



Collaborative on Health and the Environment eNewsletter -- September 2009



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Dear CHE Partners:

Most of us have heard of Michael Pollan's 'An Eater's Manifesto': "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." Excellent advice for those of us who are fortunate enough to have a variety of food choices. The challenge of course is that our current industrialized food system (and related sectors such as advertising) encourages us to eat lots of food-like substances and high on the food chain--and for many in inner cities, finding a fresh vegetable, much less an organic one, can be as rare as gold.

In addition to these challenges, hormone disruptors (also known as endocrine disrupting chemicals) are found in everything from the feed given to animals to the pesticides sprayed on crops to the plastic additives in packaging--all of which we end up ingesting. These chemicals are now associated with a range of health concerns, including obesity, diabetes, certain cancers, neurological disorders and reproductive health problems, as the Endocrine Society described in their [recent consensus statement](#). And then there are issues such as the use of antibiotics in food, the importation of foods that aren't required to meet US standards, and food-borne viruses like e.coli.

The good news is that organizations on national, state and local levels are beginning to press for a health-based food system. For example, the American Medical Association ([AMA](#)) recently adopted a policy resolution "in support of practices and policies within health care systems that promote and model a healthy and ecologically sustainable food system." In addition, the Institute of Medicine ([IOM](#)) and The National Research Council ([NRC](#)) released a report last week that emphasized the need for local governments to create environments in which people make healthful lifestyle decisions. The statement calls for municipalities to "discourage fast-food restaurants near schools and playgrounds through zoning, provide tax incentives for groceries in underserved areas, and create nutritional standards for government-run after-school programs." In addition, myriad groups across the country are promoting Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) and working with local school districts to develop "farm to school" initiatives that would help local farmers as well as improve the quality of the food served in schools.

The question is whether these actions are enough to shift the economy towards a sustainable, health-based food system given the deeply intertwined and diverse set of players involved in the production and marketing of food. In an ecological or systems biology model, all the interacting factors work in concert, each as a complement to the other and each supporting the system as a whole. Right now at the federal level, the Department of Agriculture doesn't collaborate with the Food and Drug Administration which doesn't work with Environmental Protection Agency nor the Department of

housing and Urban Development nor the Department of Transportation, and so on--at times, in fact, some of these agencies even work at odds. Then on the local level, public health departments rarely work with school districts or planning commissions, certainly not in regards to the availability of high quality food.

This of course means we need to coordinate these efforts more effectively on every level if we are to improve the health of current and future generations. If you are interested in learning more about these issues and what we can do to address them, please join us on our next CHE Partner call entitled Food Matters: The Impact of Food Systems on Public Health to be held on **September 22, 2009** (details below).

Elise Miller, MEd
Director

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Collaborative on Health and the Environment

CHE Partnership Calls

Food Matters: The Impact of Food Systems on Public Health

Tuesday, September 22, 2009 at 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern

Join CHE as we consider today's food environment or "food system" and how the dysfunction inherent in the system contributes to ill health. There is plenty of evidence to proceed forward with interventions to make a healthier food system, but many in healthcare seem stuck inside reductionist, rather than systems thinking. What's the basis for agreeing that there's evidence for broad-scale change? What are some strategies for prioritizing food systems reform, amid all the other environmental health challenges?"

RSVP for this call

Confirmed Speakers:

- **David Wallinga**, MD, MPH, Director of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy ([IATP](#))
- **Kelly Brownell**, PhD, Professor in the Department of Psychology at Yale University, Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at Yale University and as Director of the [Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity](#)

This call will be recorded for archival purposes.

CHE Cafe Call

CHE Cafe Call with Douglas Abrams, author of *Eye of the Whale*

Wednesday, September 30, 2009 at 11 AM Pacific / 2 PM Eastern

Join Elise Miller, CHE Director, for a conversation with **Douglas Abrams**, author of the newly released novel *Eye of the Whale*. The novel weaves science throughout the story, addressing important issues of endocrine disruption and toxins. Abrams will talk about his writing process, how he included leading scientists, physicians and others in his research and why he chose to address the issues of endocrine disruption in his work.

Participants do not need to RSVP for this call. Please join the call by using the following dial-in information:

1-270-400-2000
Access code: 198686#

[More information](#)

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:

- July 28, 2009 - [Precaution's Reach: A Principle in Action](#)
- June 23, 2009 - [A Common Agenda for Health and the Environment: Goals for the Next Generation and Steps to Get There](#)
- June 12, 2009 - [Ecological Intelligence: A Conversation with Daniel Goleman](#)

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

CHE Working and Regional Group Updates

General Working Group Updates:

The **Metabolic Syndrome discussion group** will hold its next call on **Monday, September 21, 2009 at 11:00 AM Pacific / 2 PM Eastern**. For dial-in information please contact info@healthandenvironment.org. If you are not already a CHE Partner and would like to participate in this discussion group on a regular basis, please first sign on as a [CHE Partner](#).

CHE Working Group Expanded to Include Spectrum of Neurodegenerative Diseases

Emerging environmental health science suggests that certain environmental toxins may be associated with a spectrum of health outcomes, rather than just one specific disease or disability. For example, some pesticides may contribute to a range of neurodegenerative diseases, including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and dementia (not to mention neurodevelopmental disorders, like learning disabilities, as well as reproductive health issues and various cancers). Given this, we have decided to expand the scope of the CHE's Working Group on Parkinson's Disease and the Environment (CHE-PD) to include other neurodegenerative health concerns that appear to be influenced by environmental factors. The new title for this working group will be **CHE-Neuro**.

The goals of this expanded group will be very similar to those for CHE-PD; namely: a) to explore potential links between this neurodegenerative disease to exposures to environmental contaminants; b) to provide a discussion forum that is conducive to the interaction between researchers, health care providers, community groups and people affected by neurodegenerative diseases; c) to translate research into accessible language for the broader community; and d) to explore opportunities for collaboration to strengthen research on health promotion and disease prevention for neurodegenerative diseases. We will build on the excellent work already undertaken by members of CHE-PD, such as the [Scientific Consensus Statement on Parkinson's Disease and the Environment](#), and related fact sheets. We also hope to draw in new participants whose expertise may focus on other neurodegenerative problems and who would like to have a forum to discuss scientific findings related to environmental contributors and their implications for health. Please know you are welcome to join this listserv (Note: those who are already signed up with CHE-PD will automatically be added to the new listserv for CHE-Neuro) Though Jackie Hunt Christensen, who has very effectively provided leadership to CHE-PD for years will still be involved with CHE-Neuro, she has decided to focus more of her energy on other emerging opportunities. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Elise Miller, MEd at elise@healthandenvironment.org or Ted Schettler, MD, MPH at tschettler@iqc.org

CHE Fertility

~ coordinated by **Julia Varshavsky, CHE Program Associate,**
julia@healthandenvironment.org

~ Workshop on Navigating the Scientific Evidence to Ensure Prevention

In August, The University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment (PRHE), the Collaborative on Health and the Environment/Commonweal, the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP), the [Magee-Womens Hospital](#) of University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, the UCSF Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU) and [WorkSafe](#) hosted a workshop on Navigating the Scientific Evidence to Ensure Prevention.

The goal of the project is to translate the emerging science in environmental reproductive health into timely action in clinical and policy arenas. An interdisciplinary group of 23 scientists, clinicians and community/patient-based partners convened to develop the Navigation Guide -- a methodology that forges the strengths of evidence-based medicine and environmental health and can be used to vet the scientific evidence related to reproductive environmental health in a timely and transparent manner. The workshop achieved consensus on the outline of the Navigation Guide and revisions are underway. It is anticipated the Navigation Guide will be submitted to the peer-reviewed literature at the end of the year.

The workshop boasted a wide range of sponsors, including Kaiser Permanente, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists District IX, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Science and Environmental Health Network, Natural Resources Defense Council, California Healthy Nail Salons Collaborative, WorkSafe, the UCSF Phillip R Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies, and the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona and the European Environment Agency. Please contact the Director of PRHE, Tracey Wooduff, PhD, MPH at WoodruffT@obgyn.ucsf.edu or 510-986-8942 for more information.

~ Shaping Our Legacy is Now Available in Spanish: Shaping Our Legacy: Reproductive Health and the Environment, the comprehensive report from the 2007 UCSF-CHE Summit on Environmental Challenges to Reproductive Health and Fertility is now available in Spanish, courtesy of the UCSF Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment (PRHE). Link to the report from the CHE-Fertility [what's new box](#).

~ The Center for American Progress Releases "Reproductive Roulette": This new slide show is a valuable tool that outlines declining reproductive health and dangerous chemical exposures. [View the full presentation and accompanying fact sheet](#)

CHE LDDI

~coordinated by Laura Abulafia, laura@healthandenvironment.org and Elise Miller, CHE Director, elise@healthandenvironment.org

~ Next quarterly LDDI working group call is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 29th at 11 AM Pacific / 2 PM Eastern**. Please note that this call has been changed from its original date two weeks earlier. A reminder and agenda will be sent out for this call one week prior. We look forward to having you on the line!

~ The LDDI biomonitoring project is rapidly moving forward with weekly calls among steering committee members. Participants will get their results by the end of September and a compilation of personal stories will immediately be put together. Media outreach and strategy are under way and soon to follow will be policy outreach and a report release. Please stay tuned for more information.

~ A regional meeting will be held October 2nd in Chicago, organized by LDDI members from the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) and the Autism Society of America (ASA). The workshop will focus translating environmental health science into more health-protective policies. Invited participants are policymakers, academicians, community members, health professionals and advocates. There will be three participants of the LDDI biomonitoring project at this meeting as well, and the intention will be to emphasize many of the same messages that will be in the biomonitoring report release. For more information please contact Laura Abulafia at laura@aaidd.org.

~ **The Mental Health Working Group**, a subcommittee of LDDI chaired by the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD), is finalizing a trifold pamphlet for clinicians and other professionals on environmental contributors to mental health concerns, which will also be available on the web. For more information please contact Ed Seliger at eseliger@thenadd.org.

The next call of the Mental Health and the Environment Working Group is scheduled for **Friday, October 9, 2009 at 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern**. If you are interested in participating in the call please contact Ed Seliger at eseliger@thenadd.org or info@healthandenvironment.org for dial-in information.

~ **AAIDD** has finalized an educational pamphlet for expecting moms on neurotoxicants and pregnancy. This resource will be disseminated to doctors offices, clinics, and beyond. For more information or to receive a copy of this resource please contact Laura Abulafia and laura@aaidd.org.

CHE Regional Working Groups Updates

CHE Alaska

~ **coordinated by Pam Miller, pkmiller@akaction.net**

~ CHE Alaska will host a teleconference, **Creating Healthy Schools in Alaska: What You Need to Know to Protect Children from Toxic Exposures** on **September 30, 2009 at 9 AM Alaska / 10 AM Pacific**

Presenters will include: Claire L. Barnett, Executive Director, Healthy Schools Network and Mike Schade, PVC Campaign Coordinator, Center for Health, Environment and Justice.

For more information or to join this free call and receive dial-up instructions, please RSVP to Alaska Community Action on Toxics at 907-222-7714.

CHE HEAL

~ **coordinated by Lisette van Vliet, lisette@env-health.org**

~ **European Respiratory Society calls for EU action on Climate Change**

The European Respiratory Society, a member of the Health and Environment Alliance, has published a position paper (1) describing the heavy burden of temperature increases and poor air quality on people whose health is already compromised due to respiratory problems, such as asthma, respiratory tract infections, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). For instance, a one degree Celsius increase in temperature produces a 6% increase in deaths among people with respiratory conditions.

The ERS encourages its doctors to speak out and to educate healthcare professionals on the impact of hotter temperatures on their patients. The ERS, which brings together some 9000 respiratory clinicians and scientists in over 100 countries worldwide, is working together with HEAL to emphasise the impact on health of climate change to policy makers in current discussions on climate change.

The ERS paper represents a first from a specialist medical society. HEAL would like to see other specialist medical bodies producing similar position papers so that the scale of the impact for health of climate change becomes more widely known. The prestigious British Medical Journal covered the ERS position paper in a recent article (2).

In June 2009, HEAL called upon the European Union to send a health delegation to the deal-making climate change talks in Copenhagen in December 2009. The aim is to draw attention to the often overlooked benefits of strong, "health-proofed" climate change policy for health. "Recent research shows that the cleaner air associated with climate change policies can reduce hospital admissions and premature deaths," says Génon Jensen, Executive Director of the Health and Environment Alliance. "This

would represent future savings to society and health systems of up to 25 billion Euros per year in monetary terms." (3)

1. See www.ersnet.org
<http://erj.ersjournals.com/cgi/content/full/34/2/295> (HTML)
<http://erj.ersjournals.com/cgi/reprint/34/2/295> (PDF)

2. "Global warming is more harmful for people with respiratory problems, warns specialist society", 2 September 2009, doi:10.1136/bmj.b3530 Citation: BMJ 2009;339:b3530

3. http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/Co-benefits_to_health_report_-_september_2008.pdf

~ **The EU leading the Way on Environmental Prevention of Cancer?**

Lisette van Vliet, Toxics Policy Advisor for the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) spoke at the Annual Conference of the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology in Dublin. This presentation was part of a session on new cancer prevention initiatives in North America and the EU aimed at reducing the burden of cancer from environmental and occupational exposures. The panel, which included members of CHE from North America, gave presentations on the President's Cancer Panel in the U.S., the international Trade Unions Global Zero Cancer Campaign, and an initiative by European Union.

Lisette van Vliet spoke about how the European Union, and two member states are tackling Cancer Prevention with respect to environmental factors. It gave a brief overview of selected EU legislation regulating chemicals and pesticides; looked at the 'Pesticides and Cancer' campaign of the Health and Environment Alliance and partner organisations in France and the UK, and the EU 'Action Against Cancer' Partnership. How can the EU expand cancer prevention beyond the traditional lifestyle factors and capitalize on the potential synergies between the EU Action against Cancer, and member states' implementation of EU laws?

For further information, please contact lisette@env-health.org

Conference Session details:

https://isee.conference-services.net/programme.asp?conferenceID=1651&action=prog_list&session=6527

~ **Report on European Commission's recent track record: 5 out of 10 for environmental health**

The Health and Environment Alliance, together with 9 other leading environment & health groups, collectively known as the 'Green 10', published a report on the European Commission's achievements. The report, entitled "Off Target: European Commission 2004-2009 Environmental Progress Report and lessons for the next Commission" was released at the end of the tenure of the current European Commission President and 27 Commissioners. It includes a chapter on Environmental Health which looks specifically at chemicals, pesticides and air quality. The report was launched at a joint press conference, and attracted widespread media attention.

Article about the report on HEAL website: <http://www.env-health.org/a/3360>

Full report: http://www.env-health.org/IMG/pdf/Green_10_assessment_EC_2004-2009.pdf

CHE Washington

~ **Now coordinated by Steve Gilbert, sgilbert@innd.org or contact info@healthandenvironment.org**

~ **CHE-WA's Children's Environmental Health** working group is hosting a **Northwest Children's Environmental Health Forum October 1-2, 2009 at the Tukwila Community Center**. Confirmed national speakers include Ted Schettler, MD who will provide an overview of children's environmental health issues, Shanna Swan, PhD speaking on endocrine disruptors and children's health, Bruce Lanphear, PhD speaking on neurotoxicants and children's brain development, and Michael Skinner, PhD addressing multigenerational health impacts linked to environmental exposures.

For more information and to register visit the [forum website](#)

Anyone interested in being involved with this event, or who would like to learn more about the efforts of the CHE-WA children's environmental health working group may contact Margo Young at young.margo@epamail.epa.gov, Gail Gensler at gail.gensler@kingcounty.gov, or Aimee Boulanger at aboulanger@iceh.org.

Announcements and News Highlights

Center for Occupational and Environmental Health, School of Public Health, University of California at Berkley publishes ***Toward a New US Chemicals Policy: Rebuilding the Foundation to Advance New Science, Green Chemistry and Environmental Health***

[Read the review article](#)

Cell Phones and Health: Is There A Brain Cancer Connection? Experts convene in Washington, DC for an international conference examining the mounting concerns about the cancer risks of cell phone radiation. September 13-15, 2009.

For more information and to register please visit <http://environmentalhealthtrust.org/>

September 2009 issue of Environmental Factor available online
<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/newsletter/index.cfm>

Endocrine Society calls for precautionary action

The Endocrine Society, a highly respected international medical society of over 14,000 members in 100 countries, issued a seminal new report stating that exposures to endocrine disrupting chemicals are a growing threat to human health and well-being. The report explicitly states that "the precautionary principle is critical to enhancing health."

For more information on the report, please see: <http://www.endo-society.org/journals/scientificstatements/index.cfm>

Reports, Resources and Other Updates

CHE's searchable calendar

CHE provides a searchable calendar of environmental health events from throughout the US and around the world: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/cgi-bin/searchevents.cgi>

Because the calendar typically includes several dozen conferences, lectures, meetings, trainings and other events, visitors can search by the type of event, the month, the location, and other fields. Events have also been coded so that visitors can **select those of interest to each of CHE's various working groups.**

World Library of Toxicology Launched

Toxipedia.org, in partnership with the USA National Library of Medicine (NLM), the International Union of Toxicology (IUTOX), and the Institute of Neurotoxicology and Neurological Disorders (INND), is proud to announce the launch of the World Library of Toxicology, Chemical Safety, and Environmental Health, briefly referred to as the World Library of Toxicology (WLT).

This free global Web portal provides the scientific community and public with links to

...the new green tea patent provides the economic community and public health to major government agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities, professional societies, and other groups addressing issues related to toxicology, public health, and environmental health.

Visit the World Library of Toxicology at <http://www.wltox.org>

Smart Guide: Hormones in the Food System released by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy today released a new [Smart Guide](#), which examines the prevalence of synthetic hormones in the food system--and the risks such hormones may pose to human health. The guide includes tips for consumers on how to reduce their exposure to hormones in food.

Thank you for taking the time to read the latest about CHE. As always, we welcome your questions and suggestions. Please direct comments to Elise Miller, Director of CHE, at elise@healthandenvironment.org.

Best wishes,

Elise Miller, MEd, Director
 Steve Heilig, Director of Public Health and Education at San Francisco Medical Society and CHE
 Erika Sanders, Administrative Coordinator
 Julia Varshavsky, Program Associate

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