is director of the TRANSCEND Research Program (Treatment Research and Neuroscience Evaluation of Neurodevelopmental Disorders). She received the first Cure Autism Now Innovator Award and is now on the Scientific Advisory Committee of Autism Speaks.

Maureen Swanson is National Coordinator of the Healthy Children Project of the Learning Disabilities Association of America focused on raising awareness of toxic chemicals linked to learning and developmental disabilities, and reducing exposures to toxic chemicals, especially among pregnant women, infants and children.

CHE HEAL

~ coordinated by Lisette Van Vliet, lisette@env-health.org

~ **HEAL announces entries for ''Health and Environment Film Prize''**: HEAL will be awarding a prize for the best health and environment documentary at the 30th International Environmental Film Festival taking place from February 19-26, 2013 in Paris. Issues addressed in the five competing films include: exposure to everyday chemicals (USA); human sensitivity to electromagnetic fields; the harmful side-effects of "carbon credit" projects in poorer countries; the losses to health and well-being from large-scale; genetically-modified agriculture in Argentina; and, the threat to all aspects of health posed by losing traditional rights to land in Australia.
View the film trailers

~ **European Parliament votes on draft law to limit sound levels from cars**: The European Parliament failed to adopt health standards in their vote on a draft EU law to regulate sound levels of motor vehicles, despite solid WHO evidence on how current noise levels in Europe harm human health. Almost half of the people living in Europe are regularly exposed to traffic noise levels that put their health at risk.
Read more

~ **Second EEA 'Late Lessons' report draws on environmental health concerns**: The European Environment Agency's new report, *Late Lessons from Early Warnings: Science, Precaution, Innovation,* demonstrates how action on early warning signs is necessary for protecting health and the environment. The report helps create a better understanding of the ways in which scientific knowledge is financed, created, evaluated, ignored, used and misused which affect timely and precautionary decisions about how to reduce harm. It also describes how precautionary decisions can stimulate innovations. Case studies include the stories behind industrial mercury poisoning; fertility problems caused by pesticides; hormone-disrupting chemicals in common plastics; and pharmaceuticals that are changing ecosystems. The report also considers the warning signs emerging from technologies currently in use, including mobile phones, genetically modified organisms and nanotechnology.
Read the report

~ **European Parliament committee urges quicker action on EDCs**: On January 23, 2013, the EP Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety voted on a draft resolution, sending a clear message to the European Commission to act promptly to protect public health from endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs). The draft resolution says that measures to reduce public exposure to EDCs are a priority. It deals with improvements in the EU regulatory system and addresses how the science should be used in hazard and risk assessment.
Read more

~ **Early-life prevention of chronic diseases**: A leading international health journal, *The Lancet*, featured the need to address early-life and toxic exposures to metals, chemicals and air pollution to help prevent non-communicable diseases. This commentary article was led by a group of scientists and leading health and environmental spokespeople, including several

CHE partners.
Read more

~ Building a pesticide free future: How to get involved in the Pesticide Action Week!
For several years HEAL has been a supporting partner of the international Pesticide Action Week, which takes place annually across the globe. From March 20-30, 2013, the 8th anniversary will have a special focus on endocrine disrupting pesticides, and will aim at showcasing the growing alternatives to pesticides use through discussions, workshops, information stands, exhibitions, etc. In 2012, 750 events took place in 21 countries. This international event aims to raise awareness on the health and environment risks of synthetic pesticides, highlight alternative solutions and build a global grassroots movement for a pesticide-free world.

More information
View the program

CHE Oregon
~ coordinated by Sarah Petras, sarahp@oeconline.org

~ 5th Annual Northwest Environmental Health Conference
The 5th Annual NW Environmental Health Conference will be held March 15, 2013, in Portland, Oregon at Portland State University. This conference will host leading scientists, researchers, and health professionals to continue our robust dialogue on the interrelationship between the environment and health and healthcare practices. The 2013 conference theme is epigenetics: how environmental factors, particularly chemicals in our environment, can change the expression of our genes, impacting health and disease over generations. Epigenetics is a crucial topic, especially in pediatric healthcare. Presentations will also cover a range of topics including environmental justice, environmental toxicants, built environment, and sustainable practices in health care. For more details, please visit the conference website.

CHE Washington
~ coordinated by Aimee Boulanger and Steve Gilbert, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ CHE-WA Children's Environmental Health Working Group meeting: The next meeting of the Children's Environmental Health Working Group will take place on Thursday February 14, 2013 from 9:30 to 11:30 am Pacific.

Karen Griego-West from the HUD Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control will speak to HUD's proposed certification process for communities that create effective partnerships and address multiple housing deficiencies in the areas of health, safety, energy efficiency and housing rehabilitation.

The meeting will take place at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development Office located at 909 First Avenue, Seattle, in room #135C. Please note: the meeting room is located within a federal building. All attendees will need a government-issued ID (driver's license) to enter. You can attend in person or by phone. To participate by phone use the following dial-in information: 1-888-273-3658, access code: 5134826.

To RSVP or for more information, contact Gail Gensler: gail.gensler@kingcounty.gov.

~ 2nd Annual Children's Environmental Health Research Matters Conference
The University of Washington Northwest Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU) and Center for Child Environmental Health Risks Research (CHC) are pleased to announce the 2nd annual *Children's Environmental Health Research Matters Conference* will take place on February 26, 2013 at the University of Washington Husky Union Building. The conference will highlight regional research contributions and explore the connection to policy and practice. There is no registration fee. For more details, please visit the conference website.

~ 2012 State Policy Action Plan to Eliminate Health Disparities released
The action plan includes a new section on Environmental exposures and hazards, including a recommendation encouraging Washington State to aggressively reduce the use of chemicals that are known to or may potentially pose a risk to human health and child development, and prioritize reducing impacts in disproportionately burdened communities.
Read more

Announcements and News Highlights

California's new flammability standard
California is expected to unveil a proposal on Friday that would transform its controversial fire safety standards by dropping a requirement that has led to widespread use of flame retardants in US couches and other furniture. The current standard, adopted in the 1970s, mandates that foam used in furniture cushions must withstand a 12-second exposure to a small, open flame. Under the direction of Gov. Jerry Brown, a state agency will release a new draft rule that manufacturers could meet without flame retardants. *Environmental Health News*.
Read more

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EHN and its sister site, The Daily Climate, offer a wealth of valuable information each day at no cost to subscribers. The daily email subscriptions and the 350,000-item news archive have recently been supplemented by a Facebook page and Twitter feed.

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February 2013 issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives* available online
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February 2013 issue of *Environmental Factor* available online
Read more

CHE maintains a news feed of environmental health related news announcements and events collected from a multitude of sources on CHE's website.

Reports, Resources and Other Updates

New report: Toward Healthy Schools 2015
The Coalition for Healthier Schools has researched and assessed state-by-state data and policies on environmental conditions at schools and risks to children's health, compiling them into a single, unique resource that painted a deeply disturbing picture, in which vulnerable children endure unhealthy schools.
Read more

CHE lists hundred of reports, books, videos, databases and other resources in a searchable Portal to Science on CHE's website.

Thank you for taking the time to read the latest about CHE. As always, we welcome your questions and suggestions. Please direct comments to Elise Miller, Director of CHE, at elise@healthandenvironment.org.

Best wishes,
Elise Miller, MEd, Director
Steve Heilig, Director of Public Health and Education at San Francisco Medical Society and CHE
Erika Sanders, Administrative Coordinator

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