



# Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative

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



**Biweekly Bulletin June 3, 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).

### New Director of Health Policy

AAIDD has hired Joyce M. Martin, JD, as new full-time Director of Health Policy in the Washington, DC, office. Joyce, who served as director of the Office of Science Policy Planning at NIEHS, started at AAIDD on June 1st, bringing her significant experience in environmental health science and policy. Joyce will be working closely with LDDI.

### 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).

### LDDI Biomonitoring Project

The planning group for the LDDI biomonitoring project has started to move forward on testing for specified chemicals with confirmed participants. For more information, please contact Sharyle Patton at [spatton@igc.org](mailto:spatton@igc.org).

### New members

The Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative welcomes these new members:

- Allison Atwood, MS, San Francisco, California
- Donna Ferullo, Bethesda, Maryland
- Elizabeth Gribble Walker, PhD, Tucson, Arizona
- Nanette Moller, BA, Aliso Viejo, California
- Alexandra Zissu, New York, New York

## 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) Film - Black Mold Exposure**

in various cities around the US in April, May and June 2009  
at select theaters

Sponsor: Looking Glass Entertainment Company

"Black Mold Exposure" explores the bizarre illnesses associated with exposure to toxic mold and the film participants' difficult task of regaining their health and lives in an atmosphere of political and social intolerance and disbelief.

Price: varies

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: [contact@blackmoldexposuremovie.com](mailto:contact@blackmoldexposuremovie.com)

### **2) 2009 Northwest Chemicals Policy Symposium**

Thursday June 4, 2009

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Seattle, Washington

at the Hyatt Hotel at Olive 8

Sponsor: Snohomish County, Conference on Canadian Stewardship

In this highly interactive workshop, participants will share activities and successes, barriers encountered, and emerging strategies to improve chemicals policy nationally. The session will bring together diverse stakeholders working toward a green materials economy where manufacturing, use, and end-of-life management of consumer products have no adverse effects on our health our environment. Representatives from academia, local and state government, health and environmental organizations, business, and advocacy organizations are all invited to attend. The session will emphasize generating ideas and joint strategies for advancing policy change in our communities, states, and the nation.

Price: \$50

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Marni Solheim, 509-329-3564 or [MSOL461@ECY.WA.GOV](mailto:MSOL461@ECY.WA.GOV)

### **3) CHE Science Café Call**

Thursday, June 4, 2009

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

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

Join CHE as we host our first Science Café call featuring Steve Gilbert, PhD, with the Institute of Neurotoxicology and Neurological Disorders. Dr. Gilbert will discuss Toxipedia (<http://www.toxipedia.org>), a tool he created that uses a modified wiki approach. Now with a contract from the National Library of Medicine and funding from King County and the Washington Department of Ecology, he will be able to further develop the site and lessen the information gap between those with knowledge on environmental public health and those that need the information to lead healthier lives.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

### **4) 21st Annual Meeting of the European Academy of Childhood Disability**

Thursday through Saturday, June 4 - 6, 2009

Vilnius, Lithuania

Sponsor: European Academy of Childhood Disability

The meeting is intended to promote collaborations between eastern and western European countries in the field of developmental disorders, and in improving and unifying rehabilitation standards in Europe. Standards of care emerging in different therapy areas will be presented in the workshops. The conference theme is "From Myth to Evidence."

Price: see [the registration page](#)

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: see [the contact page](#)

#### **5) 3rd WHO International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment**

Sunday through Wednesday, June 7 - 10, 2009

Sponsor: World Health Organization

The event aims to extend the recognition of children's environmental health needs and provide a platform for the exchange of scientific experiences, promote learning about research efforts, and promote protective policies. It will also enable us to work out why existing global efforts have not progressed more rapidly and what needs to be done, both in developing and industrialized countries.

Price: unknown

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: World Health Organization, 41-22-791-21-11 or [info@who.int](mailto:info@who.int)

#### **6) 12th Biennial Meeting of the International Neurotoxicology Association**

Sunday through Friday, June 7 - 12, 2009

Ma'ale Hachamisha, Israel

at the Kibbutz Ma'ale Hachamisha Hotel and Convention Center

Sponsor: International Neurotoxicology Association

The conference theme is "Gene-Environment Interactions in Neurotoxicology." CME credit is pending. The official language of the meeting is English.

Price: see [the registration page](#)

[Visit the website](#)

#### **7) AAIDD Annual Conference**

Wednesday through Friday, June 10 - 12, 2009

New Orleans, Louisiana

at the Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans, 921 Canal Street

Sponsor: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The conference theme is "Creating Enviably Lives: The Business Plan Conference." A panel presentation is scheduled for Wednesday on "Translating the Science: Links Between Neurotoxicants and Learning/Developmental Disabilities", led by Laura Abulafia.

Price: see [the registration page](#)

[Visit the website](#)

#### **8) 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)

### **9) 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)

## **Announcements & Articles**

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

### **[Scientists convene to discuss new method to study how toxic chemicals impact human health.](#)**

More than 200 scientists, regulators, and policy makers from around the world convened recently at EPA's first ToxCast Data Analysis Summit to discuss results of the first phase of ToxCast. ToxCast is an innovative approach for profiling how chemicals in our environment impact important biological pathways that are critical for the function of the body's systems such as the heart, lungs, brain or reproductive organs. US Environmental Protection Agency.

### **[New online forum promotes transparency and openness in government.](#)**

The eRulemaking Program has launched Regulations.gov Exchange. Regulations.gov is the one-stop, online source for citizens to search, view and comment on regulations issued by the U.S. government. US Environmental Protection Agency.

### **[Well water should be tested annually to reduce health risks to children.](#)**

Private well water should be tested yearly, and in some cases more often, according to new guidance offered by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). National Institute of Environmental Health Science.

### **[EPA strengthens safety measures for soil fumigant pesticides.](#)**

The Environmental Protection Agency is strengthening safety measures for soil fumigant pesticides. The safety measures will reduce fumigant exposures to bystanders -- people who live, work, attend school, or spend time near agricultural fields that are fumigated -- and increase overall safety of fumigant use by requiring greater planning and compliance. US Environmental Protection Agency.

### **[President Obama announces national fuel efficiency policy.](#)**

*Wednesday, May 20, 2009*

President Obama today -- for the first time in history -- set in motion a new national policy aimed at both increasing fuel economy and reducing greenhouse gas pollution for all new cars and trucks sold in the United States. US Environmental Protection Agency.

**[More stain repelling chemicals found in Inuit's traditional food than in store foods.](#)**

*Tuesday, June 02, 2009*

Traditional and locally harvested foods contribute more persistent, stain-repelling compounds to the native Inuit diet than packaged food that is imported and sold at the local stores, report researchers who analyzed and compared exposures from the two food sources. Environmental Health News.

**[N.J. environmental agency proposes restrictions on release of scientific reports.](#)**

*Tuesday, June 02, 2009*

The state DEP proposed restrictions today on the public release of its scientific studies and reports, which environmental groups lambasted as a sweeping "gag order" spurred by a controversy over chromium pollution in Hudson County. Newark Star-Ledger, New Jersey.

**[Lead remains a threat to all ages.](#)**

*Tuesday, June 02, 2009*

There have also been a number of studies of lead toxicity in elderly people. But until now, none have evaluated links between lead and mortality in people over age 65 in the general population. Environmental Science & Technology.

[See a related article about lead exposure and liability: [Landlord facing EPA lead fines](#)]

**[Obama's EPA administrator renews pledge for 'environmental justice.'](#)**

*Monday, June 01, 2009*

Lisa P. Jackson, chosen by President Barack Obama to head the EPA, told attendees at a conference on environmental justice that minorities and low-income people are the victims of pollution by U.S. companies and businesses. Cybercast News Service.

[See a related article: [Bill aims to keep emission-reduction efforts local](#)]

**[Groups ask EPA to ban lead tire weights.](#)**

*Monday, June 01, 2009*

While the federal government has banned lead in paint, gasoline, plumbing, and other products, the EPA has ignored an estimated 3.5 million pounds of lead weights that drop off tire rims and onto U.S. roads every year, according to a petition to ban their use. San Francisco Chronicle, California.

**[Dangers of two-stroke engines.](#)**

*Sunday, May 31, 2009*

Two-stroke engines commonly used for gardening and boats can cause serious health problems including cancer, from emissions of benzene and other hazardous chemicals, a Griffith University environmental scientist warned. Brisbane Times, Australia.

**[Environmentalists sue ExxonMobil in Louisiana.](#)**

*Saturday, May 30, 2009*

The Louisiana Environmental Action Network alleges that ExxonMobil's Baton Rouge chemical plant released nearly 2 tons of propylene, ethylene, and flammable vapors into the air on three occasions in June 2008 in violation of the Environmental Quality Act. Courthouse News Service.

[See a related article: [Chevron fights massive lawsuit in Ecuador](#)]

**[Where's the beef? Ghent goes vegetarian.](#)**

*Saturday, May 30, 2009*

The Flemish city of Ghent has designated every Thursday as "Veggedag" calling for meat-free meals to be served in schools and public buildings, and encouraging vegetarianism among citizens by promoting vegetarian eateries and offering advice on how to follow a herbivorous diet. Time Magazine.

[See another article about diet and environment: [Can America's urban food deserts](#)

[bloom?\]](#)

### **[E-waste handling remains primitive.](#)**

*Saturday, May 30, 2009*

Cellphones, computers, hand-held devices, TVs and VCRs all become poisonous garbage -- leaching lead, mercury, arsenic, cadmium, beryllium and brominated fire retardants either into our air or into landfills, depending on the method of disposal. Canwest News Service, Canada.

### **[Camp Lejeune vets suffer from drinking water contamination.](#)**

*Saturday, May 30, 2009*

Camp Lejeune, a sprawling Marine base on the North Carolina seaboard, is the site of what some scientists call the worst public drinking-water contamination in the nation's history. St. Petersburg Times, Florida.

### **[Fluoride in water study set to raise hackles.](#)**

*Saturday, May 30, 2009*

A study is to be carried out into adding fluoride to drinking water in Yorkshire after pleas from two health trusts concerned about the state of children's teeth. Yorkshire Post.

### **[Rail industry petitions to stop moving toxins.](#)**

*Friday, May 29, 2009*

Railroad companies are pressing federal regulators to cut back on trains carrying hazardous materials through urban areas, saying they fear a catastrophic release of toxic chemicals in a large city. Environmental News Network.

### **[Cigarette butts: Tiny trash that piles up.](#)**

*Friday, May 29, 2009*

Cigarette butts comprise one-quarter of the items tossed onto U.S. streets. Smokers see butts as a more natural kind of trash. But they are not biodegradable: they have plastic filters that will be swept out to sea -- hence releasing toxic chemicals including nicotine, benzene and cadmium. New York Times.

### **[Deadly mercury in fish is a global health hazard.](#)**

*Friday, May 29, 2009*

Your mother often told you fish is brain food. Now experts are telling you that the very same source of the food that helps to boost your brain function could be a source of brain-toxic heavy metals, such as mercury. Johannesburg Business Day, South Africa.

[See related articles about contaminated fish: [Saginaw Bay is full of fish, but watch which ones you eat](#) and [Toxic fish found in Inland lakes](#)]

### **[Pesticides lurk everywhere.](#)**

*Friday, May 29, 2009*

According to Washington, D.C.'s National Coalition on the Misuse of Pesticides, triclosan -- aka 2,4,4'-trichloro-2'-hydroxydiphenyl ether -- is associated with skin irritation, allergy sensitivity, bacterial and antibiotic resistance, and the destruction of aquatic ecosystems. In addition to certain brands of socks, it's also found in everything from makeup to children's toys. Georgia Straight, Canada.

### **[New data suggest PBDE byproducts are ubiquitous in U.S. waters.](#)**

*Thursday, May 28, 2009*

Research shows for the first time that compounds produced when PBDE flame retardants are exposed to wastewater treatment can generate dioxins. Environmental Science & Technology.

### **[A simple smooch or a toxic smack?](#)**

*Thursday, May 28, 2009*

The debate seems to resurface every few years. Do some lipsticks contain lead? If so, is the amount so negligible that consumers have nothing to be concerned about? Or will all those years of applying lipstick add up to a worrisome accumulation of a dangerous substance? New York Times.



### [Toxic.](#)

*Wednesday, May 27, 2009*

What is making American children sick? Cancer rates are climbing. Cases of autism, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and asthma are through the roof. Is the answer all around us - in the food our kids eat, the air they breathe, and the clothes they wear? WCVB Boston.

### [Autism: It's the environment, not just doctors diagnosing more disease.](#)

*Wednesday, May 27, 2009*

California's sevenfold increase in autism cannot be explained by changes in doctors' diagnoses and most likely is due to environmental exposures, University of California scientists reported Thursday. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Washington.

[See an opposing view: [Autism: study finds 12-fold rise in cases](#)]

### [EPA announces dioxin review, plans for Dow cleanup.](#)

*Wednesday, May 27, 2009*

The federal government will speed up a long-delayed assessment of how chemicals called dioxins affect human health, Environmental Protection Agency head Lisa Jackson said Tuesday. Associated Press.

[See another article related to dioxins: [DEP tells Putnam mill to rethink dioxin, other problems](#)]

### [Strapped states cut smoking-prevention funds.](#)

*Wednesday, May 27, 2009*

Cash-strapped state governments are slashing funding for tobacco prevention and cessation programs in a move anti-tobacco groups say could backfire, costing taxpayers later for treatment of tobacco-related illnesses among people who might've quit. Associated Press.

### [California farmland fumigants challenged.](#)

*Wednesday, May 27, 2009*

Groups from the Ventura and San Joaquin Air Basins charge that the state failed to analyze reasonable alternatives or to minimize the impact of volatile organic compounds from treating strawberries and other crops. Los Angeles Times, California.

### [Mobile phones to be banned in French primary schools for health risks.](#)

*Wednesday, May 27, 2009*

Mobile telephones will be banned from French primary schools, and operators must offer handsets that allow only text messages under new government measures to limit the health risk to children from electromagnetic radiation. London Times, England.

### [Clean, green clothing.](#)

*Tuesday, May 26, 2009*

More N.J. laundry services are trading traditional chemicals [perc] for earth-friendly methods. Newark Star-Ledger, New Jersey.

### [Using less pesticide may kill more cockroaches.](#)

*Tuesday, May 26, 2009*

An innovative cockroach control strategy that keeps pesticide use to a minimum is much more effective than the standard approach -- regular, massive sprays of powerful bug-killers -- for wiping out the pests, a new study conducted in schools shows. Reuters Health.

### [Impulsive behavior in preteens linked to mom's smoking when pregnant.](#)

*Tuesday, May 26, 2009*

New research indicates that smoking during pregnancy can lead to impulsive behavior in children. Environmental Health News.

### [Vaccine study links refusal to disease risk.](#)

*Tuesday, May 26, 2009*

Children whose parents refuse to have them immunized against it are 23 times more likely to get whooping cough, according to a new study that is perhaps the most

definitive yet linking vaccine refusal to disease. Denver Post, Colorado.

[See a related article: [Vaccinate your kids -- or else](#)]

**[Discover Magazine ignores much of vaccine-autism story.](#)**

Tuesday, May 26, 2009

The following letter was sent to the editors at Discover Magazine last week regarding a recent article on vaccines and autism. The magazine claimed that the debate is over, but ignored the fact that federal and private support of research into a possible association continues. Huffington Post.

[The Discover article was referenced in this publication on May 7th.]

**[Fire underscores threats and benefits of refineries.](#)**

Monday, May 25, 2009

The explosion and fire at Sunoco's Marcus Hook oil refinery was a reminder of the potential for major accidents at such facilities. But day in and day out, refineries have a significant impact, ranking among the region's top air polluters. They emit a brew of contaminants. Philadelphia Inquirer, Pennsylvania.

**[City schools seek to make buses cleaner.](#)**

Monday, May 25, 2009

The Pittsburgh Public Schools is poised to join a growing number of districts nationwide working to purify the air inside and outside of school buses. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Pennsylvania.

**[Conn. lawmakers vote to ban BPA in food containers.](#)**

Saturday, May 23, 2009

Connecticut on Friday joined a growing number of state and local governments banning the sale of plastic baby bottles, food containers and cups containing Bisphenol-A. Associated Press.

[See an article about the BPA industry response: [BPA industry seeks to polish image.](#)]

**[Rice milk arsenic contamination prompts food watchdog warning for children to stop drinking it.](#)**

Saturday, May 23, 2009

Toddlers and young children should not be given rice milk because it exposes them to arsenic, parents have been told. London Daily Mail, England.

**[Senate panel backs FDA oversight of cigarettes.](#)**

Friday, May 22, 2009

A U.S. Senate panel on Wednesday backed legislation that would give the Food and Drug Administration power to control the advertising and manufacturing of cigarettes and other tobacco products. Reuters Health.

**[Cognition, attention altered in youngsters who live with gas appliances.](#)**

Friday, May 22, 2009

Preschoolers who lived in homes using gas appliances scored lower on cognitive tests and had a higher likelihood of exhibiting inattention behaviors than those in homes without gas appliances, finds a recent study. Environmental Health News.

**[Researchers tap local mothers-to-be.](#)**

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Local pregnant women are helping McMaster researchers determine if chemicals we come across in everyday life affect our health. Hamilton Spectator, Canada.

**['Miracle' autism drug called junk science.](#)**

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Desperate to help their autistic children, hundreds of parents nationwide are turning to an unproven and potentially damaging treatment: multiple high doses of a powerful castration drug. The therapy is based on a theory, unsupported by mainstream medicine, that autism is caused by a harmful link between mercury and testosterone. Chicago Tribune, Illinois.



**[North Carolina approves ban on smoking.](#)**

*Wednesday, May 20, 2009*

North Carolina, the nation's largest grower of tobacco, will soon prohibit smoking in restaurants and bars. The ban, signed into law on Tuesday by Gov. Bev Perdue, is another defeat for the ailing tobacco industry on home turf in the South. New York Times.

**[Dangers of food packaging and BPA's.](#)**

*Wednesday, May 20, 2009*

Food packages, including cans, many bottles and plastic or foil "pouches," all contain at least some plastic -- regardless of their appearance. And unfortunately, much of the plastic used these days contains the additive bisphenol A. Oakland Tribune, California.

[See a related article: [Drinking from plastic bottles 'increases exposure to gender-bending chemical'](#)]

**[Tree leaves reveal deadly pollution levels.](#)**

*Wednesday, May 20, 2009*

Silently lining the roads, trees seem passive garnish to a bustling human society. But they are also sentinels, their leaves taking careful measurements of the microscopic particles of pollution that humans generate, which stealthily claim hundreds of thousands of lives each year across the U.S. and Europe. Discovery Channel.

**[New Connecticut law demands schools use green cleaning products.](#)**

*Wednesday, May 20, 2009*

Schools across Connecticut must develop green cleaning programs as of 2011, according to a law passed by the state Senate on Tuesday. Greater Danbury News Times, Connecticut.

**[Toxic 'carbon tet' lingers in air near schools.](#)**

*Wednesday, May 20, 2009*

Despite efforts to eliminate carbon tetrachloride -- which eats up the Earth's ozone layer, is classified by the U.S. EPA as a probable human carcinogen, and is known to damage the liver, kidneys and brain -- it still shows up at elevated levels around the world, scientists say, including outside of many schools. USA Today.

[See a related article: [Banned toxic chemical lingers in Louisville air](#)]

**[Surrounded by plastic, NICU infants tested for risk.](#)**

*Wednesday, May 20, 2009*

Scientists say the nation's sickest newborns are exposed to unusually high levels of phthalates -- chemicals in plastics that can mimic hormones -- because they often spend days or weeks connected to feeding tubes, breathing tubes and intravenous lines made of plastic. All Things Considered, NPR.

*Most of the news articles above come from Environmental Health News,*

<http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/>

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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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