



Initiative on Children's Environmental Health of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment



Biweekly Bulletin December 30, 2009

This bulletin lists upcoming events plus recent announcements, news and journal articles, calls for proposals and other items related to children's environmental health. They are archived and searchable on our website:

http://www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/childrens_health/bulletins.

ICEH Highlights

New Resource: Climate Change and Children's Health

With several recent reports and statements regarding the impact of climate change on health, the Initiative on Children's Environmental Health is excited to provide a new resource page on Climate Change and Children's Health:

www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/childrens_health/climate This page lays out why children are especially vulnerable, what health impacts may be caused or exacerbated by climate change, and actions that we can take as individuals and as groups. A resources section also links to additional information. This new resource will be updated as new information becomes available.

Announcements

A daily news feed with articles and announcements is available on CHE's website:

<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/news/announce>.

EPA strengthens transboundary hazardous waste shipment regulations.

The final rule announced today aligns EPA's hazardous waste import/export/transit shipment regulations with the procedures of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an international consortium that comprises 30 countries including the United States.

U.S. EPA releases annual enforcement results and mapping tool.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released enforcement results for fiscal year 2009, and has developed a new Web-based tool and interactive map that allows the public to get detailed information by location about the enforcement actions taken at approximately 4,600 facilities.

EPA adopts strong standards for large ships to curb air pollution.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has finalized a rule setting tough engine and fuel standards for large U.S.- flagged ships, a major milestone in the agency's coordinated strategy to slash harmful marine diesel emissions.

Call for comments: EPA proposes to expand the Lead Monitoring Network.

EPA is proposing to require air quality monitoring around sources that emit a half ton or more of lead a year, lowering the current threshold from one ton a year to include more sources. The proposal also modifies the current requirement for monitoring in larger urban areas.

EPA releases first-ever baseline study of U.S. lakes.

The draft study, which rated the condition of 56 percent of the lakes in the United States as good and the remainder as fair or poor, marked the first time EPA and its partners used a nationally consistent approach to survey the ecological and water quality of lakes.

[Call for proposals: Community-Based Participatory Research.](#)

The Northwest Health Foundation invites innovative, community-driven research proposals that seek to reduce the burden of chronic diseases using community-based participatory research approaches. Concept papers are due February 1, 2010.

[EPA seeks applications for environmental community grants.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is making \$2 million available in 2010 to reduce pollution at the local level through the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program.

[Job opening: Chicago, Illinois.](#)

The Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC) is seeking a Communications and Public Policy Analyst to support the organization's federal, state and local policy initiatives and programs.

Upcoming Events

Online Calendar. These and more upcoming events are listed in a searchable calendar: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/cgi-bin/searchevents.cgi>

1) EPA Public Hearing on Sulfur Dioxide

Tuesday January 5, 2010

10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Atlanta, Georgia

at the Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center, 61 Forsyth Street SW

Sponsor: US Environmental Protection Agency

Based on its review of the air quality criteria for oxides of sulfur and the primary national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) for oxides of sulfur as measured by sulfur dioxide (SO₂), EPA is proposing to revise the primary SO₂ NAAQS to provide requisite protection of public health with an adequate margin of safety. Comments will be limited to five minutes, but attendees can leave behind longer, written comments. Those who cannot attend the meeting can also submit written comments through [Regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Tricia Crabtree, crabtree.tricia@epa.gov

2) Lead Poisoning and Pregnancy

Tuesday January 12, 2010

10:00 a.m. - noon

Bronx, New York

at WHEDCO, 50 E. 168th Street (between Walton and Gerard Avenues), second floor

Sponsor: Bronx Health Link

Pregnant women in the Bronx are at risk for lead poisoning. For the woman, it can lead to high blood pressure, muscle and joint pain. For the baby, lead can cause premature births, low birth weight and learning problems later in life. This training will cover 1) the specific health dangers to both mother and child; 2) the tests for blood levels of lead, and the various treatment options; 3) community initiatives to educate residents about prevention and treatment approaches; and 4) how to join advocacy efforts to push for policy changes to reduce lead dangers. This training is for health providers and consumers.

Price: free, but preregistration is requested

Contact: Bronx Health Link, 718-590-2648

3) CHE-Fertility Call: Disinfectants Overkill

Thursday January 14, 2010

10:00 a.m. Pacific / 1:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment Fertility and Reproductive Health Working Group

This call will highlight the recently released Women's Voices for the Earth report, [Disinfectants Overkill](#). Featured speakers include Erin Switalski, executive director of Women's Voices for the Earth; Alexandra Gorman Scranton, MS, director of Science and research for Women's Voices for the Earth; Patricia Hunt, PhD, Meyer Distinguished Professor at the School of Molecular Biosciences, Washington State University; and Ann Blake, PhD, Environmental & Public Health Consulting.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Julia Varshavsky, julia@healthandenvironment.org

4) IAQ Tools for Schools National Symposium

Thursday through Saturday, January 14 - 16, 2010

Washington, DC

at the Grand Hyatt Hotel

Sponsor: US Environmental Protection Agency

The EPA hosts its annual Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools (IAQ TfS) National Symposium to bring together past, present and future leaders in protecting and improving IAQ in our nation's schools. The IAQ TfS Program is a nationwide initiative to help school officials assess, resolve, and prevent IAQ problems, and to reduce exposure to asthma triggers in school facilities. While school officials, administrators, facilities and operations personnel, teachers, parents, and students traditionally attend, the Symposium is open to anyone with an interest in IAQ in schools.

Price: unknown

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: 703-842-5596

5) Thailand "Reverse Brain Drain Project": Conference on Cadmium in Food and Human Health

Friday through Sunday, January 15 - 17, 2010

Phitsanulok, Thailand

at the Topland Hotel, 68/33 Akathodsarod St. A.Muang

Sponsor: Reverse Brain Drain/National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), the Commission for Higher Education (CHE), Perkin Elmer, Bangkok Equipment and Chemical, Gibthai, Bio-Active

This conference is a step towards enhancement of research and research training in Thailand in the area of environmental health along with the sensor technological innovation for on-site use in monitoring of environmental pollution. TH-RBD-CCFH will cover three main themes: health effects, case studies, and management & risk minimization. It is designed to be inclusive and thus it will consider also other toxic metals of local concerns which may include lead and mercury. All interested individuals are encouraged to participate. Thai-to-English translation will also be made available to enhance information exchange on local environmental health issues.

Price: \$150

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: thrbd.ccfh@gmail.com

6) CHE Science Cafe Call: A Conversation with Elizabeth Grossman, Author of *Chasing Molecules*

Tuesday January 19, 2010

11:00 a.m. Pacific / 2:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

Known for her book *High Tech Trash*, an exposé of the electronic waste industry, Elizabeth Grossman's new book, *Chasing Molecules: Poisonous Products, Human Health, and the Promise of Green Chemistry*, reveals the dangers and the extent of the chemicals that are found in everyday products such as BPA, perfluorinated compounds, brominated flame retardants and phthalates, and offers up hope for a future without them. With *Chasing Molecules*, Grossman reveals that we can do better; that we can make materials that we have come to rely on with chemicals that have been tested to be safe and are in fact "benign by design." In a radical departure from how synthetic chemistry has been practiced, Grossman suggests that green chemistry should be used to create new materials for use in everything from sippy cups to carpets.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: CHE, info@healthandenvironment.org

7) CHE Partnership Call: Upstream: Complex Chemical Contributors to Thyroid Function and the Potential Impacts on Policy

Thursday January 21, 2010

10:00 a.m. Pacific / 1:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

This call will involve a discussion of the complex array of chemical contributors to thyroid function. Presenters will cover chemicals linked to thyroid function, upstream biological impacts to thyroid hormones during pregnancy that can lead to a variety of health problems later in life, and the policy implications given all the complexity. In particular, speakers will address perchlorate, which inhibits the uptake of iodide into the thyroid gland, an essential part of the process of making thyroid hormone. Small changes in maternal thyroid hormone are associated with significant decreases in IQ.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: CHE, 360-331-7904 or info@healthandenvironment.org

News and Journal Articles

[Plants can break down persistent pollutants.](#)

Tuesday, December 29, 2009

New research reports that the enzymes in the roots of a poplar tree can alter the chemical structure of a common type of PCB pollutant, rendering it less harmful than the original chemical. Environmental Health News.

[Pressure rises to stop antibiotics in agriculture.](#)

Tuesday, December 29, 2009

Researchers say the overuse of antibiotics in humans and animals has led to a plague of drug-resistant infections that killed more than 65,000 people in the U.S. last year -- more than prostate and breast cancer combined. Associated Press.

[See related articles: [Disinfectants 'train' superbugs to resist antibiotics](#) and [Malaria and other diseases coming back worldwide in new and more deadly forms](#)]

[Childhood exposure to tobacco smoke raises risk of emphysema.](#)

Tuesday, December 29, 2009

Scientists have long thought that people who quit smoking recover some of their lung function and health. That may be true, but it appears children exposed to secondhand smoke are not so lucky. Los Angeles Times, California.

[See related articles: [15 cigarettes: All it takes to harm genes](#), [Cancer genomes reveal risks of sun and smoke](#) and [Smoking ban in Duluth low-income housing promotes health](#)]

[Israelis' cancer is linked to Holocaust.](#)

Tuesday, December 29, 2009

A new study has found significantly higher cancer rates among European Jews who immigrated to Israel after the Holocaust than among those who left Europe either before or during World War II. New York Times.

[What happens when the microbes that keep us healthy disappear?](#)

Monday, December 28, 2009

The human body has more microbial than human cells, but this rich diversity of micro-helpers that has evolved along with us is undergoing a rapid shift--one that may have very macro health consequences. Scientific American. 28 December 2009.

[Toxic metals may influence autism severity.](#)

Monday, December 28, 2009

The severity of a child's autism coincided with the levels of toxic metals excreted in their urine after treatment with a metals removal therapy, finds a study published in the Journal of Toxicology. Environmental Health News.

[See a related article: [Sharp rise in autism, but causes are unclear](#)]

[Labeling standards for caffeine.](#)

Monday, December 28, 2009

Caffeine turns up in expected places, in unexpected amounts. A lack of labeling guidelines leaves many consumers in the dark about just how much caffeine the products contain. Los Angeles Times, California.

[See a related article: [Coffee may have health benefits and may not pose health risks for many people](#)]

[Studies: Curbing warming saves lives.](#)

Sunday, December 27, 2009

Slashing carbon dioxide emissions could save millions of lives, mostly by reducing preventable deaths from heart and lung diseases, according to studies released recently and published in a special issue of *The Lancet* British medical journal. Statesman Journal, Oregon.

[See a related article: [Disproportionate effects of global warming and pollution on disadvantaged communities](#)]

[Katrina survivors battle a new foe: drywall.](#)

Sunday, December 27, 2009

The crisis of contaminated drywall may have first come to light in Florida, but records show that at least 60 million pounds of Chinese drywall came into the Port of New Orleans beginning in January 2006, enough to build 6,500 average-sized homes. Sarasota Herald-Tribune, Florida.

[Some disease prevention measures can pay off.](#)

Sunday, December 27, 2009

The majority of preventive measures happen in the community and workplace. And here the cost-benefit balance sheet is very different, some studies say. Antismoking campaigns and exercise programs can yield major savings. Los Angeles Times, California.

[See a related article: [Healthcare: Prevention efforts can be costly](#)]

[A toxic waste.](#)

Sunday, December 27, 2009

More than 500 brownfields dot the Indianapolis landscape from its urban core to the county's outer stretches. For residents, they bring a host of safety and health concerns, as well as a pervasive pessimism. Indianapolis Star, Indiana.

[Assessing risks from bisphenol-A.](#)

Sunday, December 27, 2009

Evaluating human health risks from endocrine disruptors such as BPA is difficult, but animal studies suggest trouble is afoot. American Scientist.

[See related articles: [Waiting on science to say if plastic chemical is safe](#) and [Polyethylene terephthalate may yield endocrine disruptors](#)]

[AP Enterprise: Feds mull regulating drugs in water.](#)

Saturday, December 26, 2009

Federal regulators under President Barack Obama have sharply shifted course on long-standing policy toward pharmaceutical residues in the nation's drinking water, taking a critical first step toward regulating some of the contaminants while acknowledging they could threaten human health. Associated Press.

[Do multivitamins curb kids' allergy risk?](#)

Saturday, December 26, 2009

Starting multivitamins at the age of 4 or younger may curb the risk of food allergies and seasonal or inhaled allergies. Reuters Health.

[Cola drinking linked to diabetes in pregnancy.](#)

Saturday, December 26, 2009

Drinking lots of sugar-sweetened cola may increase women's likelihood of developing diabetes during pregnancy, a condition known as gestational diabetes, new research shows. Reuters Health.

[Two of three California homes had excessive formaldehyde levels.](#)

Friday, December 25, 2009

Two-thirds of single-family homes built in California in recent years had substandard indoor air quality and excessive formaldehyde levels, partly because residents didn't open their windows for ventilation, according to a new state report. USA Today.

[Insecticide exposure tied to increased risks for arthritis and lupus.](#)

Thursday, December 24, 2009

Regular or long-term exposure to consumer insecticides may increase the risk of developing autoimmune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. Arthritis Today.

[See related articles: [EPA announces plan to require disclosure of secret pesticide ingredients](#) and [More herbicide use reported on genetically modified crops](#)]

[Mercury levels considered safe pose a risk to the heart.](#)

Thursday, December 24, 2009

Researchers in Japan have found that eating fish tainted with methylmercury -- at levels currently considered safe for human exposure -- can lead to a slightly unstable resting heart rate. Over time, these types of changes are associated with an elevated risk of developing coronary heart disease. Environmental Health News.

[Systematic review of epidemiological studies on health effects associated with management of municipal solid waste.](#)

Thursday, December 24, 2009

For populations living within two kilometres of landfills there was limited evidence of an increased risk of congenital anomalies and low birth weight with excess risk of 2 percent and 6 percent, respectively. Environmental Health Journal.

[See a related article: [Expansion of West's largest toxic-waste dump near Kettleman City is approved](#)]

[Environmental fears over U.S. shale gas drilling.](#)

Thursday, December 24, 2009

The boom in shale natural gas drilling has raised hopes the United States will be able to rely on the cleaner-burning fuel to meet future energy needs. But concerns about its impact on water quality could slow the industry's ability to tap this bountiful resource. Reuters.

[See related articles: [Drill wastewater disposal options in NY report have problems of](#)

[their own, Hydrofracking for gas and Concerns spreading about air quality from gas drilling\]](#)

Toxic releases decrease nationwide.

Wednesday, December 23, 2009

The TRI provides communities with valuable knowledge and encourages facilities to reduce their releases of toxic chemicals into the environment through process design, source reduction, or other pollution prevention measures. Environmental News Network. [See related articles: [Dubious distinction](#) and [Mercury emissions rise in Illinois](#)]

The city that said 'no.'

Wednesday, December 23, 2009

Across the country, studies have increasingly shown that low-income, minority communities endure a disproportionate share of poor living conditions and contamination. Maywood, California, has become a 'culture of participation' to help solve its pollution problems, particularly with contaminated water. Christian Science Monitor. [See a related article: [Poverty shortens healthy years](#)]

Dietary estrogens have little effect on cancer risk.

Tuesday, December 22, 2009

Dietary "phytoestrogens" -- plant substances that have weak estrogen-like activity -- have little impact on the risks of developing hormone-sensitive cancers like breast and prostate cancer or colorectal cancers, new research suggests. Reuters Health. [See related articles: [Experts warn of cancer linked to certain herbs](#) and [Eating our way to nirvana](#)]

No link seen between acetaminophen, birth defects.

Tuesday, December 22, 2009

Researchers found no evidence linking mothers' acetaminophen use in the first trimester to a heightened risk of any birth defect. In fact, women who took the medication to treat a first-trimester fever had a lower risk of certain birth defects. Reuters Health. [See a related article: [Prenatal baby aspirin not harmful to infants: study](#)]

Study suggests link between occupation and birth defects.

Tuesday, December 22, 2009

Women in certain professions face a high risk of having children with physical problems, research shows. Women working as janitors faced the highest risk of giving birth to children with certain defects, while teachers faced the lowest risk. Toronto Globe and Mail, Ontario. [See a related article: [Chefs lead on unhealthy habits](#)]

Living in a less toxic world -- an interview with Heather Sarantis of Commonweal

Monday, December 21, 2009

Health problems including asthma, cancer and infertility affect more than 100 million people in the U.S., about one third of the population. Examiner.com.

Cell phone-cancer link remains unclear, but some scientists urge caution.

Monday, December 21, 2009

U.S. cell phone use has quadrupled over the last decade; meanwhile, brain cancer remains as rare as ever. Nevertheless, nagging worries that cell phones cause brain cancer continue to gain traction. St. Petersburg Times, Florida.

Drinking problems.

Sunday, December 20, 2009

Like many water utilities across the U.S., disinfectants like chlorine are added to the supply to remove life-threatening microbes. But when the disinfectants interact with organic material that seeps into drinking water, new chemicals are formed that could be a potential health hazard. Glens Falls Post Star, New York.

Dry-cleaning chemical spills require cleanup throughout Rochester area.

Sunday, December 20, 2009

From Brockport to Penfield, from Main Street in Rochester to Monroe Avenue in Brighton,

the local map is stained with more than a dozen spots where dry cleaning went bad. Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, New York.

[See a related article: [Ikea Canada launches \\$8-million lawsuit over alleged soil contamination](#)]

[India's killer cookers a recipe for disaster.](#)

Sunday, December 20, 2009

The World Health Organisation estimates pollutants from chulhas are responsible for the premature deaths of more than 440,000 Indian children each year, and 44,000 women, mostly through chronic respiratory diseases. Sydney Australian, Australia.

[Lawsuit claims tannery sludge damaged Missouri farmland.](#)

Saturday, December 19, 2009

At least two dozen northwest Missouri landowners have filed a lawsuit against the former and current owners of a St. Joseph tannery that provided chromium-tainted sludge for use as fertilizer on their farm ground. Associated Press.

[Industry to phase out decaBDE.](#)

Saturday, December 19, 2009

Following negotiations with the EPA, three companies have agreed to phase out production and sale of the brominated flame retardant decabromodiphenyl ether for most uses within three years. Chemical & Engineering News.

[Dish results released.](#)

Friday, December 18, 2009

Sixty-one percent of the health problems reported by residents in a survey are associated with the toxic air emissions detected here, according to an independent analysis released Thursday. Denton Record-Chronicle, Texas.

[See a related article: [People living among ash found ill](#)]

[CPSC delays lead testing enforcement.](#)

Friday, December 18, 2009

The Consumer Product Safety Commission voted to delay for another year -- until February 2011 -- the certification and independent third-party testing rules on the amount of lead allowed in children's products. Those rules were set to kick-in last February but have been delayed twice. Associated Press.

[See related articles: [CPSC making safety reforms during busy month for recalls](#); [Half of kids jewelry tested contains pure lead](#); [Health Canada: Alert over levels of lead in children's cosmetics](#); [Make-up 'peril' for teen girls](#); [Many thrift stores wary of used toys, children's clothes](#); [Officials: Beware of dangerous toy imports](#); [Miami customs agents seize dangerous toys from China](#); [N.J. lead poisoning proposal could save \\$27M in social costs, study says](#) and [Oak Brook toymaker RC2 Corp. to pay \\$1.25 million fine over lead in paint](#)]

[Childhood brain power tied to adult heart health.](#)

Thursday, December 17, 2009

People who had greater intellectual ability as children may have fewer heart disease risk factors in middle-age, a new study suggests. Early environment -- starting in the womb -- may affect both a child's intellectual ability and long-term disease risks. Reuters Health.

[See a related article: [Premature birth tied to later behavioral problems](#)]

[Millions at risk as East Africa rains fail, Oxfam says.](#)

Thursday, December 17, 2009

Rains across swathes of East Africa have failed for the sixth year in a row, leaving millions of people facing hardship, Oxfam has warned. The charity says Somalia's drought is the worst for 20 years, and November rainfall was less than 5% of normal in parts of Kenya and Ethiopia. BBC.

[That tap water is legal but may be unhealthy.](#)

Thursday, December 17, 2009

The 35-year-old federal law regulating tap water is so out of date that the water

Americans drink can pose what scientists say are serious health risks -- and still be legal. New York Times.

[See related articles: [Bathed and confused: Reno water](#) and [Nebraska, other states' water worries flow in watchdog analysis](#)]

Heavy metal: Some airborne particles pose more dangers than others

Thursday, December 17, 2009

A growing body of research -- much of it in New York City -- suggests that breathing nickel and other metals may put acute stress on the lungs and heart, resulting in illnesses and deaths at particulate levels below national standards. Environmental Health News.

[See related articles: [Fine particulate air pollution and its components in association with cause-specific emergency admissions](#), [Traffic cops at higher cancer risk](#), [Long-term exposure to ambient air pollution and risk of hospitalization with community-acquired pneumonia in older adults](#), [Residential traffic exposure and pregnancy-related outcomes: a prospective birth cohort study](#), [Impaired cognition in elderly women linked to traffic pollution](#), [Air pollution may lessen asthma inhaler benefits](#), [Pollution report a breath of fresh air for county](#) and [Ozone pollution 'poses serious risk' to environmental health](#)]

FDA investigates radiation overdose at hospitals.

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

More than 300 patients may have received an overdose of radiation from a special type of CT scan used to image the brain. All Things Considered, NPR.

Study: Airport noise increases risk of strokes.

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

Living under a flight path can seriously damage your health. German researchers have discovered that people who are exposed to jet noise have a substantially increased risk of stroke, high blood pressure and heart disease. Time Magazine.

26,500 school cafeterias lack required inspections.

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

More than 8,500 schools failed to have their kitchens inspected at all last year, and another 18,000 fell short of a requirement in the Child Nutrition Act that calls for cafeteria inspections at least twice a year. USA Today.

Potency issues prompt recall of swine-flu vaccine.

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

Sanofi Aventis SA is recalling about 800,000 doses of children's H1N1 vaccine after tests showed some batches didn't meet potency standards, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday. Wall Street Journal.

[See related articles: [The long-term evidence for vaccines](#) and [Advisers on vaccines often have conflicts, report says](#)]

The Collaborative on Health and the Environment offers this information as a service but does not endorse any of the events, articles or announcements.

Companion bulletins are available for different audiences:

- For those interested in environmental health as it relates to learning and developmental disabilities: <http://www.iceh.org/LDDIbulletins.html>
- For those interested in environmental health in Washington State and the Pacific Northwest: <http://washington.chenw.org/bulletins.html>

While there is overlap with this bulletin, there are some events and announcements unique to those bulletins.

If you would like to join the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE) and the ICEH Working Group, please complete the application on the CHE website: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/application> Joining CHE means receiving up to four email messages a month from the CHE National listserv. CHE costs nothing to join

and the benefit is shared information and opportunities for further engagement, if you choose. Be sure to mark that you want to join the Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Working Group at the bottom of the application.

Nancy Snow
Collaborative on Health and the Environment

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