



Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative

[of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment](#)



Biweekly Bulletin February 10, 2010

This bulletin lists upcoming events plus recent announcements, news and journal articles, calls for proposals and other items related to learning and developmental disabilities and environmental health. They are archived and searchable on LDDI's website: www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/learning/r/bulletins (Note the new URL).

LDDI Highlights

Mind, Disrupted Biomonitoring Report

LDDI members released a new biomonitoring report, *Mind, Disrupted: How Toxic Chemicals May Affect How We Think and Who We Are* in Washington, DC, on February 4, 2010. Several questions prompted the undertaking of this project: What role might environmental toxics play in undermining healthy development of the brain and nervous system? How might certain environmental pollutants exacerbate the health conditions of those who already have a learning, developmental or behavioral disorder? The report intends to spotlight these pressing questions and inspire prompt actions to reduce exposures that may impair how we think -- and, in the most basic ways, who we are. Twelve leaders and self-advocates from the learning and developmental disabilities community stepped forward to try and answer these questions by having their bodies tested for the presence of a set of known or suspected neurotoxic or endocrine-disrupting chemicals.

The report was released prior to a Senate Hearing of the Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Superfund, Toxics and Environmental Health convened by the chairman of the committee, Senator Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ). A Congressional Briefing on the LDDI biomonitoring project is currently scheduled in Washington, DC, for Friday February 19th on the House side. For more information, please contact Laura Abulafia with LDDI: laura@healthandenvironment.org.

- Visit the new *Mind, Disrupted* website: www.minddisrupted.org
- Read more about LDDI and learning and developmental disabilities partners: www.disabilityandenvironment.org

LDA Symposium February 17th

The Learning Disability Association of America's annual medical symposium on environmental health will be held in Baltimore, Maryland. The first part of the symposium will feature participants in the LDDI biomonitoring project. For more information, please contact Maureen Swanson: mwsanson@ldaamerica.org or see event #1 below.

Autism Society Meeting Recap

National Autism Society executives just returned from Autism Education Week in Colorado, where Donna Ferullo, director of the Autism Society of America's Environmental Health Program, gave a talk on Autism and Environment at the JFK Partners Medical School complex at University of Colorado Medical Center. The Autism Society is also in full planning mode for their annual conference to be held in Dallas in July, which will include a science symposium focused on environmental health and brain effects.

New Mental Health Resources Coming

The Mental Health and Environment Working Group has released two new resources: "Health Care Resource: Links between Pesticide Exposure and Mental Health" and "Mental Health Effects Arising from Pesticide Exposure: A Guide for Healthcare Providers and Mental Health Practitioners." Download both resources from the [Mental Health and Environment Working Group web page](#). For more information, contact Ed Seliger: eseliger@thenadd.org.

New Members

The Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative welcomes these new members:

- Sultana Afrooz, DO, Laurel, Maryland
- Patricia Eyster, MA, Bethesda, Maryland
- Nancy Guberti, MS, CN, Eastchester, New York and Greenwich, Connecticut
- Allen Lewis, MD, Aurora, Illinois
- Mary Rivkin, PhD, Baltimore, Maryland
- Ralph Scott, Washington, DC
- Maya Shetreat-Klein, MD, Bronx, New York
- John Sundquist, Coburg, Oregon
- Deborah Thompson, Baltimore, Maryland
- Matthew Wolter, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Announcements

A daily news feed with articles and announcements is available on CHE's website: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/news/announce>.

[EPA holds public comment period on Buick City cleanup proposal, hearing Feb. 18, 5:30 p.m.](#)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 opens a public comment period tomorrow on a range of cleanup options that address historical contamination on the Southend portion of the former General Motors Buick City property in Flint, Mich.

[Call for proposals: Community Action for a Renewed Environment.](#)

The US Environmental Protection Agency is making nearly \$2 million available in 2010 to reduce pollution at the local level through a community-based program that builds partnerships to help the public understand and reduce toxic risks from numerous sources close to home. Proposals are due by March 9, 2010.

[Job opening: Los Angeles, California.](#)

Occidental College invites applications for a one-year full-time visiting position at the assistant professor level for the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 semesters in the Urban and Environmental Policy (UEP) Program. All materials are due by April 1, 2010.

[Job opening: New York State.](#)

The Center for Health, Environment & Justice is seeking a part-time campaign organizer for a new New York State campaign to green schools inside and out. Position can be located at a home office, with frequent travel to Albany, New York City and other targeted urban areas or college campuses.

[Job opening: Portland, Oregon.](#)

Josiah Hill III Clinic has an opening for an 0.8 FTE program coordinator to be responsible for leading and supporting project delivery, predominately to low-income and diverse communities, in the Portland Metro area. The application deadline is Sunday February 21st. Email a cover letter, resume, and three references to jobs@jhillclinic.org, listing Program Coordinator in the subject line.

Upcoming Events

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

deadlines for funding proposals and conference abstracts.

1) LDA 47th Annual International Conference

Wednesday through Saturday, February 17-20, 2010

Baltimore, Maryland

at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront

Sponsor: Learning Disabilities Association of America

This conference will include the latest research and dialogue on learning disabilities, including specific workshops on medical, mental health, teacher preparation, public policy, adults, assessment, research and more. A symposium on "Toxic Chemicals and Brain Development: Prevention and Policy" is scheduled from 11:00 to 4:30 on Wednesday, including panel presentations on the new biomonitoring study from the Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative and a panel on toxic chemical policy.

Price: unknown

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: see the [Contact page](#)

2) Lead-Safe Remodeling and Renovation Train-the-Trainer Program

Monday and Tuesday, March 1 - 2, 2010

New Orleans, Louisiana

Sponsor: Alliance for Healthy Homes in partnership with NeighborWorks Training Institute

This class will help prepare organizations to become accredited trainers under EPA's new Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) rule. By April 2010, this rule will require virtually every contractor working in pre-1978 homes to complete an 8-hour course in lead safe work practices or face a Federal fine of up to \$37,500 a day. The Train-the-Trainer course does not certify participants to be accredited trainers under the rule, but rather gives participants background on the requirements of EPA's rule and instruction on how to most effectively deliver the new lead safe work practices course for renovators.

Price: unknown

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: [NeighborWorks Training Institute](#)

News and Journal Articles

[Mediterranean diet may lower risk of brain damage that causes thinking problems.](#)

Tuesday, February 09, 2010

The study found that people who ate a Mediterranean-like diet were less likely to have brain infarcts, or small areas of dead tissue linked to thinking problems. Newswise.

[Herbal cures 'a toxic mix.'](#)

Tuesday, February 09, 2010

Many herbal medicines are contaminated with potentially lethal doses of heavy metals such as arsenic and mercury, belying their reputation as low-risk "natural" products. Sydney Australian, Australia.

[See a related article: [Selenium toxicity in dietary supplements](#)]

[Are the undisclosed ingredients in lipstick bad for you?](#)

Tuesday, February 09, 2010

Makeup - many of us love it - but most of us have no idea that some of our favorite beauty products contain harsh chemicals and potentially harmful ingredients. Daily Green.

[Worrisome chemical found in canned foods.](#)

Sunday, February 07, 2010

A new Consumers Union study shows just one serving of tested canned vegetable soup has nearly twice the amount considered average exposure. In fact, researchers found BPA in most of the 19 tested name-brand canned foods. Oklahoma City Oklahoman, Oklahoma.

[See related articles about research: [Study finds a link between plastics chemical BPA and childhood asthma](#), [Human placenta cells die after BPA exposure](#) and [BPA affects male rat fertility for generations](#), plus articles about legislative action from Wisconsin: [State Senate OKs BPA ban in baby bottles](#) and from Washington State: [Senate votes ban on BPA in kids' containers](#)]

Toxic coal-tar cleanup to cost New York \$3 billion.

Sunday, February 07, 2010

Gas and electric groups are cleaning up more than 250 coal-tar pollution sites across the state. Middletown Times Herald-Record, New York.

[See a related article from Missouri: [How big of a problem is coal tar?](#)]

Water, soil still a killer at Bhopal's ground zero.

Sunday, February 07, 2010

Twenty-five years after the Bhopal gas tragedy, one of the biggest industrial disasters in history, India's pollution watchdog has found huge quantities of chemicals in underground water and soil in a 2.4-km radius of the Union Carbide factory. New Delhi Hindustan Times, India.

Are birth defects caused by IVF?

Sunday, February 07, 2010

Researchers will launch a major study next week to test the theory, shown in lab studies, that test-tube babies are more likely to suffer genetic abnormalities, putting them at higher risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease in later life. London Daily Express, United Kingdom.

Toxic trinkets.

Sunday, February 07, 2010

Cadmium, a carcinogenic heavy metal, has surfaced as the latest villain lurking in the kids' toy and jewelry aisles. Montgomery Advertiser, Alabama.

[See a related article: [Walmart pendants recalled as Disney bans cadmium](#) and another from Qatar: [New regulations to set import standards](#)]

The chemical revolt.

Sunday, February 07, 2010

BPA in baby bottles. Phthalates in children's books. Lead in toys. As parents' awareness of potential toxins in the home has grown in recent years, so has their anxiety. Minnesota has helped lead the way to regulate worrisome chemicals, and federal reform. St. Paul Pioneer Press, Minnesota.

[See related articles: [Put up your dukes at home: The hazard could even be in your tap water](#), [Old story of pollution: new urgency this time](#) and [Congressional hearing focuses on regulating household toxins](#)]

The center for children's environmental health.

Saturday, February 06, 2010

A Pennsylvania Department of Health Study cited air-quality conditions in Berks County have been in violation of national air quality standards for carbon dioxide, ozone, lead, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide since 2004. Kutztown University Keystone, Pennsylvania.

USDA ends livestock tracking program.

Saturday, February 06, 2010

The Obama administration is killing a national livestock tracking program that never got off the ground amid widespread complaints by farmers and ranchers. The federally run ID system was proposed after the discovery of the nation's first case of mad cow disease in 2003. Des Moines Register, Iowa.

[ADHD and lead: Poisoning the mind.](#)

Friday, February 05, 2010

A just published paper lends supports to the idea that attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder may be caused by exposure to lead. Economist.

[See a related article: [Exposure on tap: Drinking water as an overlooked source of lead](#)]

[Urinary concentrations of metabolites of pyrethroid insecticides in the general U.S. population: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 1999-2002.](#)

Thursday, February 04, 2010

Pyrethroid insecticide exposure in the U.S. population is widespread and their presence in the urine of US residents indicate that children may have higher exposures than adolescents and adults. Environmental Health.

[See a related article: [Comparison of current-use pesticide and other toxicant urinary metabolite levels among pregnant women in the CHAMACOS Cohort and NHANES](#)]

[EPA rule could spike home repair costs.](#)

Thursday, February 04, 2010

New rule mandates contractors must be certified for projects that could disturb lead-based paint in buildings constructed before 1978 -- to prevent lead contamination. Grand Rapids WOOD-TV, Michigan.

[See a related article: [Removing paint now requires extra caution](#)]

[Report: Smelter not health threat.](#)

Wednesday, February 03, 2010

Breathing the air, drinking tap water or playing in soil in neighborhoods near the lead-contaminated U.S. Smelter and Lead Refinery site in East Chicago won't harm people's health, a federal agency announced Tuesday. Merrillville Post-Tribune, Indiana.

[Study finds Parkinson's disease hot spots.](#)

Wednesday, February 03, 2010

People with Parkinson's disease are more likely to be found in the Northeast and Midwest, and whites and Hispanics are more likely to have it than blacks and Asians. Those are two of the key findings of a new study on the debilitating neurological disorder. Suncoast News, Florida.

[See a related article: [Industrial solvent linked to increased risk of Parkinson's disease](#)]

[Researchers find clue to SIDS in brain chemical.](#)

Wednesday, February 03, 2010

Researchers looking for the cause of sudden infant death syndrome found reduced levels of the brain chemical serotonin among a group of babies who died from SIDS, compared with other babies. Wall Street Journal.

[Children suffering health problems in Port-au-Prince camps.](#)

Wednesday, February 03, 2010

Children are increasingly suffering health problems in Port-au-Prince's crowded encampments - and the situation will worsen as Haiti continues to reel from the earthquake. So a major campaign was launched to vaccinate children in the capital. Washington Post.

[See a related article: [Haiti earthquake: Push to send FEMA trailers to Haiti stirs backlash](#)]

[Cadmium found in adult jewelry; 1 store pulls item.](#)

Wednesday, February 03, 2010

Concern about the heavy metal cadmium in jewelry grew Tuesday as a California environmental group said new testing of adult necklaces and bracelets bought at three leading retailers detected high levels of the toxic material -- as much as 75 percent by weight. Associated Press.

[See related articles: [2 stores pull necklaces on toxic cadmium concern](#) and [Vermont fights to get lead out: state settles with discount retailer over toxic jewelry](#)]

[A study finds mental benefit of fish oil.](#)

Tuesday, February 02, 2010

Fish oil pills may be able to spare some young people with signs of mental illness from a progression into fully developed schizophrenia, according to a preliminary study of 81 patients in Austria. Wall Street Journal.

['The environment ... is where we live.'](#)

Tuesday, February 02, 2010

A New Mexico neighborhood offers a case study in the successes and failures of the environmental justice movement. High Country News.

[Radiation agency offers informational lecture for 'downwinders.'](#)

Tuesday, February 02, 2010

Since the U.S. Government tested nuclear weapons between July 1945 and November 1962, scientists and doctors have identified the deadly effects of radiation poisoning. Prescott Daily Courier, Arizona.

[NIH policy urges CT makers to track radiation dose.](#)

Tuesday, February 02, 2010

The National Institutes of Health plans to require that all makers of CT and other radiation-producing scanners used at NIH clinics have software that tracks a patient's radiation dose and logs it into an electronic medical record. Reuters.

[See related articles: [As technology surges, radiation safeguards lag](#), [Medical group urges new rules on radiation](#), [Radiation dose less with digital mammograms](#), [Airport scanners will soon use radiation to detect explosives and chemicals](#) and [Body scanning raises radiation exposure, committee says](#)]

[Prison computer recycling put staff, inmates at risk, NIOSH finds.](#)

Monday, February 01, 2010

Federal prisoners and staff overseers were exposed for years to excessive levels of toxic heavy metals during computer recycling operations, according to a report from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. Government Computer News.

[TTC buses idle ... and idle in the cold.](#)

Monday, February 01, 2010

Idling buses are left to spew harmful diesel fumes because expensive Swedish technology installed nearly a decade ago has never worked properly. Toronto Sun, Ontario.

[Fluorochemicals go short.](#)

Monday, February 01, 2010

Nearly all humans, and a large proportion of wildlife, are contaminated with environmentally persistent long-chain perfluoroalkyl compounds. That revelation, around for a decade now, has brought dramatic change to the fluorochemicals industry. Chemical & Engineering News.

[EPA targets chemical often dumped in Chicago sewers.](#)

Monday, February 01, 2010

Scientists at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently discovered that the metal plating industry is dumping high levels of PFCs into sewers in Chicago and Cleveland, and likely is doing the same thing in scores of other cities. Chicago Tribune, Illinois.

[Disposing of old medicines can be tricky business.](#)

Monday, February 01, 2010

Researchers have long been finding residues from pharmaceuticals and personal care products in our lakes and rivers. Some of them are endocrine disruptors and can cause fish to develop both male and female characteristics. Minnesota Public Radio, Minnesota.

[Utah scientists hope to close in on mercury source.](#)

Monday, February 01, 2010

Scientists may finally be closing in on the source of mercury fouling Utah's Great Salt Lake -- several years after U.S. Geological Survey tests showed the lake had some of the highest mercury readings ever recorded in a United States water body. Associated Press.

[Environmental toxins and learning disorders.](#)

Monday, February 01, 2010

An aggregate of chemicals in the environment are likely leaching into our children's bodies -- both before and after birth -- and could be wreaking havoc with their brains. The Parent Paper, New Jersey.

[Toxin probe eyes link to Tijuana.](#)

Monday, February 01, 2010

Nearly six years ago, cleanup efforts began on the site of Metales y Derivados, a notorious former American-owned lead smelter in Tijuana whose neighbors long had complained of health problems, including birth defects, that they blamed on the toxic-waste site. San Diego Union-Tribune, California.

[Water dangerous over decades.](#)

Sunday, January 31, 2010

With 12 to 90 parts per billion of arsenic, large swaths of the east valley's groundwater supply is unsafe if consumed over several decades, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says. Palm Springs Desert Sun, California.

[Air pollution exposure during pregnancy and reduced birth size: a prospective birth cohort study in Valencia, Spain.](#)

Saturday, January 30, 2010

Findings from this study provide further evidence of the need for developing strategies to reduce air pollution in order to prevent risks to fetal health and development. Environmental Health.

[Military environmental hazards bill faces hurdles.](#)

Saturday, January 30, 2010

Congressional jurisdictional issues and Defense Department resistance to accepting responsibility for harming veterans and dependents are major impediments to passing a final bill and ultimately providing medical care. Salem News, Oregon.

[See related articles from the US: [Toxins in Camp Lejeune water 30 years ago still a problem](#), from the Philippines: [Decades later, U.S. military pollution in Philippines linked to deaths](#) and from Puerto Rico: [Island residents sue U.S., saying military made them sick](#)]

[Another look at Atrazine.](#)

Saturday, January 30, 2010

One of the most widely used herbicides in the U.S., Atrazine, is being reevaluated by the EPA. Some scientists say the weed killer negatively impacts the environment and human health. But Atrazine's parent company Syngenta stands behind its product. Living On Earth.

[See related articles: [EPA reviews hints of weed killer's fetal risks](#) and [Weed killer atrazine may be linked to birth defect](#)]

[New study on dirty fuel raises health concerns.](#)

Friday, January 29, 2010

New York University Law School's Institute of Policy Integrity released a study last Saturday regarding the substantial environmental, health and economic benefits of converting "dirty" boiler fuel to cleaner-burning fuels in New York City. NYUNews.com.

[Firms told to halt distribution of 167 banned pesticides.](#)

Friday, January 29, 2010

Sellers of 167 banned pesticides must declare their stockpiles within one month and immediately halt their distribution to farmers and other users, officials ordered Wednesday. Abu Dhabi National, United Arab Emirates.

[Andrew Wakefield found 'irresponsible' by GMC over MMR vaccine scare.](#)

Friday, January 29, 2010

The doctor who claimed to have discovered a link between measles virus, bowel diseases and autism and thereby sparked widespread fear of the combined MMR jab, conducted unnecessary, invasive tests on children, the General Medical Council found. London

Guardian, United Kingdom.

[See related articles: [Lancet retracts study tying vaccine to autism](#), [L.A. confidential: Seeking reasons for autism's rise](#) and [UC Davis study confirms link between advanced maternal age and autism](#)]

[Study: Mercury in canned tuna high.](#)

Friday, January 29, 2010

More than half of canned tuna samples from a local grocery store failed to meet the strict Environmental Protection Agency safety level for mercury in fish, according to a new study by University of Nevada, Las Vegas researchers. Las Vegas Review-Journal, Nevada.

[EPA probes its actions in town with toxic-waste dump.](#)

Friday, January 29, 2010

The U.S. EPA has launched an internal investigation into its permitting and oversight in a San Joaquin Valley farming community dominated by a hazardous-waste facility, agricultural pesticide spraying and truck exhaust that may be contributing to health problems. Los Angeles Times, California.

[Prenatal phthalate exposure may alter children's behavior and cognitive function.](#)

Thursday, January 28, 2010

A study published January 28 in the peer-reviewed journal Environmental Health Perspectives suggests that women with higher exposure to phthalates during their pregnancy report more disruptive and problem behaviors in their children, using standardized measures. Newswise.

[Study: Port emissions may cost Charleston \\$81 million a year.](#)

Thursday, January 28, 2010

A new study says emissions from existing port terminals could cost Charleston County as much as \$54 million dollars a year in health care expenses. Charleston WCSC 5 TV, South Carolina.

[Warning: Your cell phone may be hazardous to your health.](#)

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Though the scientific debate is heated and far from resolved, there are multiple reports, mostly out of Europe's premier research institutions, of cell-phone and PDA use being linked to "brain aging," brain damage, early-onset Alzheimer's, senility, DNA damage, and even sperm die-offs (many men, after all, keep their cell phones in their pants pockets or attached at the hip). GQ.

[See a related journal article: [Mobile phone radiation health risk controversy: the reliability and sufficiency of science behind the safety standards](#)]

[KU Med School seeks feedback on environmental issues.](#)

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

The University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita is seeking feedback for a plan a local group is developing to improve environmental health in the area. Wichita Business Journal, Kansas.

[More states requiring 'green' cleaning products in schools, raising debate about cost, benefit.](#)

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

More states are requiring schools and government buildings to use environmentally friendly cleaning products, raising debate about their costs and benefits. Supporters say laws are needed but critics oppose any mandates. Associated Press.

[Orange County trial will focus on Botox's safety in children's cerebral palsy treatments.](#)

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Kristen Spears, who suffered from severe cerebral palsy, started getting Botox injections at age 6 - to calm her leg spasms. Instead, her mother alleges that the drug killed her. Los Angeles Times, California.

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 general children's environmental health: http://www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/childrens_health/bulletins
- 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 LDDI 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 Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative Working Group at the bottom of the application.

Nancy Snow
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