



Collaborative on Health and the Environment

eNewsletter - May 2010



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President's Cancer Panel Report on Environmental Contributors to Cancer

Rarely has anyone told me that they felt teary-eyed with joy when reading a newly published government report. But at least three prominent environmental health leaders I know said they felt just that when reviewing the [President's Cancer Panel report, *Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk: What We Can Do Now*](#), released last week. The report provides a multi-layered analysis of over 450 scientific studies linking chemical exposures to various forms of cancer and suggests action steps we can take on both personal and policy levels. Its publication garnered immediate press attention, with articles in the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and other media sources ([read related media](#)). Some cancer experts, including those representing the American Cancer Society who provided testimony to the PCP along with a number of respected academics and industry leaders, however, have expressed concern that the report overstates certain findings. Those discussions will no doubt continue to take place.

What should not be lost in any debate on these issues, however, is the report's unequivocal recommendation that chemical exposures need to be considered along with lifestyle choices, genetics and other factors that may contribute to cancer - otherwise, we will only continue to see unacceptably high rates of childhood leukemia, breast cancer, prostate cancer, brain tumors and many other cancers that can shatter the lives of so many families and communities and add huge costs to the health care system. In short, this report brings to the forefront why the potential health impact of certain chemicals-chemicals that are now ubiquitous in the everyday products we use, in our food and water, and even in our own bodies - need to be an integral part of any primary prevention research and public health initiative on cancer.

Other notable aspects of this report include the emphasis on taking precautionary action in the face of potential threats to public health, the promotion of new worker safety standards, and the inclusion of military activities. In addition, it makes a persuasive economic case for why we need to develop alternatives and prioritize green chemistry as well as a human rights case for focusing not just on reducing the number of deaths but on improving the quality of life, particularly for those in disproportionately impacted communities. Finally, this report is unusually compelling and comprehensive because it offers clear steps we can take on multiple levels to reduce the incidence of cancer. In short, it calls for nothing less than a national cancer prevention strategy - inclusive of all potential contributing factors - that is wholly embraced by our communities and fully supported by the federal government, the health sector, and industry.

To learn more about this seminal report and its implications, please join us for our [CHE](#)

[partnership call on Tuesday, May 18th.](#)

With warm regards,
Elise Miller, MEd
Director
Collaborative on Health and the Environment

***This essay is available on [CHE's blog](#) for comment and further discussion.

CHE Partnership Calls and Special Events

Special note:

To assist CHE in better evaluating and planning Partnership calls CHE will send out a short survey to all call participants after each call. If you participate in an upcoming CHE call, please look for the post-call survey, and help CHE plan for future teleconferences and events.

The President's Cancer Panel Report: "Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk: What We Can Do Now" Tuesday May 18, 2010 at 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern

The President's Cancer Panel (the Panel), a three-person, federal advisory committee appointed by the President, was established in 1971 with the passage of the National Cancer Act. The Panel is charged with monitoring the development and execution of the activities of the National Cancer Program. Each year, the Panel holds at least four public meetings to solicit input from a variety of stakeholders and submits an annual report to the President of the United States with recommendations focused on improving the National Cancer Program.

The Panel's latest report, Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk What We Can Do Now, was released on May 5, 2010. [Download the report](#) (select the link for Annual Report for 2008-2009)

Join CHE on **May 18th at 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern** for a CHE national partnership call (*note: this call will last one hour and fifteen minutes*) to hear from representatives of the President's Cancer Panel and learn more about the report's findings and key recommendations. We will also hear scientists' reactions to the report.

Featured speakers will include:

- **Abby B. Sandler, PhD**, Executive Secretary, President's Cancer Panel, Chief, Institute Review Office, National Cancer Institute
- **Richard Clapp, DSc, MPH**, is Professor of Environmental Health, Boston University School of Public Health.
- **Julia G. Brody, PhD**, Executive Director, Silent Spring Institute
- Nancy Buermeyer, Senior Policy Strategist, Breast Cancer Fund

[RSVP for this Call](#)

The call will be moderated by Elise Miller, Director, CHE. The call will last one hour and fifteen minutes and will be recorded for archival purposes.

Special Event Announcement CHE Co-hosts Children First Symposium: Promoting Ecological Health for the Whole Child October 1, 2010 Mission Bay Conference Center, University of California, San Francisco

Pediatric Integrative Medicine embraces a holistic, whole-child approach, specifically examining the context - the ecology - in which optimal health and wellness is

promoted. This groundbreaking one-day symposium will highlight a range of interacting factors that influence child health and development, including nutrition, education, socio-economic status, exposures to toxic chemicals, and access to preventative health care. Hosted by CHE, The Whole Child Center and the UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine.

Registration is now open, early bird rate only \$35 (until July 1st)

[Read more](#), including a complete symposium description and list of speakers

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:

- May 11, 201 - [The Information Age and EMF/RF Illness](#)
- May 4, 2010 - [CHE Cafe call with Annie Leonard, *The Story of Stuff*](#)
- April 19, 2010 - [Evaluating the Impact of Cumulative Stressors on Health](#)
- March 15, 2010 - [A Conversation with Dr. Linda Birnbaum, Director, NIEHS](#)

And of course, you can always explore our [archived resources](#)

CHE Working and Regional Group Updates

Visit **CHE's Blog** at <http://ourhealthandenvironment.wordpress.com/>

CHE's [Facebook page](#)

Working Group Highlights:

CHE is proud to highlight each month new and exciting working group efforts, which continue to draw the link between health and the environment.

This month:

~ CHE-LDDI is pleased to announce that Erika Hagensen, MSW, MPHc, will become LDDI's new half-time national coordinator as of May 10, 2010.

[Read more](#)

~ CHE-Fertility is pleased to announce the availability of the newly updated CHE-Fertility Online Abstracts Library, a representative collection of the peer-reviewed scientific literature related to fertility, reproductive health, and the environment.

[Read more](#)

CHE-Fertility

~ coordinated by Julia Varshavsky, CHE Program Associate,
julia@healthandenvironment.org

~ **CHE-Fertility call: Elevating the Issue: The Emerging CDC National Action Plan on Infertility:** Please join CHE on **Tuesday May 25, 2010 at 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern** for this upcoming CHE-Fertility call that will highlight the emerging Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Action Plan on the Prevention, Detection and Management of Infertility. Speakers on this call will cover the background and impetus for this national action plan, what is currently happening among the working groups, and what the opportunities are for involvement by CHE colleagues in this important endeavor.

[RSVP for this call](#)

This call will be moderated by Steve Heilig, MPH, Director of Public Health and Education for the San Francisco Medical Society and CHE.

Featured speakers and commentators include:

- **Maurizio Macaluso, MD, DrPH**, Chief, Women's Health and Fertility Branch, Division of Reproductive Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- **Linda Giudice, MD, PhD, MSc**, Professor and Chair, Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences; The Robert B. Jaffe, MD, Endowed Professor in the Reproductive Sciences; Director, Center for Research on Origins and Biological Consequences of Human Infertility; Director, UCSF Women's Reproductive Health Research Career Development Center; University of California, San Francisco
- **Steven Schrader, PhD**, Leader, Reproductive Health Assessment Team, Biomonitoring and Health Assessment Branch, Division of Applied Research and Technology, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
- **Barbara Collura**, Executive Director, RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association

~ **Sarah Dunagan, Staff Scientist, Silent Spring Institute contributed, "Fueling the Fire: How Flame Retardants Might Be Doing More Harm Than Good" to CHE's blog.** Following the CHE Fertility teleconference on April 15, Flame Retardants: Emerging Science and Policy Considerations, Sarah Dunagan, the call's moderator contributed a post to CHE's blog to further explore flame retardants, environmental health and human health.
[Read the blog](#)

Fertlibrary

~ **Newly Updated CHE-Fertility Online Abstracts Library**
 CHE-Fertility is pleased to announce the availability of the newly updated CHE-Fertility Online Abstracts Library, a representative collection of the peer-reviewed scientific literature related to fertility, reproductive health, and the environment. The library includes nontechnical summaries of scientific studies that link environmental exposures to infertility/reduced fertility in addition to other reproductive health problems such as preterm birth, hypospadias, endometriosis, low sperm count, premature ovarian failure, prostate cancer, and others.
[Visit the Abstracts Library](#)

~ **Congressional Briefing - Tackling Toxics: Reforming Chemical Policy and Improving Reproductive Health.** The Center for American Progress co-hosted this event on April 27, 2010 with the Reproductive Health Technologies Project and the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals. The event featured Daryl Ditz of the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families Coalition along with Congresswoman Diana DeGette (D-CO). 75 advocates, science groups, policymakers, and congressional staffers gathered to hear why chemical policy reform is a reproductive health issue.
[Watch the video recording](#)

CHE-LDDI

~ coordinated by Erika Hagensen, ehagensen@healthandenvironment.org and Elise Miller, CHE Director, elise@healthandenvironment.org

ErikaH

~ **CHE-LDDI is pleased to announce that Erika Hagensen, MSW, MPH, will become LDDI's new half-time national coordinator as of May 10, 2010.** Erika has a great deal of experience that is relevant not only to LDDI, but to CHE's work as a whole. Notably she has worked extensively in the disabilities sector, including serving as the executive director of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation. She has a master's in social work (MSW) with concentrations in policy and clinical work, and has almost completed her master's in public health (MPH). Though she recently moved to North Carolina, she originally comes from the Pacific Northwest and has recently spent a number of years in the Washington, DC, area.

Erika has participated in LDDI over the last couple years, including attending the leadership meeting on disabilities and environmental health hosted by AAIDD in December 2008 and LDDI's environmental health policy training meeting held in Baltimore, Maryland, in January 2009. Given Erika's ongoing leadership in the disability field, as well as her increasing interest in environmental health, LDDI is delighted she has agreed to join us.

After truly exceptional service as the national coordinator of LDDI over the past year, Laura Abulafia is leaving the position to pursue some personal endeavors. She plans, however, to remain a very active part of LDDI through her ongoing work with AAIDD's Environmental Health Initiative. Laura looks forward to working with Erika, Elise Miller, CHE's director, and the rest of LDDI's membership to accomplish its goals, including promoting the "Mind, Disrupted" biomonitoring project, fostering even stronger leadership among LDD organizations on chemical policy reform, and helping develop new educational materials as needed on environmental health and disability for lay audiences, media and policymakers.

To contact Laura Abulafia, please use her AAIDD email (laura@aaidd.org) and delete her 'healthandenvironment.org' email address from your files. To contact Erika Hagensen, please use her new LDDI email address, which is ehagensen@healthandenvironment.org

~ **AAIDD Annual Meeting June 9 - 11, 2010:** The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) will host its annual meeting in Providence, Rhode Island. Two sessions on environmental health are on the agenda, including one session focused on the "Mind, Disrupted' biomonitoring project in which a number of colleagues in LDDI participated over the past year. Two people who were biomonitoring and featured in the Mind, Disrupted report - Laura Abulafia with AAIDD and Rob Fletcher with the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD) - will speak about their experiences and why this kind of study underscores the need for chemical policy reform.

~ **Autism Society of America Meeting July 7-10, 2010:** The Autism Society (ASA) will have its 41st annual national meeting at the Hyatt Regency in Dallas, Texas. LDDI's "Mind, Disrupted" biomonitoring report will be featured as will other environmental contributors to disabilities. Please stay tuned in for more information on this important meeting or contact Donna Ferullo from ASA: dferullo@autism-society.org.

CHE Regional Working Groups Updates

CHE Alaska

~ coordinated by Pam Miller, pkmiller@akaction.net

~ **CHE-AK call: Environmental Links to Breast Cancer and Opportunities for Prevention.** Please join CHE-AK on **May 25, 2010 at 9 AM Alaska / 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern** for this call, which will explore why in the 1940's, a woman's lifetime risk of breast cancer was one in 22, whereas today, it is one in 7. Many people diagnosed with breast cancer do not fit into a high-risk profile based on the known breast cancer risk factors. This means other factors-perhaps environmental-are at work. Mounting scientific evidence from laboratory and limited human studies suggests that many of the 85,000 chemicals registered for use in the US may contribute to breast cancer risk by causing breast tumors, hastening their growth, or leaving mammary glands more vulnerable to carcinogens. Indigenous Arctic communities experience greater chemical exposure to some of these chemicals because many industrial and commercial chemicals are long lasting and persistent in the atmosphere, drifting north on wind and water currents from where they are applied in Southern latitudes. Join us for a discussion of the chemicals associated with breast cancer and discover how learning more can help guide prevention strategies. Find out ways to reduce your exposure and opportunities for prevention.

Featured speaker:

Sarah Dunagan, MA is a Staff Scientist at the Silent Spring Institute with expertise in environmental science. Her current work focuses on ethical considerations involved in reporting results to participants in biomonitoring and personal exposure studies, and GIS analyses for a study of hormonally active pollutants in Cape Cod, MA groundwater and drinking water. She also directs the development of the Massachusetts Health and Environment Information System (MassHEIS), an online mapping tool that allows users to explore health and environment data for their communities.

For more information or to join this free call and receive dial-up instructions, please

For more information or to join this free call and receive dial-up instructions, please RSVP to Alaska Community Action on Toxics at 907-222-7714 or diana@akaction.org.

CHE HEAL

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

~ Environment and health policy update from the EU

This month we have seen two positive developments in the European Parliament. The adoption by parliamentarians (MEPs) of a resolution that recognises the important role of environmental factors in cancer prevention and a vote in favour of strengthening health protection within EU climate adaptation policy, have both been welcomed by many in the public health and medical community.

Strengthening the role of health in climate policy

Parliamentarians voted in favour of strengthening health protection in EU climate adaptation policy and acknowledged the possible benefits to health of adaptation measures. The parliament's report--a response to European Commission's proposal for climate adaptation in the EU--contains a chapter on 'Health and social policies', and highlights the range of climate-related health impacts (e.g. on respiratory health).

Whilst not leading to binding legislation, the Parliament's health-friendly position on climate policy has been welcomed by HEAL and our members and partners from across the European medical, health care and research community. The move highlights a growing awareness amongst policy-makers of the numerous impacts to health from climate change and the need to properly equip the healthcare sector to enable it to respond to the effects of climate change. For more information about HEAL's action on climate change and health please visit <http://www.env-health.org/r/93>.

MEPs urge cancer prevention deal with environmental causes

On the 6th May, the European Parliament adopted a report on the European Commission's proposal to create a European Partnership for Action Against Cancer for the period 2009-2013--supporting EU Member States' efforts to tackle cancer. The report distinguishes between primary prevention and early detection/screening, and calls for more research into the prevention of cancer from exposure to chemicals in our everyday environment. All Member States are urged to set up integrated cancer plans, to help achieve the Partnership's long-term aim of reducing cancer by 15% by 2020. The vote has underlined the need to pay attention to the growing body of science that shows chemical pollution in our environment and work settings contributes to Europe's high rates of cancer. Before the adoption of the report, HEAL worked alongside 21 European and national cancer prevention and environment and health groups to provide expertise. We welcome this report which indicates that the reduction of cancer incidence rates will continued to be slowed by poor implementation of existing EU and national laws on water quality, chemicals and pesticides management, and worker protection as well as lack of research and development in 'environmental prevention'. For more information about HEAL's action on chemicals and health please visit <http://www.env-health.org/r/69>

CHE Washington

~ coordinated by Steve Gilbert, sgilbert@innd.org or contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ The Washington State Chapter of the national Collaborative on Health and the Environment's (CHE-WA) next public meeting is Wednesday, May 26th from 2-4pm at Antioch University in Seattle.

Meeting Topic: Cell Phones, Electromagnetic Fields and Human Health: The Latest Research

Entrance is free and open to the public. Those who cannot attend in person, and/or who want to reduce their carbon footprint, may contact us for a telephone number to call-in to the meeting by phone. We hope to see/hear you there!

For this May meeting we are proud to host Cindy Sage coordinator of the national Collaborative on Health and the Environment working group on electromagnetic fields. Joining Cindy will be Samuel Milham, MD, who was epidemiologist for the State of Washington for more than twenty years. Cindy gave a fascinating presentation on issues related to children's exposure to cell phone radiation at our Northwest Children's Environmental Health Forum in October 2009. The May 26th meeting will update this information and build upon it to share more critical health research in this field. Dr. Milham will also contribute perspectives from his own research on occupational health hazards related to electromagnetic exposures

For more information contact: CHE-WA Coordinator Aimee Boulanger, aboulanger@whidbey.com, or CHE-WA host Steve Gilbert, sgilbert@innd.org

Announcements and News Highlights

Breast Cancer Fund and CHE to co-host a congressional staff briefing in DC on the President's Cancer Panel report

BCF and CHE, in conjunction with US Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and US Representative Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL), will host this congressional staff briefing on Friday, May 21, 2010 from 9-10 AM in the Rayburn House Office Building (Room B369). For additional information and/or to RSVP please contact Vanessa Ramirez at vramirez@rabengroup.com or call 213-236-3751.

Senator Lautenberg introduces "Safe Chemicals Act" to protect Americans from toxic chemicals

The "Safe Chemicals Act of 2010" requires safety testing of all industrial chemicals, and puts the burden on industry to prove that chemicals are safe in order stay on the market.

[Read more](#)

Breast Cancer Fund honors Sarah Janssen as Science Hero for 2010

Dr. Sarah Janssen was just honored as the [Breast Cancer Fund's Science Hero for 2010](#). Sarah leads NRDC's work to protect consumers from toxic chemicals in everyday products, especially those that interfere with our natural hormones like bisphenol A, phthalates, flame retardants and antimicrobial chemicals. Her expertise is well known, and she often testifies before the legislature, speaks at scientific conferences and sits down with partner organizations to share her knowledge.

[Read Sarah's blog](#)

Join the National Conversation on on public health and chemical exposures

Partners in the National Conversation are now offering a way for the public to join the conversation about better ways to protect the public from harmful chemical exposures by using the Community Conversation Toolkit to host a community conversation. Mini grants for hosting a community conversation are available. Host a conversation before June 30, 2010 to be included as part of the National Conversation work groups and the Leadership Council's report and action agenda.

[Learn more](#)

The San Francisco Medical Society publishes environmental health focused edition of journal

[Download the journal](#)

May 2010 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives available online

[Read more](#)

May 2010 issue of Environmental Factor available online

[Read more](#)

CHE maintains a [newsfeed](#) of environmental health related news announcements and events collected from a multitude of sources on CHE's website.

Reports, Resources and Other Updates

The California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative releases new report: "Framing a Proactive Research Agenda to Advance Worker Health and Safety in the Nail Salon and Cosmetology Communities".

[Read the report](#)

The American Heart Association releases new report on the links between air pollution and cardiovascular disease.

[Read the report](#)

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
 Julia Varshavsky, Program Associate

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