



# Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative

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



**Biweekly Bulletin June 17, 2009**

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:

<http://www.iceh.org/LDDIbulletins.html>

## LDDI Highlights

### Next LDDI Working Group Call

LDDI's next general working group call is scheduled for Tuesday June 23rd at 11:00 a.m. Pacific / 2:00 p.m. Eastern time. Contact Laura Abulafia:

[laura@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:laura@healthandenvironment.org).

### ChAMP Letter to EPA

LDDI members sent a letter to Peter Grevatt, PhD, Senior Advisor for Children's Health at US EPA, recommending that the EPA's voluntary Chemical Assessment and Management Program (ChAMP) not be considered a sufficient model or as lessening the need for a fundamental overhaul of Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). [Read the letter on LDDI's website](#).

### Mental Health and Environment Working Group

This new working group, a subcommittee of LDDI chaired by the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD), will hold its next call on Tuesday July 7th. The working group's goals include a) educating and engaging the mental health community in regards to environmental exposures that may impact mental health and result in psychiatric symptoms, b) developing materials for health professionals and patients regarding how to reduce environmental exposures that may contribute to neurological or behavioral problems, and c) encouraging the mental health community to support chemical policy reform and other efforts to improve environmental health. Contact Ed Seliger:

[eseliger@thenadd.org](mailto:eseliger@thenadd.org).

### AAIDD Teleconference: July 14th

The next AAIDD Research and Science teleconference, [Association of Early-life Exposure to Household Gas Appliances and Indoor Nitrogen Dioxide with Cognition and Attention Behavior in Preschoolers](#), will be held Tuesday, July 14, 2009 at 2:00 PM Eastern. Jordi Sunyer, MD, of the Center for Research in Environmental Epidemiology in Barcelona, Spain will speak. For more information, see event #5 below.

### Environmental Health at Texas AAIDD Convention: July 15 - 17th

At the [AAIDD Texas Chapter's 34th Annual Convention](#), environmental health will be the topic of at least one session: Translating the Science: Links Between Neurotoxicants and Learning/Developmental Disabilities. The convention will be held in Corpus Christi, Texas. For more information, see event #6 below.

## Upcoming Events

**Online Calendar.** These and more upcoming events are listed in a searchable calendar: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/cgi-bin/searchevents.cgi> (note the new URL).

### **1) 73rd Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition**

Sunday through Wednesday, June 21 - 24, 2009

Atlanta, Georgia

at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta

Sponsor: National Environmental Health Association

The conference will offer a Wide variety of education, with sessions covering a broad range of environmental health. Continuing education contact hours are available.

Price: unknown

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: 303-756-9090, ext. 300 or [staff@neha.org](mailto:staff@neha.org)

### **2) A Common Agenda for Health and the Environment: Goals for the Next Generation and Steps to Get There**

Tuesday June 23, 2009

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

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

On May 11, 2009, the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production and the Toward Tomorrow Initiative released A Common Agenda for Health and the Environment. The Common Agenda is a call to action and articulates a collective commitment to six ambitious cross-cutting "Generational Goals" to ensure a healthy future for our children. Creating the Common Agenda involved nearly 100 leaders of the healthcare, community development, environmental, labor and agriculture community working together to imagine the world we want to leave our children and what it will take to get there within one generation. CHE invites you to join in an important call with leaders from different sectors who worked on this impressive document. Speakers will provide an overview the Common Agenda, highlight specific features of some of the "Generational Goals", and describe action steps we can take to achieve these goals.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

### **3) National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures Kick-off Meeting**

Friday June 26, 2009

Washington, DC

at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Sponsor: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (NCEH/ATSDR)

This day-long meeting will launch the National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures, a collaborative initiative to identify and prioritize actions for strengthening the public-health approach to chemical exposures. It is a stakeholder and public involvement initiative. The meeting will include a plenary session featuring Dr. Howard Frumkin, Director of NCEH/ATSDR as well as other guests. Breakout sessions will allow for discussion of specific issues related to public health and chemical exposures.

Price: unknown

Contact: [nationalconversation@cdc.gov](mailto:nationalconversation@cdc.gov)

### **4) International Actions to Protect the Health of Artic Indigenous Peoples: Report on Policy and Science from the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic**

### **Pollutants**

Monday June 29, 2009

9:00 a.m. Alaska time

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment - Alaska

In May, more than 800 participants representing 149 governments and many nongovernmental organizations met in Geneva, Switzerland, at the fourth Conference of the Parties (COP4) to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). Delegates made the historic decision to add nine new chemicals under provisions of the global legally binding treaty, with some limitations that concern public health advocates. Scientists from the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) presented new results about the effects of POPs chemicals on human health and ecosystems of the Arctic as part of the effectiveness evaluation of the treaty. Representatives from Indigenous communities of the Arctic participated in order to urge Parties to the Convention to integrate a comprehensive human-rights framework through the United Nations and the implementation of the Stockholm Convention. Presenters will include scientists and representatives of the Arctic Indigenous Delegation who will report on their participation and perspectives about the Stockholm Convention Conference of Parties in May. We will discuss recent findings about the environmental and human health implications of persistent pollutants in the north.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Alaska Community Action on Toxics, 907-222-7715 [info@AKAction.net](mailto:info@AKAction.net)

### **5) Association of Early-life Exposure to Household Gas Appliances and Indoor Nitrogen Dioxide With Cognition and Attention Behavior in Preschoolers**

Tuesday July 14, 2009

2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Jordi Sunyer, MD, of the Center for Research in Environmental Epidemiology in Barcelona, Spain will speak.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: 800-424-3688

### **6) AAIDD Texas Chapter's 34th Annual Convention**

Wednesday through Friday, July 15 - 17, 2009

Corpus Christi, Texas

at the Omni Corpus Christi Hotel

Sponsor: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Texas Chapter

In keeping with this year's theme, "Self Determination in a Sea of Choices," the program offers a range of presentations from which to choose. Speakers bring expertise from multiple professions and perspectives, as well as from different service options available to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Environmental health will be the topic of at least one session: "Translating the Science: Links Between Neurotoxicants and Learning/Developmental Disabilities."

Price: see page 19 of the brochure on the website

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Pat Holder, Convention Manager, 512-349-7470 or [patholder@austin.rr.com](mailto:patholder@austin.rr.com)

## Announcements & Articles

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

### [Job opening: Oakland, California.](#)

The nonprofit Center for Environmental Health is seeking a Director of Development to direct CEH's fundraising activities.

### [Oregon PSR is seeking a part-time executive director.](#)

Nonprofit management/development experience is essential for this half-time position. The submission deadline is June 28th.

### [National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures.](#)

ATSDR and CDC's National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) have launched a National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures, working with government, non-government, business and industry, and members of the public to create an action agenda. US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

### [The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes.](#)

Acting Surgeon General Steven K. Galson, MD, MPH, has issued The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes. The Call to Action looks at the ways housing can affect health; its release will initiate a national dialogue about the importance of healthy homes. US Department of Health and Human Services.

### [EPA extends comment deadline for proposed cement plant rules, sets public hearing dates.](#)

EPA is extending the public comment deadline to Sept. 4, 2009 on a proposal to slash mercury emissions and other pollutants from Portland cement kilns. The proposed standards would also set emission limits for total hydrocarbons and particulate matter from cement kilns of all sizes and would reduce hydrochloric acid emissions from kilns that are large hydrochloric acid emitters. US Environmental Protection Agency.

### [Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Awards Program.](#)

The US EPA's IAQ TfS Awards Program was initiated to recognize schools and school districts that have demonstrated a strong commitment to improving children's health by promoting good indoor air quality (IAQ) practices. EPA offers four awards for which schools or districts may apply. The deadline for submitting an application for the 2009 competitive awards is September 30, 2009.

### [EPA chemical database rules a political hazard, critics say.](#)

*Tuesday, June 16, 2009*

The Obama administration promised to end political meddling in scientific decisions, but some critics say the White House botched an early test on a key question of public health: how to assess the danger of industrial chemicals. Los Angeles Times.

### [Pesticides linger in homes, whether we use them or not.](#)

*Tuesday, June 16, 2009*

A new study shows that pesticides, some already banned for decades from the US market, continue to persist in homes. Environmental Health News.

### [Mounting evidence shows native grasses could destroy explosives pollution.](#)

*Tuesday, June 16, 2009*

TNT contaminates hundreds of sites, from military firing ranges to old production dumps to waterways. It poses a threat to the human nervous system and to the liver and kidneys, and may cause cancer and birth defects. Native grasses may be able to help. Kansas City Star, Missouri.

### [Study shows possible link between deaths and ADHD drugs.](#)

*Tuesday, June 16, 2009*

Children taking stimulant drugs such as Ritalin to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder are several times as likely to suffer sudden, unexplained death as children who

are not taking such drugs, according to a study funded by the FDA. Washington Post.

#### **[Newborn weights affected by environmental contaminants.](#)**

*Monday, June 15, 2009*

Investigators effectively show a sustained decrease in birth weight differences between boys and girls, which supports the hypothesis of growing endocrine disruption related to environmental contaminants. Science Daily.

[See related articles: [Healthy growth in womb tied to higher IQ scores](#) and [Hotter planet means more underweight babies](#)]

#### **[Target targeted in waste-dumping lawsuit.](#)**

*Monday, June 15, 2009*

Target stores across the state have been illegally dumping hazardous wastes in landfills, state Attorney General Jerry Brown and 20 district attorneys alleged in a lawsuit filed Monday in Alameda County. Silicon Valley Mercury News, California.

#### **[Indoor air quality can influence health.](#)**

*Monday, June 15, 2009*

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the air inside a typical home is, on average, two to five times more polluted than the air outside. Springfield News-Leader, Missouri.

#### **[Researchers find another estrogenic compound in soy.](#)**

*Monday, June 15, 2009*

Researchers have isolated a new estrogen-like compound in soy called glycinol. The authors report that glycinol appears to be as potent as other, similar compounds found in the legume and its many food products, such as tofu and soy milk. Environmental Health News.

#### **[Human hormones, chemicals a bad mix.](#)**

*Sunday, June 14, 2009*

Research about everyday chemicals that may harm human health is piling up. Some people say government regulators have handled the situation irresponsibly. Others say more study is needed. Minneapolis-St. Paul Star-Tribune, Minnesota.

#### **[Lake Superior fish meet contamination risk.](#)**

*Sunday, June 14, 2009*

The largest, deepest and coldest Great Lake holds another distinction -- the highest levels of the contaminant toxaphene in the region and possibly anywhere in the world. Capital News Service.

#### **[Air pollution linked to range of health issues.](#)**

*Sunday, June 14, 2009*

The Des Moines Register's analysis of air pollution statewide looked at the six main pollutants for which the Clean Air Act requires federal regulations. Des Moines Register, Iowa.

[See related articles: [Analysis finds elevated risk from soot particles in the air](#), [Study claims L.A. pollution worst in morning](#), [Road particles pose 'higher risk'](#), [Health fears linked to pollution are justified, activists say](#), [Keep breathing](#), [DEC taking action to reduce air pollution emissions in Tonawanda](#)]

#### **[Ireland one of top lead polluters.](#)**

*Sunday, June 14, 2009*

Half the lead produced in the world ends up discharged into the environment and Ireland and the UK are among the biggest culprits, a study of 52 countries shows. London Times, England.

#### **[Critics find fault with DEP's mercury logic.](#)**

*Sunday, June 14, 2009*

All of West Virginia's waterways are under a statewide fish advisory because of high levels of mercury. Despite that, last month the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection announced it intended to allow more mercury in the state's

waterways. Charleston Gazette-Mail, West Virginia.

[See related articles: [Mercury levels in Chesapeake land rockfish "dangerous" label](#) and [Her work on mercury shaped policy](#)]

### **Children's health research center planned at UWM.**

Saturday, June 13, 2009

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Children's Research Institute and the Medical College of Wisconsin have been awarded an \$8.5 million grant to form a national research center dedicated to the environmental impact on children's health. The Business Journal, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

### **Sick Wagerup residents launch massive US Erin Brockovich law suit.**

Saturday, June 13, 2009

Residents living near Alcoa's Wagerup alumina refinery have filed a massive US lawsuit. The mining giant is accused of knowingly, negligently and recklessly operating its factory and poisoning surrounding communities with toxic emissions. Perth Now, Australia.

### **EPA seeks public input on Palos Verdes pesticide cleanup.**

Saturday, June 13, 2009

Federal authorities are seeking public input on a \$36 million plan to clean up more than 100 tons of highly toxic pesticides dumped in the ocean off Palos Verdes. Long Beach Press-Telegram, California.

### **Tennessee spill: regulation hazards.**

Saturday, June 13, 2009

For years, residents of the tiny lakeside community near Kingston, Tennessee, watched as the local power plant mixed tons of leftover coal ash with water and pumped the heavy mud into a massive pond just up the road. The Nation.

[See a related article: [Group calls on state to mandate monitoring at coal ash sites](#)]

### **Chemicals sector key contributor to US toxic pollution.**

Friday, June 12, 2009

More than 5.5 billion kilograms of toxic pollutants were released and transferred by nearly 35,000 industrial facilities throughout North America in 2005, according to new data presented by the US Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). Chemistry World.

### **Nanoparticle lung threat blocked.**

Friday, June 12, 2009

Scientists have identified how a type of tiny nanoparticle can cause lung cancer -- and blocked the process. Research has shown that most nanoparticles migrate to the lungs, but there is also concern about potential damage to other organs. BBC.

[See related articles: [Carbon nanotubes may suppress immunity](#) and [Health experts raise concerns over pollution nanoparticles](#)]

### **Lead-free agreement combats poisoning.**

Friday, June 12, 2009

The City of Long Branch has joined the growing list of New Jersey municipalities to sign an agreement with the New Jersey Public Advocate to aggressively respond to and prevent the problem of childhood lead poisoning. Long Branch Atlanticville, New Jersey.

### **More troubling news about BPA.**

Friday, June 12, 2009

Heart arrhythmias in females and permanent, deleterious modifications of a gene that plays a pivotal role in reproduction are two new problems being linked to bisphenol A. Science News.

[See related articles: [BPA exposure may be higher than safe dose](#), [Medical group calls for reducing use of BPA](#), [House panel wants new review of BPA safety](#), [California Senate approves ban on BPA in plastics](#) and [Blumenthal: Chemical industry tried to kill legislation](#)]



**[Senate approves tight regulation over cigarettes.](#)**

*Friday, June 12, 2009*

The legislation, which the White House said President Obama would sign as soon as it reached his desk, will enable the Food and Drug Administration to impose potentially strict new controls on the making and marketing of products that eventually kill half their regular users. New York Times.

**[Report blames petroleum industry for 25% of toxic pollutants.](#)**

*Thursday, June 11, 2009*

The US petroleum industry accounted for a quarter of toxic pollutants recorded across North America in 2005 by a government-backed environmental watchdog, an annual report said on Wednesday. Agence France-Presse.

**[Scientists at MDI lab discover arsenic, immune system link.](#)**

*Thursday, June 11, 2009*

Scientists have known for some time that exposure to even low levels of arsenic can impair the development of immune systems in embryonic stages of life, but according to researchers the biological mechanism of how this might work has been unknown. That is, until now. Bangor Daily News, Maine.

[See a related article: [Using rust to remove arsenic from water](#)]

**[Study finds little risk from a morning sickness medication.](#)**

*Thursday, June 11, 2009*

The anti-nausea drug metoclopramide, used more on pregnant women in Europe and Israel, appears to have a statistically insignificant effect on fetuses. Los Angeles Times, California.

**[State lacks standards for private well water.](#)**

*Monday, June 08, 2009*

New York doesn't require that well water ever be tested at all and there are no state cleanliness standards for private wells. Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, New York.

**[Newborn girls, boys behavior differs after prenatal phthalate exposure.](#)**

*Monday, June 08, 2009*

Newborn girls exposed prenatally to phthalates scored poorly on a standard behavior test -- and very differently from boys. The phthalate metabolites found in the mother's urine were associated with the girls' poor performance on tests of attention and alertness. Environmental Health News.

**[Legislature takes aim at school bus fumes.](#)**

*Monday, June 08, 2009*

Oregon school districts would have to retrofit diesel-powered school buses with pollution-reducing exhaust controls by the year 2017 under a bill that won final legislative approval Friday in the Senate. Associated Press.

**[Environmental whodunit discovers invisible killers.](#)**

*Sunday, June 07, 2009*

Tests show every person on the planet, from remote South Seas islands to the frozen North, carries some of the chemical pollutants listed in this book [*Slow Death by Rubber Duck*]. Winnipeg Free Press.

**[Protect children from environmental health risks.](#)**

*Sunday, June 07, 2009*

All countries around the globe should exert greater efforts to eliminate environmental risks threatening the health of children, a senior World Health Organization (WHO) official said. Korea Times, South Korea.

**[Breast milk less toxic: study.](#)**

*Sunday, June 07, 2009*

Levels of PCBs and other toxic substances that babies consume via breast milk have declined considerably since the middle of the 1990s, a new Swedish study has shown. Stockholm Local, Sweden.

**[Neuroscience, molecular biology, and the childhood roots of health disparities.](#)**

*Saturday, June 06, 2009*

Early experiences can affect adult health in 2 ways -- either by cumulative damage over time or by the biological embedding of adversities during sensitive developmental periods. JAMA.

**[Gov't studies health risks of playground surface.](#)**

*Saturday, June 06, 2009*

For years, the Environmental Protection Agency has endorsed the use of ground-up tires to cushion the surfaces of children's playgrounds and sports fields - a decision now being reconsidered because of concerns among the agency's own scientists about possible health threats. USA TODAY.

[See a related article: [Greens call for national register after playground contamination](#)]

**[Pesticide may seed infant formulas with melamine.](#)**

*Saturday, June 06, 2009*

Infant formulas purchased from stores in Canada show widespread tainting with traces of melamine. New research suggests that melamine is a breakdown product of cyromazine, a pesticide legal for use on forage fed to dairy cattle. Science News.

**[Colorado, New York reps want regulation of gas 'fracking.'](#)**

*Friday, June 05, 2009*

Democratic Reps. from Colorado and New York plan to reintroduce a bill that would repeal a ban on regulating a widely used oil and gas drilling process under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Las Vegas Sun.

**[Over long-term, eating rockfish could affect health, advisory claims.](#)**

*Friday, June 05, 2009*

Eating rockfish or bluefish caught off the Atlantic coast could pose a health threat [due to high levels of PCB], but only after years of regular consumption of the fish, state environmental officials said. Delaware Coast Press, Delaware.

[See a related article from New Jersey: [Health officials tighten fish consumption limits](#)]

**[Nuclear test veterans can sue MoD.](#)**

*Friday, June 05, 2009*

Ex-servicemen who took part in nuclear tests in the 1950s have won the right to sue the government for compensation. More than 1,000 men say they and their families have suffered ill-health following the nuclear tests conducted in the South Pacific. BBC.

**[Recycled radioactive metal contaminates consumer products.](#)**

*Thursday, June 04, 2009*

Thousands of everyday products and materials containing radioactive metals are surfacing across the United States and around the world. Scripps Howard News Service.

**[EPA cracks down on improper CFL disposal.](#)**

*Wednesday, June 03, 2009*

Large corporations including CBS and Macy's Inc. have been just a few of the groups penalized as the EPA and state environmental agencies crack down on improper disposal of mercury-containing compact fluorescent lamps (CFL). In addition to imposing fines for violators, the companies are required to provide public education. Environmental News Network.

**[Children's lead poisoning drops, UCLA environmental report card says.](#)**

*Wednesday, June 03, 2009*

While cases of childhood lead poisoning have fallen dramatically in recent decades, some of the poorest and most vulnerable populations in Southern California are disproportionately affected, according to the UCLA Institute of the Environment. Media Newswire.

**[BP faces new air pollution complaint.](#)**

*Wednesday, June 03, 2009*

BP acknowledged that for the last six years its Whiting refinery violated federal



pollution limits on benzene, a highly toxic chemical linked to leukemia. The U.S. EPA cited BP for repeatedly violating the Clean Air Act at Whiting, the Midwest's largest oil refinery and one of the largest sources of air pollution in the Chicago area. Chicago Tribune, Illinois.

[See a related story: [Congressional leaders call for BP investigation](#)]

#### **Nicotine's role In SIDS.**

Wednesday, June 03, 2009

Exposure to cigarette smoke in the womb may dampen a baby's fight-or-flight responses, leaving the newborn vulnerable to sudden infant death syndrome, a study in rats suggests Science News.

#### **Folic acid offers more protection than thought.**

Wednesday, June 03, 2009

Baby-protecting folic acid is getting renewed attention: Not only does it fight spina bifida and some related abnormalities, new research shows it also may prevent premature birth and heart defects. Associated Press.

Most of the news articles above come from Environmental Health News, <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/>

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](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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