



# Collaborative on Health and the Environment

## eNewsletter - March 2011

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### Primary Prevention Starts with Moms

Why would a group of moms from around the country and varied ethnic backgrounds choose to spend almost three days together learning about environmental health science? As one participant in CHE's new Environmental Health Primary Prevention Training program, put it: "Every mom is already devoted to prevention. We want keep our kids from getting sick and having any health problems. So of course we want to prevent exposures that could hurt our kids and communities. We're moms--together we can do anything."

Held at the Commonweal retreat center in northern California last week and co-sponsored by Making Our Milk Safe (MOMS), this workshop was offered to 12 women, chosen from over 50 applicants. The participants had the opportunity to learn some basic environmental health science from experts in the field. In addition, the meeting offered time for trainees to reflect on how they might apply their new knowledge--from making their homes, schools and communities healthier to pressing for chemical policy reform on state and national levels. What was particularly striking to me about this training was not only how eagerly these women absorbed the scientific information, but how significantly they touched each other on a personal level as well. By sharing their stories of heartache and courage, they made the connection between the science they were learning and the implications for their everyday lives and their children's future. These moms left the training clearly inspired and ready to make primary prevention not only their personal priority, but a priority for their communities and beyond. For more information on CHE's Environmental Health Primary Prevention Trainings, please see:

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

Of course, environmental factors that influence health are not only a concern for women of child-bearing years and their children, but for all of us. In this light, CHE is very

pleased to host our next national CHE partnership call this Friday, March 11 entitled, "Healthy Aging Starts at Conception: Promoting Health Across the Lifespan." This call will feature aspects of the scientific basis for CHE's new Healthy Aging Initiative in relation to the science underlying CHE's Initiative on Children's Environmental Health. To reserve a place on this call, please see [http://www.healthandenvironment.org/partnership\\_calls/8761](http://www.healthandenvironment.org/partnership_calls/8761)

With warm wishes to all as the days lengthen in a prelude to Spring,  
Elise Miller, MEd  
Director, Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE)

\* \* \* \* \*

This essay is available on [CHE's blog](#) for comment and further discussion.

## CHE Partnership Calls and Special Events

### **CHE Partnership call:**

### **Healthy Aging Starts At Conception: Promoting Health Across the Lifespan**

**Friday March 11, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. PST / 2:00 p.m. EST**

[RSVP for this call](#)

Beginning in the womb and continuing throughout life, environmental factors are strong determinants of throughout the lifespan. Reproductive, children's, midlife and elder health are inherently interconnected. In addition, various features of our biological, social and natural environments, alone and in combination, can affect health at any time in the life continuum. These stressors can also accumulate and influence genetic expression, and even the health of future generations. A century of change in our food, built, chemical, natural, psychosocial, and socioeconomic environments is fueling dramatic increases in diseases and disabilities throughout the lifespan, such as diabetes, obesity, cancer, reproductive health and developmental disabilities. Combined with a near doubling of the over-65 population in the next few decades, this trajectory threatens to overwhelm our health care system, our social resources, and bring economic and social instability.

**Join CHE on March 11, 2011 at 11 a.m. Pacific / 2 p.m. Eastern** to discuss how we can advance a more positive path if we understand and address the interrelationships of health and the environment throughout life, and explore common sense and also innovative approaches that may prevent chronic disease, foster health, and sustain local and global economies. We will also address the importance of interventions that address the structural, systemic origins of many diseases that can be designed to benefit ecosystems more generally, thereby linking human health to planetary health.

#### **Featured speakers include:**

[Patrice Sutton, MPH](#), Research Scientist, UCSF Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment (PRHE)

[Ted Schettler, MD, MPH](#), Science Director, Science and Environmental Health Network and Collaborative on Health and the Environment

[Rick Moody, PhD](#), Director of Academic Affairs, AARP

#### **Respondents:**

[Maria Valenti](#), Coordinator, CHE Healthy Aging and the Environment Initiative.

Kathy Sykes, MA, Senior Advisor, [US EPA Aging Initiative](#)

The call will be moderated by Elise Miller, MEd, Director, CHE. The call will last one hour and will be recorded for archival purposes.

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### **Environmental Health Primary Prevention Trainings**

The Collaborative on Health and Environment recently launched a new initiative designed to train people in environmental health science. These trainings will focus on teaching evidence-based science in lay language to be used in a range of settings, including advocacy, determining research priorities, public education and community organizing. The goal is to provide basic scientific knowledge so trainees can become more effective as champions for a healthier world.

CHE will be offering trainings throughout 2011, all on the subject of environmental health science and breast cancer. All trainings will be held at Commonweal, a health and environmental research and education institute in Bolinas, California.

2011 training dates:

May 2-4

September 27-29

November 7-9

For more information, please visit the [trainings webpage](#) or contact Davis Baltz of Commonweal at [dbaltz@igc.org](mailto:dbaltz@igc.org) or phone 510-848-2714. An application form is available on the trainings webpage.

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### **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:

- February 10, 2011 - [Report from the Cancun Climate Change Talks: NGOs Promote Health and Partner for Future Action](#)
- January 18, 2011 - [Cumulative Impacts and Environmental Justice: a conversation with Manuel Pastor and Sharyle Patton](#)
- December 8, 2010 - [2010: Environmental Health Highlights of the Year](#)
- November 15, 2010 - [Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposure in the US](#)

And of course, you can always explore our [archived resources](#)

## **CHE Working and Regional Group Updates**

### **Stay in touch with CHE via Facebook and the CHE blog:**

Visit CHE's blog at <http://ourhealthandenvironment.wordpress.com/>

CHE's [Facebook page](#)

### **CHE Cancer**

~ coordinated by Michael Lerner and Jeanne Rizzo. For more information contact [info@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:info@healthandenvironment.org)

### **~ Interview with Dr. Margaret Kripke on cancer and the environment now available for download**

This interview was recorded prior to the evening presentation on February 7, 2011 by Dr. Margaret Kripke, PhD, co-author of the groundbreaking 2010 President's Cancer Panel report *Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk: What We Can Do Now*. The report, which informs the National Cancer Program, has brought unprecedented attention to the environmental exposures that increase cancer risk.

Dr. Kripke's interview and presentation were co-presented by [The New School at Commonweal](#) and the [Breast Cancer Fund](#).

[Visit the New School website and listen to Dr. Kripke's interview](#)  
[Read more about the President's Cancer Panel](#)

~ **New cancer art program launched at Commonweal**

The Art Circle at Commonweal is a new virtual gathering place to discover and purchase fine art and craft inspired by the art of people who have attended the Commonweal Cancer Help Program. The first installation includes California artists Nancy Bellen, Dana Gluckstein, Jennifer Bec Hirschfield, Marianne Hale, Katherine Klein and Beverly Prevost. Proceeds from this new program benefits the Cancer Help Program.

[Visit the Art Circle website](#)

~ **New England Journal of Medicine publishes new article on the President's Cancer Panel**

David C. Christiani, MD, MPH, authored "Combating Environmental Causes of Cancer", which was published in the March 2011 *New England Journal of Medicine*.

[Read more](#)

**CHE Fertility**

~ coordinated by Karin Russ, CHE Fertility National Coordinator,  
[karin@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:karin@healthandenvironment.org)

~ **New CHE Fertility call: Effects of BPA on In Vitro Fertilization**

March 17, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. PST / 4 p.m. EST

[RSVP for this call](#)

Dr. Victor Fujimoto, from the University of California San Francisco, and Dr. Michael S. Bloom, from the State University of New York, Albany, will present the results of their recent study on the effects of bisphenol A (BPA) on in vitro fertilization (IVF). Data show that as blood BPA levels rise, the quality of oocytes from women undergoing in vitro fertilization declines. As blood levels of BPA doubled, the percentage of eggs that fertilized normally declined by 50 percent. The results indicate a negative effect of BPA on reproduction and fertility that may carry over to the general population. Dr. Valerie Baker from Stanford University will lead a discussion on the translation of research into practice, describing how research findings such as this can be used when counseling infertility patients.

~ **Request for Proposals**

Sponsor: National Institute Reproductive Health; Deadline: March 15th

The Urban Initiative for Reproductive Health is a multi-year initiative to create solutions to address the reproductive health challenges facing cities today. Proposals are sought that promote policies and programs to increase access to reproductive health services, reduce unintended pregnancies, address disparities, and lead to healthier birth outcomes.

[Read more](#)

~ **American Fertility Association Blog**

BPA & IVF: Bisphenol A (BPA) is in the news alot lately. BPA disrupts the endocrine system, and may have an effect on fertility. Over the last decade, animal studies have found that BPA has a negative effect on the quality of oocytes produced. Now, two studies published in 2010 found negative effects on human fertility associated with BPA.

[Read more](#)

**CHE Healthy Aging Initiative**

~ coordinated by Maria Valenti, [mvalenti@igc.org](mailto:mvalenti@igc.org)

~ **CHE Partnership call: Healthy Aging Starts at Conception: Promoting Health**

### **Across the Lifespan**

Friday March 11, 2011 at 11 a.m. Pacific / 2 p.m. Eastern

This teleconference is modeled after a symposium we have submitted to the 2011 American Public Health Association annual conference. It will address the interrelationships of health and the environment throughout life, and explore common sense and also innovative approaches that may prevent chronic disease, foster health, and sustain local and global economies. Featured speakers: Patrice Sutton, MPH, Research Scientist, UCSF Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment (PRHE), Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, Science Director, Science and Environmental Health Network and CHE, and Rick Moody, PhD, Director of Academic Affairs, AARP. Respondents: Maria Valenti, Coordinator, CHE Healthy Aging and the Environment Initiative, and Kathy Sykes, MA, Senior Advisor, US EPA Aging Initiative.

[Read more and RSVP for the call](#)

### **~ *Healthy Aging for an Abundant Life*: new resource form the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program**

A new guide *Healthy Aging for an Abundant Life* is about to be released by the [National Council of Churches of Christ \(NCC\) Eco-Justice Program](#). It is designed to provide guidance to grandparents and others on environmental health issues across the lifespan. Our report *Environmental Threats to Healthy Aging* was used as a major reference to develop this new publication and we worked with NCC staff on reviewing the content. The NCC Eco-Justice program focuses on providing education and advocacy opportunities for people of faith on environmental health issues such as safe cosmetics and toxic chemicals. They work in states across the country to provide worship and education materials and opportunities to weigh in with policymakers. The NCC's member faith groups - from a wide spectrum of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, Evangelical, historic African American and Living Peace churches - includes 45 million persons in more than 100,000 local congregations in communities across the nation.

~ From February 18 -20, more than 90 health care professionals and environmental advocates met at University of Wisconsin-Madison conference ***Making the Connection 2011: Translating Environmental Health Research into Clinical Practice and Prevention*** co-sponsored by PSR Wisconsin and many others to share the latest research on environmental impacts on public health. Conference participants heard from experts on maternal & child health, reproductive health, and the health impacts of our current energy policy. Participants learned the importance of the health care professional in influencing public policy and ways to apply environmental health assessment tools to their clinical practice. Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, presented a plenary session and workshop on *Environmental Chemicals, Exposures and Effects: A Lifetime Perspective* and the *Eco-Social Model of Health*.

[Read more](#)

### **CHE-LDDI**

~ coordinated by Erika Hagensen, [ehagensen@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:ehagensen@healthandenvironment.org)

~ **Chemical policy reform**: For the first time, The Arc of the United States, United Cerebral Palsy, ANCOR, the Association of University Centers on Disability, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, and the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities -- an LDDI core member, have included chemical policy reform as part of their joint legislative goals for the 112th Congress.

### **CHE Obesity**

~ **CHE announces new coordinator of the CHE Obesity working group** CHE is pleased to announce that Sarah Howard, MS, has agreed to be the new national coordinator for CHE's Obesity Working Group. In a recent CHE partner spotlight, Sarah noted that she developed gestational diabetes while pregnant with her first child, though she had none of the risk factors for this diagnosis. Since that time she has done extensive research on gestational and Type 1 diabetes, including the emerging science

on possible environmental contributors. Please see: <http://www.diabetesandenvironment.org> for more information. More recently she has been reviewing the scientific literature on Type 2 diabetes, including some common biological mechanisms that may trigger different types of diabetes as well as other health conditions, such as obesity and metabolic syndrome.

You can now find other resources, including information about National Toxicology Program (NTP) Workshop on the Role of Environmental Chemicals in the Development of Diabetes and Obesity held in January 2011, on our new resources page:

[http://www.healthandenvironment.org/initiatives/obesity/obesity\\_resources](http://www.healthandenvironment.org/initiatives/obesity/obesity_resources). We welcome your additional recommendations for scientific studies and other relevant evidence-based materials that we might post. Please send those to Erika Sanders, CHE's Administrative Coordinator, at: [info@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:info@healthandenvironment.org).

## **CHE Regional Working Groups Updates**

### **CHE Alaska**

~ coordinated by Pam Miller, Alaska Community Action, [pkmiller@akaction.net](mailto:pkmiller@akaction.net)

#### **~ New CHE Alaska call: Green Chemistry and Safer Alternatives to Toxic Flame Retardants: Achieving Protective Policies without Compromising Fire**

**Safety** Wednesday March 16, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. Alaska / 10:00 a.m. Pacific / 1:00 p.m. Eastern

**RSVP:** To join this free call and receive the dial-up instructions, please RSVP to Alaska Community Action on Toxics at [diana@akaction.org](mailto:diana@akaction.org) or (907) 222-7714. For a complete list of speakers and access to additional call resources visit the [call page](#).

Toxic flame retardant chemicals known as PBDEs (polybrominated diphenyl ethers) are widely used in home furniture, electronics, and other everyday products. Mounting research suggests that these chemicals may cause neurological and reproductive harm, thyroid disruption, and cancer. This call will focus on safer alternatives to PBDEs and how green chemistry - a philosophy of chemical engineering that encourages the design of products and processes that minimize the use and generation of hazardous substances - can help shape protective public policies. Find out about the Green Screen project to identify safer alternatives to toxic flame retardants and learn how you can support legislation in Alaska (Senate Bill 27 and House Bill 63) to phase out PBDEs.

### **CHE-HEAL**

~ coordinated by Lisette van Vliet, [lisette@env-health.org](mailto:lisette@env-health.org)

#### **~ Week Without Pesticides, 20th - 30th March 2011**

The European Week Without Pesticides will start on the 20th March. The initiative aims to raise awareness of the risks to health and the environment posed by pesticides and to highlight alternative solutions. With the continuing success of the original French campaign in 2006, the movement expands to new countries throughout Europe every year. There are now actions and events taking place across Belgium, Macedonia, Hungary as well as parts of Africa, including Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania and Togo to highlight the numerous alternatives to pesticide use. HEAL has compiled an overview of activities during the week.

[Read more](#)

#### **~ Research quantifies increased life and wealth from cleaner air**

EU-supported research findings by the Aphekom project show that significant health and monetary benefits could result from further reducing current levels of air pollution in European cities. The findings were released at a stakeholders meeting in Saint-Maurice just outside Paris on Wednesday, 2 March 2011.

HEAL hopes full use will be made of these and other EU funded studies to launch ambitious legislative proposals. "The results of the Aphekom project show that action

for cleaner air pays off in health benefits," says Anne Stauffer, Policy Manager of Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), who took part in the stakeholders meeting. Air pollution of fine particles is associated with more than 455,000 premature deaths every year in the EU's 27 member states, according to a recent study by the European Topic Centre on Air and Climate Change (ETC/ACC) on behalf of the European Environment Agency (EEA). The findings of the Aphekom project come as the European Commission is preparing for a review of EU air quality policy.

[Read more](#)

**~ What's good for climate is good for health and the economy: Message presented to European Parliamentarians**

HEAL's recent findings on health 'co-benefits' from a stronger climate action was presented directly to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in a public hearing on climate change in Brussels on 28th February 2011. The European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety heard stakeholders' and scientific views on "Moving beyond a 20% greenhouse gas reduction target in the EU", in preparation for a report by Dutch MEP Bas Eickhout (Greens, Netherlands), which draws strongly on HEAL's joint report [Acting NOW for better health: A 30% reduction target for EU climate policy](#).

[Read more](#)

**~ 6 steps to pesticide reduction: a guide for communities**

In preparation for the Week Without Pesticides, HEAL has launched a community guide to pesticide reduction. The 'toolkit' is aimed at community groups and individuals wishing to reduce pesticide use in their communities and local areas. HEAL has drawn on experience of international pesticides and health campaigns to create a 6 step guide packed full of examples and model campaign materials.

[Download a copy of the guide](#)

**~ Registration opens for the third Paris Appeal International Congress**

The Third Paris Appeal International Congress, organised by the Association for Research and Treatments Against Cancer (ARTAC) in partnership with HEAL and the International Society for Doctors for the Environment (ISDE), will be held in Paris on the 12 -13th April. This year the focus will be on children's environment and health. Following the conference, there will be a three-day training course on environmental medicine open to medical professionals.

[Read more and register](#)

## Announcements and News Highlights

**NIH launches largest oil spill health study**

A new study that will look at possible health effects of the Gulf of Mexico's Deepwater Horizon oil spill on 55,000 cleanup workers and volunteers begins today in towns across Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

[Read more](#)

[Listen to the MP3 recording](#) of the CHE Cafe call with Wilma Subra and Michael Lerner discussing the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

[Listen to the MP3 recording](#) of the CHE Partnership call titled, *The Human Health Effects of the Gulf Coast Oil Spill*

**EPA proposes new rule for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for carbon monoxide (CO) in the Federal Register**

Public comments may be submitted through April 12, 2011, and there will be one public hearing on February 28, 2011 in Arlington, VA.

[Read more](#)

**March 2011 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives available online**

[Read more](#)

### March 2011 issue of Environmental Factor available online

[Read more](#)

CHE maintains a [news feed](#) of environmental health related news announcements and events collected from a multitude of sources on CHE's website.

## Reports, Resources and Other Updates

### **New paper from the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health (CCCEH) focuses on prenatal exposure to diverse environmental chemicals**

Published in *Reproductive Toxicology* online February 18, 2011 this paper summarizes the evidence that prenatal exposure to diverse environmental chemicals dysregulates the fetal epigenome. The paper examines two endocrine disrupting chemicals in particular: polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and bisphenol-A (BPA).

[Read more](#)

CHE lists hundred of reports, books, videos, databases and other resources in a searchable [Portal to Science](#) on CHE's website.

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](mailto: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

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