



Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative

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



Biweekly Bulletin February 23, 2011

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

LDDI Highlights

Practice Prevention Column Updates

Recent updates to CHE's Practice Prevention columns will bring new information to parents, caregivers, advocates and others concerned about children's health and learning and developmental disabilities:

- The **Mold column** was updated and published this month. The new column provides information on the health risks of mold and how to prevent exposures.
- The **Baby Care Products column** has been translated into Spanish. More translations will be coming in the next few weeks, thanks to CHE's intern Kelly Quinn.

Both columns are available, along with all LDDI's other columns and fact sheets, on the [LDDI website](#).

Announcements

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

[New Johns Hopkins institute studies environment, energy, sustainability and health.](#)

Drawing on faculty expertise in environmental science and engineering, public health and other areas, The Johns Hopkins University has launched an Environment, Energy, Sustainability and Health Institute to promote research and education in topics ranging from green energy practices to climate change and related health issues.

[EPA seeks public comment on plan to review regulations.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is inviting the public to provide input on a plan that will guide EPA's retrospective reviews of regulations as part of the agency's response to President Obama's January 18, 2011 Executive Order (EO) 13563, "Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review."

[Call for comments: National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Carbon Monoxide.](#)

Based on its review of the air quality criteria and the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for carbon monoxide (CO), EPA is proposing to retain the current standards. EPA is also proposing changes to the ambient air monitoring requirements for CO including those related to network design. Comments will be accepted until April 12th.

[EPA removes confidentiality claims on studies of chemicals submitted under TSCA.](#)

The US Environmental Protection Agency has notified five companies that the identities of 14 chemicals associated with a number of health and safety studies submitted under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and claimed as confidential are not eligible for confidential treatment.

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) The Autism Book: What Every Parent Needs to Know About Early Detection, Treatment, Recovery and Prevention

Friday February 25, 2011

1:30 - 3:30 p.m. in Evanston, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. in Indianapolis

Evanston, Illinois, and Indianapolis, Indiana

at Northwestern University, Annie May Swift Hall, 1920 Campus Drive and at Indiana University School of Law, Lawrence W. Inlow Hall, Wynne Courtroom, 530 W. New York Street

Sponsor: Talk About Curing Autism (TACA)

The speaker will be Robert W. Sears, MD, FAAP.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: 800-497-0944

2) Healthy Aging Starts at Conception: Promoting Health Across the Lifespan

Friday March 11, 2011

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

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

Beginning in the womb and continuing throughout life, environmental factors are strong determinants of throughout the lifespan. Reproductive, children's, midlife and elder health are inherently interconnected. In addition, various features of our biological, social and natural environments, alone and in combination, can affect health at any time in the life continuum. These stressors can also accumulate and influence genetic expression, and even the health of future generations. A century of change in our food, built, chemical, natural, psychosocial, and socioeconomic environments is fueling dramatic increases in diseases and disabilities throughout the lifespan, such as diabetes, obesity, cancer, reproductive health and developmental disabilities. Combined with a near doubling of the over-65 population in the new few decades, this trajectory threatens to overwhelm our health care system and our social resources, and bring economic and social instability. This call will discuss how we can advance a more positive path if we understand and address the interrelationships of health and the environment throughout life, and explore commonsense and also innovative approaches that may prevent chronic disease, foster health and sustain local and global economies. We will also address the importance of interventions that address the structural, systemic origins of many diseases that can be designed to benefit ecosystems more generally, thereby linking human health to planetary health.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: CHE, info@healthandenvironment.org

3) Atmospheric Toxics Webinar Series

Tuesday March 15, 2011

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Great Lakes Commission

Over the last six years, the Great Lakes Commission (GLC), under funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and in cooperation with the eight Great Lakes states, has awarded research grants dealing with atmospheric toxic pollutants affecting the Great Lakes and their tributary watersheds. Thirty-five research grants have been awarded since 2004 addressing a diverse array of research concerning atmospheric pollutant loadings and movement within the basin and the associated impacts of numerous persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic (PBT) chemicals on wildlife and human health. A substantial amount of new scientific knowledge has been attained through these research activities. The GLAD webinar series is intended to provide a forum for GLAD Principal Investigators (PIs) to disseminate information on their respective research activities, including specific findings, recommended follow-up actions, and potential public policy actions to foster elimination of PBT threats to the region. The presenters and topics will be listed on the website.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: GLC, 734-971-9135

News and Journal Articles

[Cell phone radiation affects brain function.](#)

Tuesday, February 22, 2011

The study, published today by the prestigious Journal of the American Medical Association is the first investigation to document changes in brain glucose metabolism after cell phone use.

[See another article about cell phones: [Leaders of WHO cell phone research urge precautions in using cell phones, says Environmental Health Trust](#) and a warning about telecommunications towers: [Warning signs, towers greet Mt. Woodson hikers](#)]

[New study could show PG&E 'Smart Meters' have more radiation levels than thought.](#)

Tuesday, February 22, 2011

A new study could show that the radiofrequency radiation level of some PG&E SmartMeters is significantly higher than previously thought, a spokesman for an environmental health coalition said. Pleasanton Weekly News, California.

[See another article about Smart Meters: [Jepsen urges state regulators to reject CL&P's plan to replace electric meters](#)]

[Unraveling the mystery of the bizarre deformed frogs.](#)

Tuesday, February 22, 2011

Yale ecologist David Skelly wanted to know why a sizable percentage of frogs in the northeastern U.S. suffered from deformities. He discovered that the deformities are almost certainly not caused by a single chemical, but rather by a whole suite of substances that act in concert to mimic hormones like estrogen or cause other ill effects. Yale Environment 360.

[See other articles about water quality: [EPA underreports radiation in America's drinking water](#) and [On the 'state of the lake.'](#)]

[Podcast: Your chemical exposure. How much should you know?](#)

Tuesday, February 22, 2011

Advances in biomonitoring technology has resulted in a greater array of chemicals being detectable in the human body at lower and lower levels. This increase in accuracy and detectability has outstripped the abilities of Medical professionals to interpret the results and what they might mean to the patient. Science.

[Warning over toxic traditional medicine.](#)

Monday, February 21, 2011

A warning has been issued over the use of "Ayurvedic" traditional medicines, after an Australian man was found to have more than eight times the safe level of lead in his body. Australian Associated Press.

[Bring back cocktail hour... to beat Alzheimer's: Research shows alcohol can delay dementia.](#)

Sunday, February 20, 2011

Our vulnerability to dementia is influenced by our genes, but genes are not the final deciders. They can be muted or magnified and partially subdued by lifestyle. This means that people with these genes are more predisposed, but by no means predestined, to develop Alzheimer's. London Daily Mail, United Kingdom.

[Workers pay high price at Bangladesh tanneries.](#)

Friday, February 18, 2011

Standing barefoot in toxic chromium effluent at a tannery in Hazaribag, 23-year-old leather worker Sumon fears his job is sending him to an early grave. Demand for cheap shoes has turned Hazaribag into a wasteland of toxic swamps, landfills and mountains of decomposing leather scraps surrounded by workers' slums. Agence France-Presse.

[See another article about occupational exposures: [Ontario probes Agent Orange poisoning](#)]

[EU to ban toxic chemicals in household plastics.](#)

Friday, February 18, 2011

The European Union will ban six toxic chemicals within three to five years, three of which are commonly used in plastic household items, the EU Commission said on Thursday. Among the compounds are three plastic softening phthalates, a musk fragrance, a flame retardant and a hardener for epoxy resin, the Commission said. Reuters.

[See another article about regulation of toxic chemicals: [Tougher measures against toxic chemicals pushed](#)]

[Determinants of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon levels in house dust.](#)

Friday, February 18, 2011

As self-reported data and outdoor PAH sources were only marginally predictive of observed PAH levels, we recommend that PAH concentrations be measured directly in dust samples for use in epidemiological studies. Journal of Exposure Science and Environmental Epidemiology.

[The push to get the mercury out.](#)

Thursday, February 17, 2011

The EPA is working to change federal and state regulations that require the use of mercury thermometers for certain industries by citing the standards set by international organizations, such as ASTM International -- formerly the American Society for Testing and Materials -- and the American Petroleum Institute. Washington Post.

[See a related article: [Glens Falls' Lehigh cement plant boss balks at new EPA rule on mercury](#) and another about mercury: [Ohio's mercury ban extended to novelty items' batteries](#)]

[Prenatal lead exposure heightens childhood allergies.](#)

Wednesday, February 16, 2011

A child's exposure to even low levels of lead while in the womb increases the risk for developing allergies during childhood, finds research from Poland. Environmental Health News.

[See other articles about lead poisoning: [Milwaukee receives federal aid to cut lead poisoning in children](#) and [More children need lead levels tested](#)]

[Ecuadorian court rules Chevron must pay \\$9 billion for oil pollution.](#)

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

A judge in a small jungle town in Ecuador on Monday ordered Chevron to pay more than \$9 billion in damages, finding the energy giant responsible for the oil pollution that has fouled a stretch of land along Ecuador's northern border. Washington Post.

[See other articles about contaminated sites: [New Orleans parks rooted in areas containing dangerous levels of lead](#); [People tested for dioxin pollution](#); [Secret Society: Mercier's hidden poison](#); [30 years to clean up Barangaroo](#); [Tight budgets threaten pace of cleanup at Paducah nuclear fuel plant](#); [Will oil ever be completely cleaned up?](#); [Time's up for toxic town of Picher, Okla.](#); [EPA's Superfund website can save veterans' lives](#); [Yerington residents file suit against BP America over alleged contamination from old copper mine](#); [DuPont reaching into pantry in cleanup effort](#); [Cambodia approves titanium mine in world's 'most threatened forest'](#); [Report: tar sands oil boosts pipeline risks](#); [153 million gallons of sewage, grease dumped](#) and [Team looks at drilling](#)]

Brain, disrupted.

Monday, February 14, 2011

Science suggests that exposure to toxic chemicals --everyday toxins found in foods, carpeting and flooring, cleaning and lawn products, and personal-care products, like toothpastes, may contribute substantially to such disorders as ADHD, autism, and learning disabilities. ADDitude Magazine.

[See a related article: [Scientists look to new imaging techniques to measure metals in the brain](#)]

Indecent disposal: Recycling efforts in Knoxville combat e-waste problem.

Sunday, February 13, 2011

In addition to old JPEGs of your adorable 3-year-old, computers house some nasty junk, like cadmium, nickel, mercury and lead. Knoxville News Sentinel, Tennessee.

[See related articles and announcement about waste disposal: ["A better Ghana agenda", sitting on a time bomb. "All die be die?"](#) and [EPA orders proper disposal of intercepted electronic waste shipment destined for Vietnam](#); [Fed's new plan to dump nuclear waste at Indian Point](#); [Yucca Mountain or not, nuclear waste resides here](#) and [Electronic waste easier to recycle in Jacksonville](#)]

Where there's smoke, there's trouble.

Sunday, February 13, 2011

Where there is wood smoke, there is fire -- as well as invisible toxins you could be inhaling. A little soot exposure probably isn't harmful to most people, pulmonologists say, but a new Danish-led study suggests regular exposure could damage DNA.

Burlington County Times, Pennsylvania.

[See other articles about air quality: [Metra finds 'alarming' pollution on some trains](#); [Metro Vancouver takes aim at older, diesel-belching engines](#); [EPA launches HOVENSA air quality study](#); [Cross-border pollution: A growing international problem](#); [Smoke can be a health concern](#); [Indoor air pollutants cause 50% of illnesses globally](#) and [Study: County air quality depends on ZIP code](#)]

Boston University professor undertakes New Bedford-wide public health study.

Sunday, February 13, 2011

A Boston University professor is spearheading a study that will look for trends and patterns of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and cardiovascular disease amid a confluence of health factors, ranging from urban pollution to personal dieting. New Bedford Standard-Times, Massachusetts.

Science you want to know: Epigenetic research actually explains what makes us human.

Saturday, February 12, 2011

Epigenetics is the software that tells the DNA hardware (the genes) how and what to do -- without altering the gene sequence. And it is at the early stages of development that epigenetic changes can cause lifelong health effects. San Francisco Chronicle, California.

Go-ahead for fluoride in tap water.

Saturday, February 12, 2011

Renewed efforts to add fluoride to tap water across the UK are likely after the high court gave the go-ahead for the NHS in Southampton to do so. London Guardian, United Kingdom.

[See other articles about fluoridation of water: [Health officials explore ways to give fluoride to children after City Hall vote](#) and [Niskayuna lowers fluoride levels in water](#)]

Toxic tide: Discovering the health effects of the Deepwater disaster.

Saturday, February 12, 2011

Months after BP's well was capped, the health effects of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill may just be starting to surface. Residents across the Gulf Coast report mysterious ailments, and some blood samples show traces of chemicals related to the oil. Living On Earth.

[See related articles: [BP spill taints mental health, too](#) and [Study to track Gulf cleanup workers' health](#), and another article about ecological disasters: [The worst eco-catastrophes of all time](#)]

NIH study finds two pesticides associated with Parkinson's disease.

Saturday, February 12, 2011

New research shows a link between use of two pesticides, rotenone and paraquat, and Parkinson's disease. People who used either pesticide developed Parkinson's disease approximately 2.5 times more often than non-users. NIEHS.

[See a related article: [Company pays government to challenge pesticide research showing link to Parkinson's](#); other articles about Parkinson's risks: [Eating berries may lower risk of Parkinson's](#) and [Using amphetamines may increase risk of Parkinson's disease, study suggests](#); and other articles about pesticides: [Is Endosulfan, a pesticide, harmful for human beings?](#); [Common insecticide \[piperonyl butoxide \(PBO\)\] used in homes associated with delayed mental development of young children](#); [New tests reveal many pesticides block male hormones](#); [Protecting children from pesticides and other toxic chemicals](#); [New study reveals dangers of prenatal pesticide exposure](#); [State bans endosulfan, seeks Centre's nod](#); [City wary of Edmonton-wide pesticide ban](#) and ['Unhealthy' pesticide use lost as Macadamia industry massages media](#)]

UC researchers: LED lights contain lead, arsenic.

Friday, February 11, 2011

LED light bulbs are the green alternative to standard halogen light bulbs, right? Wrong, says a new study from UC Irvine and UC Davis that suggests those good-for-the-environment light bulbs contain lead, arsenic and a dozen other potentially toxic and hazardous substances. California Watch.

[See other articles about potential hazards in consumer products: [Doctors warn women against hot drinks with plastic covers](#) and [Brazilian Blowout ingredients investigated](#)]

First ban on fracking in New York; legislation also targets wastewater.

Thursday, February 10, 2011

First ban on fracking in New York; legislation also targets wastewater. Citizens and clean water advocates heralded the Buffalo Common Council's move Wednesday to become the first city in New York State to ban hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. Oneida Daily Dispatch, New York.

[See related articles: [Fracking fluid tainted water may have been processed in Buffalo](#) and [Forum looks at dangers of fracking](#)]

Cutting refinery pollution: is Sierra Club doing what Texas won't?

Thursday, February 10, 2011

Environmental groups are showing the 11 News I-Team what they contend is proof the state of Texas has been going so easy on industry that big refineries are breaking existing pollution laws, often without consequence. Houston KHOU TV, Texas.

[See another article about refinery pollution: [Balkan ecology row shows divide over EU standards](#)]

Smoking harms mental health but quitters arrest decline.

Thursday, February 10, 2011

Smoking accelerates mental decline and damages parts of the brain linked to dementia, an Australian study has found. But there is good news for long-term smokers: quitting reverses the harmful effects on the brain. Sydney Morning Herald, Australia.

[See other articles about hazards of smoking: [Second-hand smoke ups risk of abnormal Pap test](#); [US submariners learn to live without smokes](#); [More hotels go completely smoke-free](#) and [Reactions vary to Campbell smoking ban repeal](#)]

[WHO probing reported link between H1N1 vaccine, narcolepsy.](#)

Wednesday, February 09, 2011

The World Health Organization is investigating reports that the H1N1 vaccine may have triggered a rare sleep disorder in children. Toronto Globe and Mail, Ontario.

[See another article about vaccines: [Some vaccines tied to lower kids' leukemia risk](#)]

[NV Energy power plant releasing toxic chromium into environment, groups say.](#)

Wednesday, February 09, 2011

NV Energy's coal-fired Reid Gardner power plant is one of 28 nationwide that release toxic chromium into the environment, according to a new report by watchdog groups. Las Vegas Review-Journal, Nevada.

[See other articles and announcements about power plants and coal ash: [Electricity use, coal consumption, and public health](#); [Columbia Energy Center mercury emissions top in state](#); [EPA releases more electric utility plans to improve safety of coal ash impoundments](#); [State ranks 8th in mercury pollution from power plants](#); [Environmental group emphasizes danger of coal ash in new report](#); [Coal's hidden costs top \\$345 billion in U.S. -- study](#); [Environmentalists and locals win fight against coal plant in Borneo](#) and [Proposed EPA rule on coal ash drawing heat from industry](#)]

Lessons Learned

From Alice Hamilton to Workplace to OSHA to Children

by Steven G. Gilbert, PhD, DABT

"You have the right to a safe workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act) was passed to prevent workers from being killed or seriously harmed at work. The law requires employers to provide their employees with working conditions that are free of known dangers." (OSHA website, <http://osha.gov/workers.html>)

The right to a safe workplace was not always the case. Alice Hamilton, MD (February 27, 1869 - September 22, 1970) was the founder of occupational medicine. At the beginning of the 19th century worker safety was not a priority. Alice Hamilton saw firsthand the effects of the workplace on workers while working at Hull House in Chicago. One of the many workplace effects she explored was the consequences of worker exposure to lead and the symptom of wrist drop due to damages to the nervous system. Hamilton pioneered occupational epidemiology and industrial hygiene in the United States in her work on occupational toxic disorders. Ultimately she became the first female faculty member at Harvard Medical School.



Hamilton helped advocate for fair workers compensation laws and fought for workplace environments free of dangerous chemicals. On February 27, 1987, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health dedicated its research facility as the "Alice Hamilton



Laboratory for Occupational Safety and Health." The Institute also began giving a yearly "Alice Hamilton Award" to recognize excellent scientific research in the field.

The United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is an agency of the United States Department of Labor. It was created by the Congress of the United States under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, signed by President Richard M. Nixon on December 29, 1970, just months after Alice Hamilton died at age 101. Its mission is to prevent work-related injuries, illnesses, and occupational fatality by issuing and enforcing rules called standards for workplace safety and health. One of the most important rules related to chemicals was Hazard Communication, also known as the "Right to Know" standard. Issued on November 25, 1983, it requires developing and communicating information on the hazards of chemical products used in the workplace.

Lead poisoning: wrist drop

Workplace health and safety rules also help protect our children. Toxic chemicals such as lead and pesticides easily travel from the workplace to home on parents' clothes and shoes, exposing children at home. Pregnant women can expose the developing fetus to workplace chemicals. Keeping kids safe and protecting children from chemical exposures starts with a safe workplace for all workers and families. Just like children, workers have a right to an environment in which they can reach and maintain their full potential.



Alice Hamilton at Toxipedia - <http://toxipedia.org/x/lwU>
OSHA at Toxipedia - <http://toxipedia.org/x/JQU>

Looking back to go forward

Lessons Learned is a bulletin feature focusing on an historical event that provides an important lesson for ensuring a more sustainable and healthy environment. Please feel free to send suggestions to [Steve Gilbert](#).

Past Lessons Learned - Looking back to go forward:
<http://toxipedia.org/x/06Jb>

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
Collaborative on Health and the Environment

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)