

Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative

of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment



Biweekly Bulletin February 9, 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

Recap of the LDAA Forum January 24th

On January 24th, the Learning Disabilities Association of America, with support from the John Merck Fund, Kaiser Family Foundation and the Ceres Foundation, convened a forum to present the state-of-the-science on toxic chemicals and health as well as related policy updates and training. Nearly 60 people representing 38 different groups attended including those concerned with learning and developmental disabilities, various cancers, infertility and reproductive health, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, birth defects and respiratory illness. In addition, several leaders from health professional organizations, including the American Nurses Association, the American Medical Association and the National Medical Association, participated.

The meeting featured presentations by <u>Dr. Ted Schettler</u>, science director for the Science & Environmental Health Network and the Collaborative on Health and the Environment, describing environmental contributors to disease and disability; Dr. Sandra Steingraber, an ecologist and author of *Living Downstream*, *Having Faith* and the newly released *Raising Elijah*, discussed the human rights aspects of toxic chemical contamination; and <u>Andy Igrejas</u>, director of the Safer Chemicals Healthy Families campaign, who offered opportunities and strategies for reforming chemical policies to better protect public health.

LDDI members were instrumental in attracting key participants and coordinating this event, including Maureen Swanson of the Learning Disabilities Association of America, Joyce Martin with American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Donna Ferullo with the Autism Society of America, and Elise Miller and Erika Hagensen with Collaborative on Health and Environment.

New Members

The Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative welcomes these new members:

- Cara Chiaraluce, MA, Davis, California
- Ken Mutch, MA, Palo Cedro, California
- Bindu Panikkar, Providence, Rhode Island
- Herb Pierrie, MSN, San Francisco, California

Announcements

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

<u>Call for abstracts: International Symposium on Health Benefits of Foods: From Emerging Science to Innovative Products.</u>

The overall objective of this event is to review and debate recent advances in substantiation of health benefits of foods, covering establishment but also the communication of innovative nutrition science. The submission deadline is Tuesday, March 1, 2011.

Call for abstracts: 15th World Conference on Tobacco or Health.

This conference, scheduled for March 21 - 24, 2011, invites all proposals related to tobacco control. The deadline is Monday February 28, 2011.

Call for abstracts: Growing Old in a Changing Climate.

Population aging and global warming are two of the biggest challenges facing humanity this century. How will these complex phenomena impact each other, and how will aging populations adapt to climate change? This conference will explore this May 25 - 26, 2011, in British Columbia. Submissions are due February 15, 2011.

EPA to hold five listening sessions on updating the Clean Air Act's pollution standards for power plants, refineries.

Five sessions between February 4th and March 4th in Washington, DC, Atlanta and Chicago seek input to design common-sense, cost-effective greenhouse gas standards for the largest polluters. Each session has a different target audience and will be webcast and recorded for later viewing. EPA will accept comments for 60 days after the proposed rule is published in the Federal Register.

EPA solicits public input on using vapor intrusion threats as criteria for Superfund sites.

Vapor intrusion describes the migration of volatile chemicals from contaminated groundwater or soil into the atmosphere, and is a particular concern if vapors enter an overlying building.

New database: Health Effects Spreadsheet and Summary.

TEDX maintains a publicly available database of the potential health effects of chemicals used during natural gas operations.

Call for proposals: Fiscal Year 2011 Pollution Prevention Grant Program.

EPA Regions will award P2 grants and/or cooperative agreements to support state and tribal technical assistance programs that address the reduction or elimination of pollution by businesses across all environmental media: air, water and land. Proposals are due March 28th.

Call for proposals: Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

The purpose of the HHLPPP is to reduce or eliminate housing-related health hazards and to promote housing that is healthy, safe, affordable, and accessible. Letters of intent are due February 28th.

<u>Call for proposals: Health Impact Assessment to Foster Healthy Community Design.</u>

The purpose of the program is to increase the capacity of state, tribal and local government to include health considerations in community development, transportation, housing, and land use planning decisions, and to expand the scope of health impacts considered when making decisions that impact community design. Letters of intent are due February 25, 2011.

<u>Call for proposals: Developing High-throughput Assays for Predictive Modeling of Reproductive and Developmental Toxicity.</u>

EPA is seeking applications for research in development of high-throughput assays for use in analyzing chemicals or mixtures of chemicals to explain how exposure can be causally related to adverse, apical outcomes related to development and reproduction.

Request for proposals: Environmental Justice Small Grants Program.

The EPA is now accepting grant applications through March 31, 2011, for \$1.2 million in funding to support projects designed to research, educate, empower and enable communities to understand and address local environmental and public health issues. The closing date is March 31st.

Job opening: Washington, DC.

The National Research Center for Women & Families, and our Cancer Prevention and Treatment Fund, has an opening for a senior fellow with a graduate degree in epidemiology/public health, medicine, psychology, or a related field. The position is a 20 hours/week position for 4-6 months with modest stipend and excellent benefits. Please send a resume and cover letter to info@center4research.org.

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) Autism NOW Webinar

Thursday February 10, 2011 2:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Autism NOW, a national initiative of The Arc

The speaker will be Joyce Martin, the environmental health policy director for AAIDD. In that capacity, she interacts with Congress, federal agencies, state and local environmental and health departments, industry, nonprofit organizations and the public to change US chemical policy to protect the health of all and particularly of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Price: free <u>Visit the website</u>

Contact: Jennifer Sladen, jsladen@autismnow.org

2) 3rd Annual Northwest Environmental Health Conference

Friday February 11, 2011

Portland, Oregon

Sponsor: Oregon Environmental Council

The tracks for the 2011 Northwest Environmental Health Conference are 1) Emerging Science & Research: Presentations that address new and innovative research on environmental factors affecting human health; 2) Direct Practice & Real World Applications: Presentations that describe programs that engage, directly affect, and/or are led by members within a community or procedures and protocols that nurses, doctors, and other health care professionals are taking to integrate issues of health, environment and safety into facilities and practices and 3) Policy & Future Directions: Presentations that address federal, state, county, local or organizational policies and initiatives about environmental health issues and concerns. Continuing education credits are available.

Price: \$60 for professionals, \$75 for professionals with continuing education credits, or \$30 for students

Visit the website

Contact: nwehc@oeconline.org

3) Green Science Policy Symposium: The Flame Retardant Dilemma

Friday February 11, 2011 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Berkeley, California at 150 University Hall, 2199 Addison Street

Sponsor: Green Science Policy Institute

The event will include presentations, a panel discussion and an author forum. The agenda is available on the website.

Price: a \$25 donation at the door covers the cost of breakfast, lunch and room charges

Visit the website

Contact: see the Contact page

4) 2011 Disability Policy Seminar

Monday through Wednesday, February 14 - 16, 2011 Washington, DC at the Grand Hyatt Washington, 1000 H Street, NW

Sponsor: The Arc of the United States, United Cerebral Palsy, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Association of University Centers on Disabilities, National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, and Self Advocates Becoming Empowered

The Disability Policy Seminar partners are planning another informative event focusing on major federal issues that affect the lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Price: see the Registration form

Visit the website

Contact: Annie Acosta, acosta@thedpc.org

5) Advancing the Next Generation of Risk Assessment (NexGen)

Tuesday and Wednesday, February 15 - 16, 2011 Washington, DC

Sponsor: US Environmental Protection Agency

In collaboration with federal and state agencies, the US Environmental Protection Agency is beginning a process to better use molecular biology to understand risks posed by environmental exposures. This transformation is driven by several recent and important reports from the National Research Council, and volumes of new test data emerging from the Tox21 and European REACH programs. A new collaborative effort - Advancing the Next Generation of Risk Assessment (NexGen) - will make this transformation a reality over the next decade. NexGen collaborators include the Environmental Protection Agency, National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences/National Toxicology Program, National Human Genome Research Institute, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and State of California's Environmental Protection Agency. To engage stakeholders in the early stages of the NexGen program, EPA is sponsoring this public conference. This conference presents an opportunity to learn about the exciting new developments in risk assessment, and to provide your comments and suggestions for stakeholder awareness and involvement. You must register online prior to the workshop. No walk-in registration is available

Price: free <u>Visit the website</u>

Contact: 703-225-2910 or EPA NexGen Workshop@icfi.com

6) Atmospheric Toxics Webinar Series

Wednesday February 23, 2011

10:00 a.m. - noon 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

7) LDA 48th Annual International Conference

Wednesday through Saturday, February 23 - 26, 2011 Jacksonville, Florida

at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

Sponsor: Learning Disabilities Association of America

The program will feature top experts in the fields of education, special education, psychology and policy who will be sharing up-to-date information on timely topics. Thursday's Keynote address will be "The Exquisite Vulnerability of the Developing Human Brain to Toxic Chemicals in the Environment", presented by Philip Landrigan, MD, Msc.

Price: see the preconference book

Visit the website

Contact: LDA, 412-341-1515 or online

News and Journal Articles

Uranium plan pits prospect of jobs against health concerns.

Tuesday, February 08, 2011

Some say a promise to bring hundreds of jobs to western Colorado has quite the catch. And now they're wondering if that prospect is worth potential health hazards. Grand Junction KJCT TV, Colorado.

Exposure to pesticides in womb linked to learning disabilities.

Tuesday, February 08, 2011

Babies exposed to high levels of pesticides while in the womb may suffer from learning problems, a new study suggests. USA Today.

[See other articles about pesticides: <u>Children's pesticide safeguards advance</u>; <u>Pesticide levels pose threat to Thai vegetable exports and India resists efforts to ban pesticide</u>]

Religion, vaccine laws may clash.

Monday, February 07, 2011

Last summer, New Jersey quietly made it easier for parents to get a religious exemption from the immunization requirements for children entering school or day care. Now a state legislator who's also a doctor says that was a bad idea. North Jersey.com [See another article about autism: <u>Testosterone in womb linked to autism risk</u>]

Avoiding health pitfalls of home energy-efficiency retrofits.

Monday, February 07, 2011

Housing consumes 40 percent of our nation's energy use, making it a prime target for energy-efficiency measures. But even experienced and well-intentioned contractors can make mistakes in installation. This can result in health problems for occupants and installers alike. Environmental Health Perspectives.

Natural gas: It's not easy being green.

Wednesday, February 02, 2011

With increased scrutiny from regulators, more communities' being directly exposed to natural gas exploration, and questions arising about the fuel's global climate benefits, a more variegated view of natural gas is emerging. New York Times.

Are plastics without estrogenic-active compounds possible?

Wednesday, February 02, 2011

According to research performed by George Bittner, PhD, and his colleagues at CertiChem and PlastiPure, almost all commercially-available plastic products, including those sold as BPA-free, leach chemicals that exhibit detectable estrogenic activity. Environmental Factor.

[See another article about BPA: <u>A better understanding of BPA metabolism, with Frederick vom Saal</u>]

UC Riverside: 'We are guinea pigs,' professor says.

Tuesday, February 01, 2011

In his new book, Carl Cranor details the toxic chemicals people are exposed to daily from plastics, fabrics, cosmetics and other products. He advocates testing that would ensure the chemicals are safe before they can be used in such items. Riverside Press-Enterprise, California.

[See other articles about chemical exposures and regulation: Legislation proposed for federal regulation of perchlorate, chromium 6; New Mass. push to reduce toxic chemicals in everyday products; Use of poisonous asbestos finally banned in Turkey; EPA to develop regulation for perchlorate and toxic chemicals in drinking water and EPA plan to limit rocket chemical fuels debate]

10 American cities with the worst drinking water.

Tuesday, February 01, 2011

Unknown to most Americans, a surprising number of U.S. cities have drinking water with unhealthy levels of chemicals and contaminants. Daily Finance.

[See other articles about water quality: Fluoridation of water back in the spotlight; Tests find safe chromium levels in Oahu drinking water; State can seek more from gas suppliers; Va. to study chemicals in James; Dems report that oil, gas drillers pumped diesel into the ground; Drilling industry says diesel use was legal; Water-treatment method can create pollution problem and Fluoride debate rages over decades]

Chromosomes, upbringing or both?

Sunday, January 30, 2011

A seminar on factors that influence the brain, from heredity and environment to creativity, parenting and medications held recently at Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Medical Center featured a lively debate on whether certain neurological diseases result from Nurture (environment) or Nature (genes). Jerusalem Post, Israel.

In China, the true cost of Britain's clean, green wind power experiment: Pollution on a disastrous scale

Sunday, January 30, 2011

Pollution on a disastrous scale. On the outskirts of one of China's most polluted cities, an old farmer stares despairingly out across an immense lake of bubbling toxic waste covered in black dust, dumped by rare earth processing plants. He remembers it as fields of wheat and corn. London Daily Mail, United Kingdom.

[See other articles about contaminated sites: The Vietnam War ended but a silent threat

from Agent Orange remained: Unfinished Business; Mired in bureaucracy, questionable soil; Markey Park closed because of lead concerns; 'Bhopali' documentary probes 1984 industrial disaster; Gowanus Canal crime: Study finds 'cocktail of contaminants' and BP oil spill's health effects will be felt for generations, scientist warns]

EU presses UK over London air pollution.

Friday, January 28, 2011

The UK government has just weeks to convince EU officials that it will meet European clean air standards in London, if it is to avoid a court case. BBC.

[See other articles about air quality: Arizona pulls Maricopa County dust plan to avoid U.S. penalties; BLM study reveals high levels of arsenic in dust at Nellis Dunes; EPA proposes to retain national air quality standards for carbon monoxide; Air pollution in capital at harmful levels; Benzene poses a major threat; New legislation to restrict efforts to reduce air pollutants harms public health, increases health care costs; and Environmental report urges tougher power plant emission rules; Oregon's Aprovecho Research Center builds stoves to help the environment, health and humanity; Louisville reaches clean-air milestone; Study: ozone smog pollution expanding and Living with 100 yards of petrol stations 'damages your health', study claims]

Activist returns to community to battle pollution.

Friday, January 28, 2011

After graduating from a prestigious university, a young Hispanic woman decided to return to her community in East Los Angeles to start a campaign against pollution blamed for an increase in local cancer and asthma cases. EFE.

[See a related article: From science to action in environmental justice]

Antioxidants fall from grace.

Thursday, January 27, 2011

Antioxidants in supplement form may not do any good. In fact, they may actually be causing harm. Newsweek.

[See other articles about nutrients: <u>Eating poorly can make you blue: trans-fats increase risk of depression, while olive oil helps avoid risk; Deficiency of dietary omega-3 may explain depressive behaviors; Avoid excess of folic acid, researchers say and Poor diets may lower children's IQ</u>]

New report: Dirty Energy's Assault on Our Health: Mercury.

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

Dirty Energy's Assault on our Health is a series of reports examining the numerous threats that power plants pose to our environment and our health. Each segment in the series focuses on a different pollutant emitted by power plants.

[See related articles: TCEQ poised to OK Corpus energy plant today; Environmental report urges tougher power plant emission rules; Report on environment critical of power plants; W.Va. among worst for mercury pollution; Study: Kentucky 6th-most mercury polluted state and NV Energy calls report on mercury pollution 'misleading']

Mercury in Bay Area fish a legacy of California mining.

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

Mercury mining and gold recovery in the mid-1800s to late 1900s, combined with present day oil refineries, chemical manufacturing plants and wastewater treatment plants have contributed enough mercury to threaten wildlife and prompt a fish consumption advisory in the Bay Area. ScienceDaily.

[See other articles about food contamination: <u>Warning: Don't eat much fish from Donner Lake; U-M study says dioxins more problematic in meat, eggs than in Midland, Saginaw county soil; Pregnant women warned of clay risk; FDA ramps up scrutiny on a new area: Cheese and <u>Newly identified chemicals leach into food packages, pose regulatory challenge</u>]</u>

<u>Oregonians buy fewer cigarettes, die less from tobacco-related cancers, according to state report.</u>

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

While Oregonians buy fewer cigarettes and die less from tobacco-related cancers, the number of people smoking had a slight uptick in 2009 - though public health officials can't yet say is a trend. Portland Oregonian, Oregon.

[See other articles about smoking and tobacco: Report rips Pa.'s smoking cessation efforts; Strasburg attempting to shut out tobacco; War on cheap, illegal smokes losing ground, critics say; New York smoking ban extended to parks and coastlines; Trying to quit smoking? It will take you FIVE years and seven attempts and Does the smoke ever really clear? Thirdhand smoke exposure raises new concerns]

Safety first as bottles banned.

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

Health fears over a component [BPA] used in the manufacture of babies' bottles has prompted the authorities to act. Dublin Irish Times, Ireland.

[See other articles about concerns over consumer products: Artists worry about toxic art supplies; Chinese dry wall did not kill 11 people; Mothballs can kill children, experts warn; Keratin hair treatments get raves from customers but raise health concerns and The toxic truth about nail salons]

How to buy lead-safe, reusable shopping bags?

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

The Center for Environmental Health, which supports limits on disposable shopping bags, has found that about 10% of the reusable bags it has tested so far contain at least minute levels of lead. USA TODAY.

[See other articles about lead hazards: <u>Atlanta will get HUD grant to fight lead</u> poisoning; <u>Porter: 'Gravy train' cuts mean more lead in our water and Exposure to lead found to be extremely dangerous for children, pregnant women]</u>

Lessons Learned

Two Edges of the Same Sword - Chemical Weapons to Pesticides

"...Determined for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons, through the implementation of the provisions of this Convention." - Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), 1993.

The chemical revolution of the past century was driven in part by humans' ongoing wars with each other and relentless drive to invent new ways to kill other people. The modern era of chemical weaponry began in the first world war, and advances in synthetic chemistry led to the development of increasingly potent compounds such as nerve agents and VX. Chemical weaponry stockpiling was an integral part of the arms race throughout the Cold War; they were used during that time by Egypt, Iraq and Iran. The Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993 outlaws the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons for all signatories. The CWC is an extension of the 1925 Geneva Protocol that aimed to outlaw the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons, ignored in WWII and the Cold War.

The use of chemical compounds (as well as biological materials) dates back to biblical times. Greek historian Thucydides recorded use of arsenic smoke by the Spartans against the Athenian city of Delium during the Peloponnesian War in 425. Similar smoke was used during the Sung Dynasty by the Imperial forces in China. The use of poisons fell out of favor in the 18th and



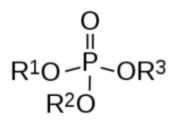
Chlorine dispersion WW1

19th century.

At the beginning of World War I, the use of chemical weapons was still very much taboo, but this changed as trench warfare dragged on. The Germans employed the first successful use of chemical weapons on April 22, 1915, at Ypres Salient in Belgium: chlorine released from cylinders was carried by the wind toward enemy positions, killing an estimated 5,000 soldiers. This use spawned a technological competition between the Allies and Germans revolving around offensive and defensive (protective masks and antidotes) possibilities of chemicals.



The beginning of modern chemical warfare unequivocally begins in the German search for new pesticides in the 1920s and 1930s and the ongoing chemical revolution. With the loss of territory after World War I and Germany's desire to lessen its reliance on food importation, the German leadership emphasized the need for new insecticides to increase food production. Chemist Gerhard Schrader was tasked with finding new non-flammable, non-harmful insecticides to eliminate the threat from the boll weavil. Schrader synthesized a series of "organophosphates" which included Tabun and later the extremely lethal Sarin which became part of the military arsenal. And thus the race was on to develop and stockpile highly lethal chemical weapons that we are now spending a small fortune to destroy.



Organophosphate formula

Pesticides and chemical weapons share a common root of development and common mechanism of action, two sides of the same sword. From bitter experience we have learned that it is prudent to ban the use of chemical weapons and similarly ban the use of the most hazardous pesticides. We now struggle to adequately regulate the pesticides we need while ensuring that workers and children develop in an environment in which they can reach and maintain their full potential.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) at Toxipedia -

http://toxipedia.org/x/5hE

Overview of Chemical Weapons at Toxipedia - http://toxipedia.org/x/Oww

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 <u>Steve Gilbert</u>.

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

by Steven G. Gilbert, PhD, DABT

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

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