



Collaborative on Health and the Environment

eNewsletter -- December 2008



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Dear CHE Friends:

We want to let you know about several important transitions at CHE. First, after four and a half years of service, Eleni Sotos, CHE Program Director, will be stepping down in January to pursue other interests. Eleni has done a truly superb job at CHE. We wish Eleni all good things in her next endeavors and look forward to working together in new ways in the future.

"I have been blessed to work with so many dedicated and extraordinary colleagues in both CHE and the broader environmental health movement," Eleni says. "I look forward to remaining engaged in the CHE network and exploring new opportunities in the field."

Second, Elise Miller, M.Ed., will take on the new position of CHE Director on January 1, 2009. As most of you know, Elise is a Founding Partner of CHE and Founder and Executive Director of the Institute for Children's Environmental Health. She has served as National Coordinator of the CHE's Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative since its inception in 2002. In addition, she is a member of the CHE core planning group, Co-chair of the Parkinson's Disease Working Group, Founding Coordinator of CHE-Washington, and Chair of CHE's working and regional groups.

"Though I have had the privilege to engage in numerous CHE efforts over the last six years, I am truly honored to be asked to serve the broader CHE partnership in this new role," Elise says. "As we move into the New Year, the economic picture may be bleak, but the need to address environmental health concerns is an pressing as ever and integrally tied to creating a greener, more sustainable and just society. I look forward to working with all of you to develop creative, collective and bold next steps for prioritizing and framing scientific research in environmental health, galvanizing health-affected constituencies, and providing forums for diverse sectors to have informed, action-oriented discussions on emerging issues."

As part of her responsibilities as CHE Director, Elise will also serve as the Managing Partner of CHE, a position I have held since we initiated CHE six years ago. Though I will remain very active in CHE, my role will change to Vice-Chair under CHE Chair Phil Lee, M.D.

As I turned 65 in October, I knew it was time for new and more youthful leadership in CHE. Elise is widely recognized and respected for an extraordinary balance of skills in the CHE community and the broader environmental health field. I have no doubt the national and international membership of CHE will benefit enormously as she takes on this new leadership position.

Finally, Ted Schettler, M.D., M.P.H., will assume a new role as CHE Science Director. Ted, who is Science Director of the Science and Environmental Health Network, is also a Founding Partner

of CHE and has long coordinated the CHE Science Working Group. He has also played a critical role in a whole series of CHE projects, most recently the CHE Parkinson's Disease Consensus Statement.

Ted says, "It's a great pleasure to be a part of this community of interests and to help identify the common threads that weave through our work. Although much remains to be done, it seems clear that CHE is contributing substantially to the effort bringing the fields of public environmental health and medicine into closer alignment. At a time when many of the assumptions underlying science and policy over the past 50 years have proven to be ephemeral, this task has even more urgency. I hope and expect that CHE will continue to find creative ways to contribute to what is evolving."

Likewise, Ted has been right at the heart of CHE's scientific work since CHE's inception. His new position as CHE Science Director essentially codifies the position he has long occupied at CHE. We are deeply fortunate to have his scientific leadership in CHE.

In the midst of these transitions, we are grateful for what we have accomplished together as an international partnership of 3000 individuals and organizations committed to civil and constructive dialogue on the revolution in environmental health sciences. We also value your ongoing collaboration regarding new opportunities to further scientific research as well as make collective progress on environmental health promotion and disease prevention.

We look forward to working with you in CHE's seventh year at a time of extraordinary change, challenges and opportunities.

Thanks for being part of CHE,

Michael Lerner
Founding CHE Partner

CHE Partnership and Working Group Calls

--CHE Partnership Call--

Crash Landing: Environmental and Health Costs (and Benefits?) of the Economic Recession

-A Conversation with Lester Brown-

Thurs, Jan 8 at 11 AM Pacific/ 2 PM Eastern

How will the global recession affect health and the environment?

The global recession has drastically reduced the use of oil, lowering emissions that contribute to climate change. Less manufacturing will reduce production of some chemical contaminants. Reduced oil and commodity costs should reduce the cost of food. But millions of people are out of work, and socioeconomic status (SES) is a powerful predictor of health outcomes. And the opportunities to reform the financial system in ways that reduce inequality, enhance health and sustain the environment are unlikely to be pursued.

Please join us with eminent environmentalist Lester Brown to discuss these questions. This call will last one hour and will be recorded for archival purposes. Brown is the founder of the Worldwatch Institute, founder and president of the Earth Policy Institute, and author of many books, including *Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization*.

This special CHE Partnership Call will be on **Thurs, Jan 8 at 11 AM Pacific/ 2 PM Eastern**. Don't miss this chance to hear and talk with one of the great environmental thinkers of our time.

RSVP for CHE's conversation with Lester Brown

--CHE Partnership Call--

Critical Windows of Development: A Conversation with Dr. Theo

Colborn

With Dr. Linda Giudice and Pete Myers

Tues, Feb 10, at 10 AM Pacific/ 1 PM Eastern

This call will highlight a new tool developed by Dr. Colborn that demonstrates the importance of environmental impacts to critical windows of development. The Critical Windows of Development tool is a timeline of how the human body develops in the womb, with animal research showing when low-dose exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals during development results in altered health outcomes.

Speakers:

- **Dr. Theo Colborn**, President, The Endocrine Disruption Exchange (TEDX) and Professor, University of Florida, Gainesville
- **Dr. Linda Giudice**, Professor and Chair, Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences, University of California, San Francisco
- **Dr. Pete Myers**, CEO, Environmental Health Sciences

The call will last one hour and will be recorded for archival purposes.

RSVP for CHE's conversation with Dr. Theo Colborn

Resources from recent CHE calls

If you missed any of the following CHE calls, you may listen to MP3 recordings and find supporting materials at the following links:

- Dec 9, 2008 - "[Growing Danger: Pesticides, Other Agricultural Exposures, and Cancer: A Conversation with Dr. Tyrone Hayes](#)"
- Nov 20, 2008 - "[CHE Café with Nancy A. Nichols and Alice and Philip Shabecoff](#)"
- Oct 20, 2008 - "[Environmental Threats to Healthy Aging](#)"

And of course, you can always explore our [archived resources](#) from past Partnership calls.

CHE Working and Regional Group Updates

CHE Alaska

Statewide Teleconference Seminar Series

Health care professionals, researchers, tribal representatives, health and environmental advocates, students, health-affected persons, parents, and anyone who is interested is cordially invited to participate in the teleconference seminar:

Community-Based Participatory Research: How Communities Assess Environmental Exposure and Make Positive Changes

Wednesday, December 18, 2008 at 9 AM Alaska/ 10 AM Pacific

The call will last one hour.

CALL-IN INFORMATION:

To join this free call and receive the dial-up instructions, please RSVP to Alaska Community Action on Toxics at info@akaction.net or (907) 222-7714.

Community-based participatory research is a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. Join our speakers for an informative look at critical health related research examples that were structured around a community's concern and that have empowered and led to positive change in the lives of the people concerned.

- **Dr. Phil Brown** is Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies at Brown. His most recent book is "Toxic Exposures: Contested Illnesses and the Environmental Health

Movement."

- **Dr. Rebecca Gasior Altman** earned her PhD in sociology from Brown University in 2008. Her article, "Pollution Comes Home and Gets Personal: Women's Experience of Household Chemical Exposure," co-authored with Phil Brown, Rachel Morello-Frosch, and the Silent Spring Institute, appeared in the December 2008 issue of The Journal of Health and Social Behavior (available at: <http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/DEC08JHSBFeature.pdf>).
- **Vi Wahiyi** is a bilingual St. Lawrence Island Yupik Eskimo who was born and raised in Savoonga, Alaska on St. Lawrence Island. She is the Environmental Justice Community Coordinator for ACAT and serves as the coordinator of the NIEHS project on St Lawrence Island.

CHE Cancer

~ coordinated by Jeanne Rizzo, RN, Executive Director of the Breast Cancer Fund, Diana Zuckerman, PhD, President of the National Center for Policy Research (CPR) for Women & Families, and Michael Lerner, PhD, President of Commonweal
For more information about this group, contact Shelby Gonzalez, CHE Administrative Coordinator, at shelby@healthandenvironment.org

~ We invite you to voice your support for a stronger, science-based cancer prevention agenda by signing the new **CHE Consensus Statement on Cancer and the Environment**. The Consensus Statement on Cancer and the Environment outlines the scientific rationale for stronger cancer prevention and enumerates specific research and policy initiatives to prevent environmental exposures that contribute to cancer. Many notable scientists and other reviewers have agreed to sign the statement.

The Consensus Statement is being presented to the President's Cancer Panel. This year the Panel is holding a series of meetings focused on "Cancer and the Environment". We believe the Panel has a unique opportunity to influence the strategic direction of the national cancer prevention agenda in this country and around the world; an agenda that includes an expanded perspective on the occupational and environmental contributors of cancer in our research, policy and educational programs.

Our goal is to **gather as many signatures as possible by Jan 27, 2009**, the date of the fourth and final President's Cancer Panel meeting on cancer and environment, to indicate a critical mass of public support for a stronger cancer prevention agenda. We invite you to review the statement and sign as an individual or on behalf of your organization/institution at: www.healthandenvironment.org/cancersignon.

~ An exclusive **fact sheet on indoor/outdoor air and water pollution and cancer** is now available. The fact sheet was written by Molly Jacobs, MPH and Richard Clapp, DSc, MPH of the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production as part of the CHE Cancer subgroup initiative on the President's Cancer Panel. Access the fact sheet and other cancer and the environment resources at:

<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/articles/doc/4960>

~ The **final meeting of the President's Cancer Panel** will focus on nuclear fallout, electromagnetic fields and radiation exposure and cancer. The meeting will take place in **Phoenix, AZ on Jan 27, 2009**. The meeting is free and open to the public, with 30 minutes reserved for public comment. CHE will be hosting a reception immediately after the event; if you are interested in attending, send an email to info@healthandenvironment.org.

~ **We encourage CHE Partners and friends to submit written testimony to the Panel** so it becomes part of the Panel's official record and is taken into consideration as the final report is written and ultimately submitted to the President of the United States.

You may **submit comments to the panel** at pcp-r@mail.nih.gov. You may also submit written comments to:

The President's Cancer Panel
National Cancer Institute
6116 Executive Boulevard
Suite 212, MSC 8349
Bethesda, MD 20814-0120

Belmesua, MD 20814-8439

For more information on the President's Cancer Panel meeting series, visit **CHE's PCP resource page:**
<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/articles/doc/4960>

CHE LDDI

~ coordinated by Elise Miller, Executive Director, Institute for Children's Environmental Health
emiller@iceh.org

~ **American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)** is hosting an invitational conference on "Toxic Chemicals and Vulnerable Populations: New Opportunities" December 11-12 at the Airlie Center in northern Virginia. This conference is a follow-up to AAIDD's (then AAMR's) Wingspread conference in 2003 where a "National Blueprint for Health Promotion and Disability Prevention" was developed that recommended actions for reducing the unnecessary occurrence of disabilities due to avoidable exposure to environmental contaminants. For more information, contact Laura Abulafia: Laura@aaidd.org

~ LDDI, coordinated by the Institute for Children's Environmental Health, is organizing an invitational **policy training** January 13-14 in Baltimore, MD for leaders in the learning and developmental disabilities sector interested in working on chemical policy reform. For more information, contact Elise Miller: Emiller@iceh.org

~ **Autism Society of America's (ASA's) Environmental Health Curriculum.** ASA's new online curriculum regarding environmental contributors to autism is now available. This is the first of two curricula explaining environmental hazards and connections that have been and are being drawn to autism and other complex conditions.
http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=research_envirohealth

~ LDDI's recently published **Mental Health and Environment fact sheet** is available at:
<http://www.iceh.org>

~ The Environmental Health Initiative of AAIDD presented a free **teleconference titled "Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units: A Resource for the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Community"** December 9. The teleconference presentation by Jerome Paulson, MD described the 12 pediatric environmental health specialty units (PEHSUs) in the US, Canada and Mexico. In the US, there is one unit in each of the 10 regions of the country designated by the US EPA. The goals of the units are to disseminate information about children's health and the environment and to consult with those who have questions about known or suspected environmental impacts on the health of individual children or a group of children. This teleconference described the PEHSUs in detail and will focus on case presentations involving concerns about 1) neurotoxicants, 2) specific cases involving individuals with intellectual or other developmental disabilities, and 3) community-level partnerships. Sponsored by the John Merck Fund. See the website at http://www.ehinitiative.org/Projects/tele_con.htm or contact Laura Abulafia: Laura@aaidd.org

Resources, Announcements, and Calls for Comments

Call for Comments - President's Cancer Panel

--Comments due January 27, 2008--

The President's Cancer Panel is preparing a report on cancer and the environment that will be presented to President Obama in 2009. We encourage CHE Partners and friends to submit written testimony to the Panel so it becomes part of the Panel's official record and is taken into consideration as the final report is written and ultimately submitted to the President of the United States.

You may submit comments to the panel at pccp-r@mail.nih.gov. You may also submit written comments to:

The President's Cancer Panel
National Cancer Institute
6116 Executive Boulevard
Suite 212, MSC 8349
Bethesda, MD 20814-8439

For more information on the President's Cancer Panel meeting series, visit CHE's PCP resource page:

<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/cancerpanel>

What is RESRAD and Why Should You Care?

--Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IEER)--

The December 2008 issue of IEER's newsletter, Science for Democratic Action (SDA), will feature the article, "What is RESRAD and Why Should You Care? A Community Guide to Estimating Radiation Doses Resulting from Residual Radioactive Contamination." This article summarizes IEER's forthcoming activist's manual on **how to use RESRAD to calculate doses to children**.

RESRAD is a free computer program that is widely used by industry and government -- DOE, NRC, EPA etc. -- to make regulatory decisions about residual radioactivity levels at nuclear sites, in other words to help determine "how clean is clean enough." The article, and the manual on which it is based, are important because they are designed to help activists and community leaders better understand and modify the official RESRAD program -- which cannot correctly calculate doses to children. The default setting of RESRAD is a 154-pound Reference Man in his twenties.

Access the Newsletter

KnowYourAirForHealth.eu

--European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA) and Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)--

People with respiratory diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) suffer more than others when air pollution levels are high. The new website was launched recently, on World COPD Day, by the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA) and Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL).

Www.knowyourairforhealth.eu is a resource centre for air pollution forecasts across EU, steps to take to protect your health and learning about rights for healthier air.

KnowYourAirForHealth.eu

Pollution Gets Personal

--Silent Spring Institute--

Study reveals that pollution at home lurks unrecognized, instead attributed to large-scale environmental disasters. Many surprised to learn extent of in-home contamination from consumer products that go unstudied, untested. "People more readily equate pollution with large-scale contamination and environmental disasters, yet the products and activities that form the backdrop to our everyday lives - electronics, cleaners, beauty products, food packaging-are a significant source of daily personal chemical exposure that accumulates over time," said sociologist Rebecca Gasior Altman, the lead author of the study, "Pollution Comes Home and Gets Personal: Women's Experience of Household Chemical Exposure."

Access the Study

Choosing Our Future

An educational comic strip that shows how chemicals are harming our health

--Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and Mouvement pour les Droits et la

---Health and Environment Alliance (HEA) and Movement pour les Droits et le
Respect des Generations Futures (MDRGF) --

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More about "Choosing our Future"

Healthy Toys 2008: Consumer Guide to Toxic Chemicals in Toys

--The Ecology Center--

The Ecology Center, a Michigan-based nonprofit organization, and partners across the country recently released the 2nd annual consumer guide to toxic chemicals in toys at www.HealthyToys.org. Researchers tested over 1,500 popular children's toys for lead, cadmium, arsenic, PVC and other harmful chemicals in time for this year's holiday shopping season. **One in three toys tested were found to contain "medium" or "high" levels of chemicals of concern.**

www.HealthyToys.org

Call for Comments - EU Consultation on the Use of the Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TTC) Approach for the Safety Assessment of Chemical Substances

The European Commission has asked its 3 scientific committees to do a joint review of the available scientific literature on the use of the Threshold of Toxicological Concern (TCC) approach. The Commission asked these three committees to give an opinion on the use of the TTC approach for the human health safety Assessment of Chemical Substances.

The concept of a Threshold of Toxicological Concern stands in direct contradiction to the concept of the "cocktail effect", and the implications for health from dose additivity and chemical mixtures to which we are all exposed. This is a key opportunity to tell the EU that they have to take the new science on board.

The draft report on the TTC is now open for public consultation. This is the second of two important reports that the EU scientific committees are doing; the other is on Risk assessment methodologies and approaches for mutagenic and carcinogenic substances. These reports are important because they will probably be heavily used or cited when decisions are being considered about certain chemicals under REACH and other chemicals laws in the EU: whenever the implementation of those laws involve 'risk assessment' and setting allowable levels below which chemicals can be used.

What can you do?

-- Announce this public consultation in your network, to your partners, colleagues etc. who might be interested in giving comment.

-- If this consultation is relevant to you or your organization's work, you can comment on the preliminary report drafted by the three Committees. Interested parties are invited to send their comments on the preliminary opinion via online form. (Consult the guidelines for submission first). Anyone can comment. Comments from the consultation are supposed to be taken into account in the final report, which will probably be issued in late January-early February. **The deadline for submissions is January 2, 2009.**

NOTE ALSO that the public consultation is done via a webpage, under a strict format. There is one mandatory 'choose a pre-set answer' question, and two optional sections (give your scientific or technical evidence; give your references for your comments).

For more information, and the online consultation, visit the Scientific Committee on Health

and Environmental Risks website:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scher/scher_cons_03_en.htm

Linda S. Burnbaum, Ph.D., D.A.B.T., A.T.S., Named New Director of NIEHS

recently announced the appointment of Linda S. Birnbaum, Ph.D., D.A.B.T., A.T.S., as director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). Dr. Birnbaum, who is currently a senior advisor at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), where she served for 16 years as director of the Experimental Toxicology Division, will begin her appointment in January 2009.

"I look forward to Dr. Birnbaum joining us," Dr. Kington said. "She has a long and distinguished career conducting research into the **health effects of environmental pollutants**, and the cause and effects relationships at pollutant concentrations which mimic those occurring in the environment."

Thank you for taking the time to read the latest about CHE. As always, we welcome your questions and suggestions. Please direct comments to Eleni Sotos, CHE Program Director, at Eleni@HealthandEnvironment.org.

Best wishes,

Eleni Sotos, MA, Program Director
Shelby Gonzalez, Administrative Coordinator
Julia Varshavsky, Program Associate

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