



Collaborative on Health and the Environment eNewsletter - December 2010



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Contents

CHE Partnership Calls

[Working and Regional Group Updates](#)

[Announcements and News Highlights](#)

[Reports, Resources and Other Updates](#)

Appealing to the Power of Collaboration

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I hope this holiday season finds you healthy and surrounded by loved ones, particularly as we face so many challenges on every level of society and around the world.

**DONATE
NOW!**

If you're a CHE partner, I write now to invite you to reflect on the ways CHE may have supported your work professionally and your decisions personally to improve human and ecological health. CHE provides a wide range of services at no cost to its almost 4000 partners globally. If you are not yet a partner, I would like to share more about our efforts to improve human and ecological health.

Having been integrally involved in CHE since its inception in 2002 and having had the privilege of serving as Director of CHE over these past two years, I am pleased to note that even more partners than ever have written or called to say that CHE serves an essential and seminal role in shaping and galvanizing their respective work and interests.

Some highlights from this past year include:

- Organized and facilitated over a dozen **national CHE Partnership calls** with leading researchers on an array of cutting-edge environmental health topics, including a conversation with Linda Birnbaum, PhD, Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; a look at nanotechnology as an emerging environmental health field; a review of the findings of the President's Cancer Panel report; two discussions focused on the oil spill in the Gulf Coast; a call on the connection between breast cancer and the environment and a conversation focused on pediatric integrative health (see <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/news/calls>);
- Managed and fostered activities of **CHE's Working Groups** including: fertility and reproductive health, learning and developmental disabilities, neurodegenerative

disorders, mental health, obesity/diabetes, cancer, breast cancer, asthma, EMFs, science and integrative health (see http://www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups);

- Organized a highly informative symposium "**Children First: Promoting Ecological Health for the Whole Child**" featuring prominent speakers from diverse sectors who offered new models and systems to help advance pediatric integrative health (see <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/news/conference>);
- Launched a national initiative on **Healthy Aging and the Environment**, which is engaging AARP, Generations United and other national organizations serving seniors regarding environmental health (see http://www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/healthy_aging);
- Launched CHE's new **Primary Prevention Environmental Health training program** for professionals and others in various health-affected sectors (see <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/ehtraining>);
- Initiated a partnership with the Science and Environmental Health Network on **cumulative stressors** and their impacts on human and ecological health;
- **Published** timely science-based materials on environmental contributors to reproductive health, cancer and neurological disorders;
- Continued to improve the accessibility and usability of the CHE website, including our **Portal to Science** which now offers dozens more research articles and scientific papers (see <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/cgi-bin/portal.cgi>);
- Updated CHE **Fertility and Reproductive Health's web library** (see <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/cgi-bin/fertilitylibrary.cgi>);
- Revised CHE's **Disease and Toxins database** based on peer-reviewed articles published in the last few years (new version to be released in early 2011, see <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/tddb/>);
- Developed a web page on links to information on **chemical policy reform** (see http://www.healthandenvironment.org/resources/chemical_policy);
- Advanced initiatives with **partners in Europe** on cancer and climate change; and
- Participated in dozens of conferences, workshops, federal advisory committees, Congressional briefings and hearings, and other relevant events to translate the emerging environmental health science for various constituencies.

Though we never ask for membership fees for our services and we know so many are deeply constrained by today's economic challenges, we invite those of you who can to make a donation of any size towards our ongoing efforts. You can access the "Donate" link on CHE's web site to make your contribution (<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/donate>), or you can mail a check made out to "Commonweal/CHE" directly to Commonweal at PO Box 316, Bolinas, CA 94924.

By making a gift today, you will help us continue to define and successfully implement CHE's current and evolving initiatives dedicated to creating a healthier future for all.

With gratitude and warmest wishes for 2011,
Elise

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 Partnership call:

2010: Environmental Health Highlights of the Year

Wednesday December 8, 2010

For our last CHE partner call of the year, we invited three national leaders to highlight what they think have been the top 2 or 3 research studies, reports, policy actions, seminal events, etc. in environmental health and justice in 2010-and why. We would also like to invite YOU to send in your thoughts on what have been prominent highlights or turning points (positive or challenging) during this past year and why. To offer your contributions, [visit the CHE blog](#). A list of resources provided by our speakers is available on the call webpage (http://www.healthandenvironment.org/partnership_calls/8462), and an MP3 recording will be available shortly.

Featured speakers included:

Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, is the Science Director for the Science and Environmental Health Network ([SEHN](#)). Dr. Schettler is co-author of *Generations at Risk: Reproductive Health and the Environment*, which examines reproductive and developmental health effects of exposure to a variety of environmental toxicants. He is also co-author of *In Harm's Way: Toxic Threats to Child Development*, which discusses the impact of environmental exposures on neurological development in children, and *Environmental Threats to Healthy Aging: With a Closer Look at Alzheimer' and Parkinson's Diseases*.

Pete Myers, PhD, is founder, CEO and Chief Scientist of [Environmental Health Sciences](#). Along with co-authors Dr. Theo Colborn and Dianne Dumanoski, Myers wrote *Our Stolen Future*, a book (1996) that explores the scientific basis of concern for how contamination threatens fetal development. He has published the website [OurStolenFuture.org](#) since that book was published, synthesizing hundreds of scientific articles about endocrine disruption to make them accessible to the media and the lay public. Myers is now actively involved in primary research on the impacts of endocrine disruption on human health.

Peggy Shepard, is executive director and co-founder of [WE ACT](#) For Environmental Justice. Founded in 1988 in West Harlem, WE ACT works to build community power to improve environmental health, policy and protection in communities of color. She is a recipient of the 10th Annual Heinz Award For the Environment, and the Dean's Distinguished Service Award from the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health in 2004. She is a member of the National Children's Study Federal Advisory Committee to the National Institutes of Health.

The call was moderated by Steve Heilig, CHE Director of Public Health and Education.

Resources from recent CHE calls:

Update from the CHE Cafe call on October 12, 2010: Living Downstream: A Conversation with Sandra Steingraber and Chanda Chevannes

Last month, CHE Science Café featured a conversation about the new documentary film, [Living Downstream](#) with Sandra Steingraber and filmmaker Chanda Chevannes. Now, as

a special offer, the film's producers are offering all CHE full members free online access to screen this important film.

Based on the acclaimed book by ecologist and cancer survivor [Sandra Steingraber, Ph.D.](#), *Living Downstream* is an eloquent and cinematic documentary following Sandra during one pivotal year as she works to break the silence about cancer and its environmental links. This award-winning film has been screening to full houses and receiving standing ovations across North America. The *Living Downstream* Educational DVD, set to be released later this month, is designed for use by educators, organizations, professionals, and community groups. Purchasing this DVD gives your group the right to screen the film publicly for educational or nonprofit purposes. Learn more about pre-ordering a copy of the DVD:

http://www.livingdownstream.com/order_the_dvd.php

Screen *Living Downstream* online to see whether it might be useful to you in your work, or to simply learn more about the issue of cancer and the environment.

Here's how:

- Go to: <http://www.livingdownstream.com/screener>
- For the Username, type or "copy" and "paste" the following: orgs7
- For the Password, type or "copy" and "paste" the following: ,\$(vPO(BIQVx
- Depending on your web browser, you may be asked to enter the Username and Password more than once
- The film should start automatically

Please note the following:

- This online copy is strictly intended for private professional review. The access information should not be shared with anyone for any purposes beyond organizational review.
- To allow for quick download speeds, this online copy is highly compressed, which results in a degradation of picture and sound quality. The DVD picture and sound quality is much higher.
- The Username and Password will only be valid until December 31, after which they will be modified for the sake of piracy prevention. If anyone requires the Username and Password after this time, please contact chanda@theppcin.com.

If you require any assistance, contact chanda@theppcin.com.

Recent CHE calls available as MP3 downloads:

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

- November 9, 2010 - [Fracking: Implications for Human and Environmental Health](#)
- October 28, 2010 - [State of the Evidence: The Connection Between Breast Cancer and the Environment](#)
- October 12, 2010 - [Living Downstream: A Conversation with Sandra Steingraber and Chanda Chevannes](#)

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 training for mothers announced: The Collaborative on Health and Environment, in partnership with MOMS (Making Our Milk Safe), will host a training to teach mothers about environmental health science on March 2-4, 2011. Our goal is to give moms a basic scientific understanding so that they can be more confident as advocates for a healthier world. The training will primarily focus on evidence-based science in lay language that can be used for advocacy. Applications are now being accepted.

[Learn more, including application requirements](#)

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 Fertility

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

~ **New CHE Fertility call MP3 recording posted: Environmental Exposures and Early Onset of Puberty**

On November 16, 2010 CHE Fertility hosted a call exploring the the science focused on environmental exposure and the early onset of puberty.

[Listen to the MP3 recording and view additional related resources](#)

~ **Oral contraceptives are not a major estrogen source in drinking water.** The contribution of oral contraceptives to estrogen pollution in water is relatively small compared to other agricultural, industrial and household sources. To see if OCs are mainly to blame, the researchers reviewed scientific studies from Europe and the United States that identified sources of estrogens in surface, source and drinking water. They paid close attention to the main estrogen in OCs, 17 alphaethinylestradiol (EE2). They also evaluated the public health impact of estrogenic pollution in drinking water. The authors find that agricultural sources are an important source of estrogens in waterways because livestock produce 13 times more solid waste than humans. The animals can excrete both natural and pharmaceutical hormones. One study estimates that up to 90 percent of total estrogens in the environment could come from animal waste. Dec 07, 2010 Wise, A, K O'Brien and T Woodruff. 2010. Are oral contraceptives a significant contributor to the estrogenicity of drinking water?

[Read the full study](#)

[Read an *Environmental Health News* article on the study](#)

~ **BPA may inhibit pregnancy.** Even as women choose to have babies later in life, more are having trouble conceiving, and the chemical BPA might be partly to blame, suggests a new study. Mice that were exposed to tiny amounts of the common chemical in the womb and shortly after birth had no problems getting pregnant early in their reproductive lives, the study found. But the animals were less likely to get pregnant as they aged compared to animals that had not been exposed to BPA, and they gave birth to smaller litters as time wore on. Discovery Channel. 2 December 2010.

[Read more](#)

~ **14th World Congress on Controversies in Obstetrics, Gynecology and Infertility (COGI):** The next COGI™ Congress will take place in Paris, France, November 17-20, 2011. The COGI™ Congresses are the only meetings that are designed primarily to facilitate effective debates concerning unresolved issues in all fields of Ob/Gyn and infertility, resulting in agreed-upon answers supported by evidence-based medicine and expert opinions.

A limited number of abstracts will be accepted for free communications if submitted in good time. Abstract Form, Registration Form and list of optional hotels for accommodation will soon be mounted on the Congress website at:

<http://www.congressmed.com/cogi>

CHE Healthy Aging Initiative

~ coordinated by Maria Valenti, mvalenti@igc.org

~ **A series of five webinars on healthy aging** supported by CHE and sponsored by CHE partner the Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities ([AAIDD](#)) are archived with audio and presentation materials on the AAIDD site at [this page](#). Sessions cover a wealth of information on an ecological approach to healthy aging, and the built, food, psychosocial and chemical environments. Requests for similar presentations include the upcoming December 9 presentation for the Association of University Centers on Disabilities ([AUCD](#)), CDC Cooperative Agreement grantees. The topic will be the Built Environment and Healthy Aging, and will be presented by Dr. Rodney Harrell from AARP's [Public Policy Institute](#), and Kathy Sykes of EPA's [Aging Initiative](#).

~ Healthy Aging project coordinator Maria Valenti participated in a **meeting with staff of Senator Scott Brown** at his district office in MA to discuss the need for health protective national chemical policy. She was joined by Cindy Luppi, co-director NE Region Clean Water Action, and Erin Boles, Associate Executive Director, MA Breast Cancer Coalition, both CHE members. Maria also represented CHE member Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility. Letters and petitions were delivered from CWA and GBPSR members asking the Senator to support measures to reduce exposures to hazardous chemicals. All three organizations are members of the Safer Chemical Healthy Families coalition ([SCHE](#)).

~ Maria and CHE's Healthy Aging initiative medical advisor Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, have been in discussions with the [National Council of Church's Environmental Health Initiative](#) about some upcoming materials and programs that will incorporate healthy aging across the lifespan concepts. These include a Grandparents Guide on environmental health issues that will be coming out soon (stay tuned!) and also a webinar for the NCC national activist network now scheduled for February 8, 2011.

~ Ted Schettler will be a panelist in the **January 18, 2011 webinar *Vision to Reality: Special Challenges & Opportunities in Environmental and Policy Change*** as part of a series being held and hosted by the CDC Healthy Aging Research Network & Creating Aging-Friendly Communities. Ted will be joined by co-panelist Lenard W. Kaye, D.S.W., Ph.D, Director, Center on Aging, College of Business, Public Policy & Health, University of Maine. The session will be moderated by Rebecca Hunter, M.Ed., University of North Carolina and CDC-HAN. To register or view the online presentations, webinars, and resources from September 2010 through January 2011 go to: <http://agingfriendly.org/>.

CHE Regional Working Groups Updates

CHE Alaska

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

~ **New CHE-AK call announced: Bisphenol A (BPA): What it does, where it's found, and what we can do to reduce our exposure**

December 15, 2010

Wednesday, December 15, 2010 at 9:00 AM Alaska / 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern

Bisphenol A (commonly known as BPA) is one of the most widely produced chemicals in the world. BPA is used in hard plastics, food and beverage containers, receipts, dental sealants and more. BPA mimics estrogen activity and is known as an "endocrine disruptor," interfering with the hormonal systems in animals and humans. Hear about the latest BPA studies and what they tell us about how exposure to bisphenol A may affect human health. Find out about everyday products that contain BPA and how consumer concern is moving some companies to transition to safer alternatives. Learn about precautionary policies adopted by some states and countries and how you can get

involved in efforts to reduce people's exposure to BPA.

PRESENTERS:

Dr. Patricia Hunt, Professor of Reproductive Biology, School of Molecular Biosciences, Washington State University at Pullman

Bobbi Chase Wilding, Organizing Director, Clean New York, and national BPA Coordinator for the Coming Clean collaborative.

Staff (TBA), Breast Cancer Fund

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.

Announcements and News Highlights

US EPA identifies chemical list to be screened for endocrine system disruption

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified a list of 134 chemicals that will be screened for their potential to disrupt the endocrine system. Endocrine disruptors are chemicals that interact with and possibly disrupt the hormones produced or secreted by the human or animal endocrine system, which regulates growth, metabolism and reproduction. Administrator Lisa P. Jackson has made it a top priority to ensure the safety of chemicals, and this is another step in this process.

[Read more](#)

First scientific consensus statement on treating a group of toxic chemicals as a class

For the first time, nearly 150 leading scientists from 22 countries have declared serious concerns about BFRs and CFRs as a class. The "San Antonio Statement on Brominated and Chlorinated Flame Retardants" was published on-line by *Environmental Health Perspectives* on October 28th, along with an editorial by Åke Bergman (world famous researcher) and Linda Birnbaum (Director of NIEHS and the National Toxicology Program).

[Read more](#)

National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures wants to hear from you

The Leadership Council will share its draft action agenda for review and comment in mid-December, kicking off a month-long period of public engagement and discussion. In addition to providing specific comments on the draft action agenda, we hope you will participate in the second *National Conversation* WebDialogue on January 5-6, 2011. The WebDialogue is an opportunity to learn from one another and form conclusions to share as part of the public comment process. The *National Conversation* Leadership Council is using the six work group reports, results of more than 50 Community Conversations, input from the April 2010 WebDialogue, listening sessions held with tribal members, and insights from partner organizations, including the National Association of County and City Health Officials and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, to draft the action agenda.

[Read more](#)

Europe bans baby bottles with bisphenol A.

On November 25, 2010 Europe banned baby bottles containing the chemical Bisphenol A as of early next year over fears it may harm the health of children throughout the EU's half a billion population.

[Read more](#)

December 2010 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives available online

[Read more](#)

December 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

National Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Registry available online

The Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR) launched the National Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Registry web portal. ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a fatal neurodegenerative disease. The registry provides a means of structured data collection that will help address uncertainty about the incidence and prevalence of ALS in the United States.

[Visit the registry](#)

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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