



Collaborative on Health and the Environment eNewsletter - October 2010



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Keeping Lifecycles Healthy

"Recycling" is a pretty commonplace word these days when it comes to cans and newspapers. But recycling is also considered one of the most brilliant inventions ever in evolutionary terms. In fact, as Dianne Dumanoski writes in her book, *The End of the Long Summer*, "Establishing these grand cycles [such as respiration and photosynthesis] was one of the great problems early life had to solve in order to have a future." She adds, "Enduring life is inescapably a joint enterprise."

Reading this book provoked me to reflect on CHE's role in these "grand cycles" of life. Since CHE's work is fundamentally a "joint enterprise," what are we doing and what more can we do to reinforce, rather than inhibit, the energy that keeps these natural cycles running smoothly?

One significant new expression of CHE's efforts to be in service of life and its myriad cycles is our new [Healthy Aging and Environment Initiative](#). We see this program as complementing CHE's Initiative on Children's Environmental Health and underscoring the need to look at a range of interacting influences on human health throughout the lifecycle—from conception to death. To lead this initiative, we are delighted to welcome Maria Valenti. Maria has been working on environmental health issues for almost two decades at Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility—most recently as program director for GBPSR and head of GBPSR's healthy aging project.

CHE's Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative (LDDI) is also working to catalyze more research and awareness about the nexus between aging, environmental health, and developmental disabilities. Towards that end, one of LDDI's leading organizations, the Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, is hosting a teleconference series based on the report, *Environmental Threat to Healthy Aging*, co-authored by Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, CHE's science director, Jill Stein, MD and Maria Valenti. The teleconference series started yesterday, but if you missed that you can sign up for the upcoming sessions on [AAIDD's teleconference webpage](#).

In addition, to highlighting various stressors that can influence early development and

have lifelong health consequences, CHE co-sponsored the "Children First: Promoting Ecological Health for the Whole Child" symposium with the Whole Child Center and the University of California San Francisco's Osher Center for Integrative Health earlier this month. The UCSF auditorium was packed with health professionals, researchers, students, educators and others eager to hear prominent experts from diverse fields discuss how to create optimal and sustainable environments in which children can thrive. A number of the presentations were, in fact, so inspiring and resonate that many audience participants were moved to tears. To listen the audio recording from the symposium and review powerpoints and other relevant materials, please visit the [symposium's webpage](#).

From healthy pregnancies to healthy aging, CHE is committed to ensuring that humanity's lifecycles are supported and sustained in keeping with the "grand cycles" of life. We do this by providing various forums for discussing emerging science and by translating the best available science for the widest possible constituencies. Your expertise, critical thinking and insights add enormous value to our efforts. Please join us for our upcoming partnership calls and working group activities.

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

CHE Cafe call:

State of the Evidence: The Connection Between Breast Cancer and the Environment

Thursday, October 28, 2010 at 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern

[RSVP for this call](#)

Breast Cancer Fund recently released its sixth edition of *State of the Evidence: The Connection Between Breast Cancer and the Environment*. This latest edition reflects the burst of scientific research on breast cancer and the environment, incorporating more than 250 new research articles. It also includes a new focus on breast cancer and vulnerable populations. Join CHE on for a conversation with Janet Gray, Ph.D., author of the report and Director of Vassar College's Program in Society, Technology & Science.

The call will be moderated by Heather Sarantis, Women's Health Program Manager at Commonweal. The call will last one hour and will be recorded for archival purposes.

CHE Cafe call:

Sacrifice Zones: The Front Line of Toxic Chemical Exposure in the United States: a conversation with author, Steve Lerner

Monday, November 15, 2010 at 11 AM Pacific / 2 PM Eastern

[RSVP for this call](#)

Low-income Americans and people of color who live immediately adjacent to heavy industry and military bases are subjected to higher levels of pollution than more affluent citizens and suffer disproportionately severe health effects. Through studies of twelve communities across the U.S., *Sacrifice Zones* (MIT Press / September 2010) a new book by Steve Lerner, describes the plague of environmentally induced diseases that people

who live nearby heavy industry endure, and shows how these communities are rising up to take action against the polluters.

The book is based on hundreds of interviews of residents of communities on the fenceline with heavy industry. Lerner lets the victims of environmental injustice speak in their own words, and describe in detail what they experience and how they are organizing to improve their quality of life and protect themselves.

Join CHE for a discussion with Steve Lerner. Elise Miller, CHE Director, will moderate this call.

Save the Date

CHE Partnership call:

CHE will host a call on **Tuesday, November 9th at 11 AM Pacific / 2 PM Eastern** on the environmental health implications of fracking, a process that results in the fracturing of rocks with a goal of increasing output from natural gas well. Confirmed speakers include Sandra Steingraber, PhD, author of *Living Downstream*; Theo Colborn, PhD, President, The Endocrine Exchange (TEDX); Tony Ingraffea, PhD, PE, Cornell University; Weston Wilson, EPA Region 8.

Details and RSVP instructions will be available on the CHE website soon.

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:

- October 12, 2010 - [Living Downstream: A Conversation with Sandra Steingraber and Chanda Chevannes](#)
- September 21, 2010 - [Pediatric Integrative Health: Approaches to Optimizing "Whole Child" Wellness](#)
- August 12, 2010 - [On the Ground in the Gulf Coast: A Conversation with Wilma Subra and Michael Lerner](#)
- July 29, 2010 - [The Human Health Effects of the Gulf Coast Oil Spill: A Summary of the IOM Workshop](#)

Podcasts: CHE also podcasts Partnership and working group call recordings. Subscribe to the podcast at: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/Calls.xml>

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

CHE Working and Regional Group Updates

New: CHE launches Healthy Aging and the Environment Initiative

CHE is pleased to announce the launch of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment's new initiative on Healthy Aging and the Environment on October 1, 2010. As part of this transition, Maria Valenti, who has helped lead environmental health issues for almost two decades at Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility, will officially become the national coordinator of CHE's Healthy Aging and the Environment initiative in November 2010.

CHE's Healthy Aging and the Environment initiative intends to build on the seminal work instigated by the [Healthy Aging](#) report and continue to develop a set of "ecological" approaches to healthy aging. We will offer this information to the multiple levels of society and organizations that can find common cause with our work. This includes organizations focusing on aging, nutrition, psychosocial factors, and the built and natural environments, as well as decision makers in government, business, and communities. Through a multidisciplinary approach to healthy living, our overarching goal is to integrate these principles into the mainstream of health care and society as a

basic approach to promote lifelong health and wellbeing.

[Visit CHE's Healthy Aging Working Group webpage](#)

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

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

Visit CHE's [Facebook page](#)

CHE Breast Cancer

~ coordinated by Jeanne Rizzo, jeanne@breastcancerfund.org

~ Announcing the 2010 edition of the Breast Cancer Fund's Report *State of the Evidence: The Connection Between Breast Cancer and the Environment*

The Breast Cancer Fund's landmark report, *State of the Evidence: The Connection Between Breast Cancer and the Environment* (Sixth Edition, 2010), by Janet Gray, Ph.D., presents a comprehensive summary of the scientific data on the environmental causes of breast cancer. The report catalogues the growing evidence linking breast cancer to, among other factors, synthetic hormones in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and meat; pesticides in food; solvents in household cleaning products; BPA in food containers; flame retardants in furniture; and radiation from medical treatments. The report also highlights impacts on vulnerable populations, including infants, pregnant women, African-American women and workers, and outlines the policy initiatives required to develop a national breast cancer prevention plan. In addition to a comprehensive summary of the science and policy recommendations, the report also presents advice on what individuals can do to reduce their risk.

Download a PDF of the report and explore online content at

www.breastcancerfund.org/evidence.

Also, join CHE on [October 28th for a Science Cafe](#) call with the report's author, Janet Gray, PhD.

CHE Initiative on Children's Environmental Health

~ coordinated by Elise Miller, CHE Director, elise@healthandenvironment.org

~ Children First Symposium convened October 1, 2010

The symposium, Children First: Promoting Ecological Health for the Whole Child, was held October 1st at the Mission Bay Conference Center in San Francisco. More than 200 health care professionals, students, nutritionists, parents, research scientists and others concerned with ensuring children have the best possible environments in which to grow and develop participated in this day-long event. For those who could not attend, speaker PowerPoint presentations, additional speaker resources and MP3 audio recordings of the day's presentations are available on the [CHE website](#).

CHE Fertility

~ coordinated by Karin Russ, National Coordinator, karin@healthandenvironment.org

~ New National Coordinator Named for CHE's Fertility and Reproductive Health Working Group

The Collaborative on Health and the Environment is very pleased to announce that Karin Russ, MS, RN, will serve as the new National Coordinator for CHE's Fertility and Reproductive Health working group. Karin brings to this position 20 years of experience as a registered nurse, working in a variety of settings such as labor and delivery, women's health, long-term care, epidemiology and research management. In addition, she has a Masters degree in Nursing Management and a certificate in Teaching in Nursing from the University of Maryland, School Nursing. More recently, she completed a post-masters certificate in Environmental Health Nursing, also from the University of Maryland. Currently, she is the Nursing Outreach Coordinator for Maryland Hospitals for a Healthy Environment, supporting staff as they bring more sustainable practices to healthcare. As an adjunct faculty member, she also teaches undergraduate courses on public health nursing, including environmental health issues, at Johns Hopkins and the

University of Maryland Schools of Nursing. On a personal note, she lives near Baltimore with her husband and three children and is very engaged in community service, including initiating a recycling program and coordinating continuing education seminars for health professionals on environmental health topics.

Karin can be reached at: karin@healthandenvironment.org or ph: 410-493-5940.

CHE-LDDI

~ coordinated by Erika Hagensen, ehagensen@healthandenvironment.org and Elise Miller, CHE Director, elise@healthandenvironment.org

~ The next meeting of the **Mental Health Working Group** will take place on **Monday, October 25th at 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern**. If you are not a participant in the working group, but would like to participate in this conversation, please contact info@healthandenvironment.org.

~ **Aging, Environmental Health, and IDD Teleconference Series**. This fall, the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) with Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and our distinguished panels of guest speakers bring you a groundbreaking series of teleconference calls on aging, environmental health and disability. Scheduled webinars include:

- 1) "Built Environment" with Kathy Sykes, Rodney Harrell and Regina Gray
Tuesday October 19th, 2:00-3:00 p.m. Eastern time
- 2) "Psychosocial Environment" with Danny George and Peter Whitehouse
Tuesday October 26th, 2:00-3:00 p.m. Eastern time
- 3) "Chemical Environment" with Maye Thompson and Marybeth Palmigiano
Tuesday November 2nd, 2:00-3:00 p.m. Eastern time
- 4) "Food Environment" with Michelle Gottlieb and Emma Sirois
Tuesday November 9th, 2:00-3:00 p.m. Eastern time

For more information, please visit AAIDD's [Teleconference webpage](#).

CHE Regional Working Groups Updates

CHE Alaska

~ coordinated by Pam Miller, Alaska Community Action, pkmiller@akaction.net

~ **New CHE-AK call announced: International Actions to Eliminate the World's Most Dangerous Chemicals: Recommendations of International Panel of Experts on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)**
Wednesday, October 27, 2010 at 9 AM Alaska / 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern

An international panel of experts is meeting in Geneva, Switzerland October 11 - 15, 2010 to review chemicals being considered for a worldwide ban under the [Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants](#) (POPs). The 31 members of the [POPs Review Committee](#) (POPRC) will be considering whether endosulfan (an insecticide used in agriculture and already banned in 60 countries), short-chained chlorinated paraffins (used primarily in metalworking, but also as flame retardants, plasticizers, and additives in paints) and hexabromocyclododecane (used as a flame retardant in insulation board for construction, electrical and electronic equipment, upholstery fabric, draperies, and car interiors) should be banned under the Convention. All three of these dangerous chemicals can be found in the Arctic due to long range transport by wind and ocean currents. International observers representing non-governmental organizations from around the world are attending the meeting to advocate for meaningful international action to eliminate the production and use of these harmful chemicals. Join us for a discussion with international observers Karl Tupper of Pesticide Action Network North

America, Pamela K. Miller of Alaska Community Action on Toxics, and Eva Kruemmel (invited) of Inuit Circumpolar Council to hear the outcomes of the meeting and to find out how you can help ensure that these chemicals are eliminated from worldwide production and use.

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

CHE-HEAL

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

~ BPA: European food panel fails to protect EU citizens' health

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and partners were dismayed by the recent conclusion from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) that no stronger protection for public health is needed from the controversial synthetic chemical bisphenol A (BPA).

In June 2010, during the EFSA review process, HEAL and other environment and health groups backed a letter sent to the European food authority by 21 leading scientists (2). It states that: "We believe any objective and comprehensive review of the scientific literature will lead to the conclusion that action is necessary to reduce the levels of BPA exposure, particularly in groups at highest risk, namely young infants and pregnant mothers."

Lisette van Vliet - Toxics Policy Advisor, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) says "We are shocked by EFSA's conclusion. With growing evidence that BPA may play a role in major chronic diseases, such as breast cancer and diabetes, reducing levels of human exposure is a necessary and important step. The exposure of the developing foetus in the womb warrants particular attention because BPA can cross the placenta."

[Read more](#)

CHE Washington

~ coordinated by Steve Gilbert, sgilbert@innd.org and Aimee Boulanger, aboulanger@whidbey.com

~ The Washington Chapter of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment cordially invites you to its next public meeting, **Thursday, November 18th, from 2-4 PM Pacific** in the conference room at the American Lung Association of Washington (2625 Third Avenue) in downtown Seattle. This meeting is free and open to the public. This meeting's topic:

Environmental Health in the Media: Developing Effective Messages and Getting Better Coverage of Your Issues

Come meet with media expert Sian Wu of Seattle's Resource Media to hear her talk about their work to increase the profile of key environmental health campaigns. Bring questions about how to better communicate your own environmental health work to the public and decision-makers. Please also bring good ideas and any new tools/innovations you are using to communicate across internet social networks or in-community outreach. We'll leave plenty of open time for group discussion and to generate practical ideas to better communicate the links between human health and the environment across our region and nationally.

More information on Sian Wu is available at the link below.

You can [RSVP through the CHE-WA webpage](#) to receive important announcements and updates related to this meeting. RSVPs, however, are not required to attend. We hope to see you there!

CHE's Chairman Philip R. Lee and CHE co-founding staff member, Steve Heilig author article on healthy aging and environmental health

The article is published in, *Generations*, the journal of the American Society on Aging and is titled, "Better Living Through Chemistry? Diseases of Aging, Health Care Without Harm, and the Struggle for Chemical Policy Reform".

[View the abstract](#)

October 2010 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives available online

[Read more](#)

October 2010 issue of Environmental Factor available online

[Read more](#)

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

Reports, Resources and Other Updates

CHEM Trust report: A Review of the Role Pesticides Play In Some Cancers: Children, Farmers and Pesticide Users at Risk

In July, 2010 CHEM Trust released this report looking at pesticide exposures in pregnant women and farmers.

[Download the report](#)

PSR: Environmental Health Policy Institute posts second installment

PSR's Environmental Health Policy Institute, an online forum of physicians, health professionals, and environmental health experts. The Institute aims to host inspired conversation about toxic chemicals as well as cross-cutting issues in environmental health science and policy.

[View the Institute webpage](#)

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.

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, info@healthandenvironment.org

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