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Navigating the Scientific Evidence to Ensure Prevention Project Progress and Next Steps

Over the past year, the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment (PRHE) has led an effort in collaboration with the Collaborative on Health and the Environment/Commonweal, the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals, Magee-Women's Hospital of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and other partners to craft the *Navigation Guide*, a transparent and systematic methodology to sort the scientific evidence linking environmental exposures to reproductive health outcomes. The purpose of the *Navigation Guide* is to provide the evidence-based foundation for the timely development of anticipatory guidance in clinical care settings and policy arenas. Below is a summary of project accomplishments to date and next steps.

Accomplishments to Date:

- **Established and worked in close partnership with the *Navigation Guide* Organizing Committee to develop the methodology.** In addition to PRHE's Director and scientific staff, the organizing committee is composed of five representatives of PRHE's From Advancing Science to Ensuring Prevention (FASTEP) Alliance all of whom have provided in-kind support (Table 1. Organizing Committee).
- **Identified and engaged a multi-disciplinary group of 23 scientists and community-based collaborators** (Appendix I. List of Participants). The participants are based across the U.S. and in Europe and were chosen to reflect a range of new partners spanning the fields of clinical medicine and environmental and public health and representing diverse disciplines and perspectives.
- **Developed a comprehensive proposal for the *Navigation Guide*** (Appendix II. Draft Discussion Document). The 34-page document describes the purpose of the *Navigation Guide*, discusses key commonalities and differences in the use of scientific evidence in clinical and environmental health sciences, provides an overview of how scientific evidence is incorporated into clinical practice, details a proposed methodology, and reflects on future directions in the use of scientific evidence in the fields of clinical medicine and environmental health. The *Navigation Guide* incorporates the key principles of evidence-based medicine, values the environmental health stream of evidence, incorporates patient or public preferences in decision-making and provides a pathway to reaching a timely decision in the face of scientific uncertainty.
- **Convened a two-day workshop of scientific collaborators.** On August 10-11, 2009 the 23 participants met in Oakland, CA to develop the *Navigation Guide* (Appendix III. Workshop Prospectus and Appendix IV. Workshop Agenda). There were many positive outcomes of the workshop. First and foremost, together we cemented a collaborative interdisciplinary working relationship that over the course of two days

achieved consensus on the need to craft a *Navigation Guide* and a commitment to continue to work together to create and publish the methodology. Our collaboration also produced a detailed roadmap for how to improve the proposed *Navigation Guide* to ensure it values all components of the evidence stream used in environmental health decision-making and meets the needs of clinicians and other end users. We gained agreement among the participants to publish the methodology in a peer-reviewed journal read by medical and environmental health scientists and having an established focus on evidence-based medicine, such as *JAMA*. Publication in a prestigious and well-established medical journal will solidify the acceptance of incorporating reproductive health into clinical care.

- **Gained key endorsements for developing the *Navigation Guide* from clinical, environmental, and reproductive health professionals and advocates.** Our August workshop was sponsored by: the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals, Magee-Women's Hospital of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, UCSF Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit, Kaiser Permanente, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists District IX, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Physicians for Social Responsibility, Science and Environmental Health Network, Natural Resources Defense Council, California Healthy Nail Salons Collaborative, WorkSafe, UCSF Phillip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies, Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona and the European Environment Agency.
- **Initiated efforts within Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) to use the *Navigation Guide* as the basis of developing PPFA's clinical practice guidelines for reproductive environmental.** PRHE Director, Tracey Woodruff's presentation to PPFA's National Medical Committee on October 2, 2009 about the *Navigation Guide* was enthusiastically received. Efforts to have PPFA use the *Navigation Guide* are being led by *Navigation Guide* collaborators, Rivka Gordon, the Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP) and Sandy Worthington, Program Director for PPFA, who are members of the PPFA National Medical Committee that advises the organization on clinical guidelines development.
- **Initiated an uptake and dissemination strategy for the *Navigation Guide*.** Our discussions, panels and closing comments at the August workshop revealed many potential uses of the *Navigation Guide* in clinical, policy and community-based arenas. This suggests that the *Navigation Guide* will ultimately describe a generic process that can be used by any and all end users who may choose to gather the relevant scientific, clinical, patient, community-based, and other potential resources needed to apply the *Navigation Guide*. It will serve as a foundation for prevention-oriented decision making by clinicians and ultimately policy-makers. For example, the *Navigation Guide* is also a critical foundation step for the next generation of chemical policy-making such as current efforts to reform the Toxic Substances and Control Act and the growing intersection of clinical medicine and environmental health.

Next Steps:

- **Nurture the Collaboration** - PRHE will continue to lead and nurture the collaboration among the *Navigation Guide* participants.
- **Complete the *Navigation Guide*** - PRHE in collaboration with workshop participants will finalize the *Navigation Guide* paper and submit it to a peer-reviewed journal authored by PRHE and the participants; and
- **Gain Uptake of the *Navigation Guide*** - PRHE in collaboration with workshop participants will accelerate efforts to have the *Navigation Guide* adopted by professional and medical societies and health care organizations. The *Navigation Guide* will integrate environmental health science into clinical decision making in a timely manner. As such, it will provide a foundation for clinicians, medical societies and health care organizations to move toward recommendations on chemicals of concern, even when scientific debate remains. Our *Navigation Guide* partner, the Collaborative on Health and the Environment, will be hosting a conference call on November 11, 2009 to share details about the August workshop with the larger community. Check their website for more details at: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/>.

Table 1. Navigating the Scientific Evidence Organizing Committee

Tracey Woodruff, PhD, MPH	Associate Professor and Director Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment University of California, San Francisco
Patrice Sutton, MPH	Research Scientist Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment University of California, San Francisco
Heather Sarantis, MS	Women’s Health Program Manager Commonweal
Julia Quint, PhD	Retired, Chief, Hazard Evaluation System and Information Services, Occupational Health Branch California Department of Public Health
Mark Miller, MD, MPH	Director, Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit; Assistant Clinical Professor of Pediatrics and Occupational & Environmental Medicine University of California, San Francisco
Michele Ondeck, MEd	Program Director Magee Women’s Hospital University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
Rivka Gordon, PA-C, MHS	Director of Strategic Initiatives Association of Reproductive Health Professionals