



# Collaborative on Health and the Environment

## January 2016



### Upcoming Partnership Events

CHE Partnership call:  
[Is a Health Study the Answer for Your Community? A Guide for Making Informed Decisions](#)  
Tues, Jan 26

CHE Partnership call:  
[Environmental Health Disparities in Children: Breaking the Cycle and Building Resilience for Better Health](#)  
Fri, Feb 5



### Mental Health: A Heightened Recognition of the Role of Toxic Chemicals

*Elise Miller, EdM*  
Director

For the first time the American Psychological Association's (APA) *Monitor on Psychology* magazine featured a [cover story \(Oct 2015\)](#) on the [impact toxic chemicals can have on the](#)



Monitor of

CHE Partnership call: [Wireless Technology and Public Health: Health and Environmental Hazards in a Wireless World](#)

Tues, Feb 16

Hosted by the CHE EMF Working Group

Visit the [CHE Partnership call archives](#) and [CHE Working Group call archives](#) to listen to MP3 recordings of past calls.

### Special Announcement

[CHE Chemical Policy Reform webpage updated](#)

After years of pressure by nonprofits and others to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)-an act that has proven highly ineffective at protecting public health since its enactment in 1976-both houses of the US Congress passed different versions of a bill intended to improve TSCA in 2015.

[developing brain](#). It makes sense that if chemical exposures can undermine children's learning capacities, then they might be implicated in mental health problems as well. However, there has been scant research in or recognition of the latter in mainstream psychology. The publication of this article suggests that this sector may now be starting to take these concerns more seriously.

One psychologist who has been particularly instrumental in putting these issues on the radar of the APA is Sue Koger, PhD, professor of psychology at Willamette University and co-author of the forthcoming book *Psychology for Sustainability* (Scott, Amel, Koger, & Manning, 2016). In 2003 she attended an ["In Harm's Way" training](#), led by Ted Schettler, MD, MPH (science director of both the Science and Environmental Health Network and CHE), Maria Valenti (coordinator of CHE's Healthy Aging Initiative and co-developer of [A Story of Health](#)) and Jill Stein, MD. The audience was a mix of physicians, nurses, teachers, and members of advocacy organizations. Dr. Koger was one of a few, if not the only, psychologists participating. After the training, she was inspired to submit an abstract for an

MONITOR OF  
Psychology  
*cover photo.*  
*Chemical threats:*  
*Researchers are*  
*discovering potential*  
*links between*  
*chemicals in common*  
*household items and*  
*damage to*  
*developing brains.*  
[View the story.](#)

Adhering to CHE's mission of providing a neutral and civil forum for discussing emerging environmental health science and its implications for potential policy decisions, we've updated our [Chemical Policy Reform](#) webpage with news coverage as well as analyses by several groups, some of which argue in favor of the Senate and House bills and others that oppose them.

Though CHE does not take a stance on specific legislation, CHE's consensus statement makes it very clear that we support the most health-protective policies based on the best available science. In this context, we provide these different perspectives simply to encourage readers to review the links closely and draw their own conclusions about the potential efficacy and impacts of the proposed bills.

## Resources

CHE explores the issue of

oral presentation at the next APA annual meeting. To her knowledge chemical exposures had never been on the agenda. Her abstract was accepted. Subsequently, she, Schettler, and Bernard Weiss, PhD, co-authored a [paper on these issues for the \*American Psychologist\* in 2005](#).

During this time, the [CHE Mental Health and the Environment Working Group](#), a sub-working group of [CHE's Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative](#), was formed to provide a forum where emerging research on chemical exposures and mental health concerns could be posted and discussed. [The National Association for the Dually Diagnosed](#) (for those with both learning and mental health diagnoses) was a leading participant in these CHE working groups and made sure that at least one session on toxic chemical exposures was on their annual conference agenda for a few years. Other colleagues in various parts of the US spent time working to heighten awareness of these issues in psychology (and even psychiatry) circles in other ways. But for the most part, there hasn't been a significant uptick in interest as far as we have been able to discern, and CHE's Mental Health working group has remained only minimally active.

Then late last year, without much fanfare, this issue was spotlighted on the cover of a major magazine for American psychologists. And so it

complexity on our new webpage: [Ecologic Models of Health and Disease](#)

[CHE's blog](#) promotes dialogue on issues at the intersection of human health and environment.

[CHE's searchable calendar](#) of events related to environmental health.

[CHE's podcast](#) of teleconference call recordings.

[CHE's news feed](#) of news articles, studies, reports, calls for proposals, job openings and other announcements. Relevant items are sent to CHE's listservs several times each week, or visitors can subscribe via RSS.

[A Story of Health ebook](#) grounds the science of health in stories of fictional people, their families, and communities to enable readers to explore the risk

goes in our work. Ideas gain traction in non-linear ways. Strategic planning and other processes need to be in place. Vocal, dedicated champions make a huge difference in getting ideas out. Money certainly helps. But sometimes it's an unexpected interaction or an unrelated event that crystallizes an idea and makes it palpable to those who may have never considered it before. Often we'll never know why one idea springs into mainstream consciousness while others that seem equally significant fall flat. But what we do know is that fostering a highly effective learning community and collaborating in forums that bridge multiple perspectives are essential ingredients for social change.

We very much look forward to learning and collaborating more with you in 2016 - in both anticipated and unexpected ways.



*P.S.* During the last quarter of 2015 CHE surveyed our listserv participants about the value of each listserv in their personal and professional lives, also asking for suggestions for improving each listserv. We were pleased to receive many

readers to explore the risk factors for disease as well as how to prevent disease and promote health and resilience. Using the setting of a family reunion as a backdrop, we explore how multiple environments influence our health across the lifespan.

The eBook offers FREE continuing credits offered by the CDC and ATSDR.

positive comments about the value of CHE listservs, and we were grateful as well for the feedback about how we might improve this core CHE service. Following CHE's values of civility and transparency, we have shared the surveys' responses on the [CHE blog](#). We invite you to review the responses, and if you would like to leave further feedback in the comments section you are most welcome to do so.

We thank all those CHE Partners who completed the surveys (some of you who are subscribed to several listservs even completed several of them-thank you!). We value your feedback.

## Working Groups and Initiatives

Visit the webpages of CHE's groups for **monthly highlights** featuring the the latest environmental health news, research, and announcements important to each topic:

### Topic-based Working Groups

[Asthma](#)

[Autism](#)

[Breast Cancer](#)

[Cancer](#)

[Children's Health](#)

[Climate Change](#)

[Cumulative Impacts](#)

[Database](#)

[Diabetes/Obesity](#)

[Electromagnetic Fields \(EMF\)](#)

[Fertility/Reproductive Health](#)

[Healthy Aging](#)

[Integrative Health](#)

[Learning and Developmental Disabilities](#)

[Mental Health](#)

[Pet](#)

[Neurodegenerative Disease](#)

[Science](#)

### State-based and International Groups

[Alaska](#)

[Oregon](#)

[Washington](#)

[Europe/HEAL](#)

