A Beacon of Light is Only as Strong as its Source
by Elise Miller, MEd
CHE Director

We can no longer relegate social and environmental determinants of health to the sidelines, while deeply investing in pharmaceuticals and gene therapies. Instead, we must work to minimize exposures - from toxic chemicals to psychosocial stress - starting in the womb. By providing this expanded frame for addressing chronic disease and disability, CHE is helping us reimagine and ignite new ways to improve population health for generations to come.

- Philip R. Lee, MD
Former United States Assistant Secretary of Health
Chancellor Emeritus, University of California, San Francisco
Professor Emeritus, Stanford University

As 2013 comes to a close, Dr. Phil Lee, CHE's founding chair, continues to inspire us. Given his renowned leadership and expertise in public health over the decades, he remains a beacon of light as stormy economic and political forces often obscure scientific evidence and common sense, further undermining our capacity to protect our most vulnerable populations from environmental health insults.

The good news is that many other beacons of light, embodied in each of you, are also illuminating the emerging science through your dedicated efforts to reduce exposures and make systems level changes towards improved health across the lifespan. And we each source each other.
As partners of CHE, quite a number of you over this past year presented on or participated in the 40-plus CHE partnership and working group calls on cutting edge science from "Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals: Exposure, Research and Regulation" to "Superfund Contaminants and Reproduction". Many of you also shared scientific updates and your expertise on our 20 different working group listservs. Others found the scientific information you needed on our highly lauded Toxics and Disease Database. Some responded to our 23 blog posts or contributed your own article. A number of you let us know how helpful you find the specialized news feeds we provide for several of our listservs and our new "Top 10" quarterly environmental health lists. Some tweeted about our pitch for the Robert Wood Johnson's Foundation's first "Pioneer Pitch Day" in New York City. Dozens participated in a CHE Environmental Health Primary Prevention Training. Many more attended one or more of the sessions we organized at conferences around the country from New Partners for Smart Growth to the American Public Health Association to Generations United as well as our CHE-Northwest Children's Environmental Health Forum. Others of you were one of the 55,000 unique visitors to www.diabetesandenvironment.org, a website Sarah Howard, coordinator of CHE's Diabetes-Obesity Spectrum Working Group, has developed to highlight the scientific literature linking diabetes to toxic exposures. And yes, the list could go on and on.

In short, you have all collectively helped make CHE as robust and effective as it is by engaging in and contributing to these myriad manifestations of our work. But as you well know from your own experience, a beacon of light is only as strong as its source. You have sourced us with your energy, expertise and time, but CHE itself cannot continue to provide the services we do, stay on the cutting edge of science, and foster new strategic initiatives without your financial support as well.

Please make a tax-deductible gift today--whatever amount is within your means--so that CHE can remain a beacon in the environmental health field and, most important, help augment the light you each bring to our collective work. We know you are called on by many outstanding and worthy nonprofits for your support. We truly hope you will include CHE in your giving this year.

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CHE Partnership Calls

CHE Partnership call: The Ecology of Breast Cancer with Ted Schettler, MD, MPH
Monday December 16, 2013 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

RSVP for this call

The Ecology of Breast Cancer: The Promise of Prevention and the Hope for Healing is a new book by Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, that makes the case that breast cancer is a disease arising from diverse societal conditions. Although well-recognized risk factors and a person's life style are important, they simply do not explain why many people develop the disease. Nor do they fully explain breast cancer patterns in populations. "In many ways, breast cancer is a design problem", Schettler concludes. "It is not only a disease of abnormal cells but also of communities that we create and live in. Breast cancer is profoundly a public health concern, requiring a public health response. Thinking about this as an ecological challenge helps us identify multi-level interventions that will reduce breast cancer risk and improve outcomes after diagnosis." On this call CHE-cofounder Michael Lerner and Ted Schettler will discuss the themes that emerge in this analysis and opportunities for reducing the burden and impact of this disease.

CHE Partnership call: Endocrine Disruption and Immune Dysfunction
Wednesday January 8, 2014 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

RSVP for this call

On this call Dr. Dietert will discuss how the immune system is a target for endocrine disrupting chemicals, particularly during development. Numerous relatively 'hidden' effects can ensue from a single risk factor and emerge over a lifetime. He will also discuss how current safety testing fails to appropriately assess misregulated inflammation as the greatest immune based health risk.

Save the date: CHE Partnership call: Fukushima Two Years After: The Future of Nuclear Energy and Human Health
Thursday January 16, 2014 at 10:00 am Pacific/ 1:00 pm Eastern
Speakers for this call will be announced soon, and a full description and RSVP link will be available on the CHE website.

Special Announcements

Northwest Children's Environmental Health Forum a success
Two hundred people sold out the room on December 4th for CHE-WA's 2013 Northwest Children's Environmental Health Forum--Healthy Environments for Healthy Babies: Preventing Harmful Environmental Exposures Before and During Pregnancy. Participants from around the Pacific Northwest came from the public health, community health outreach, early childhood education, nursing, clinical practice, academic and government sectors. 22% (!) of the attendees were nurses. A panel of national and local speakers spoke 'interview style' on basic science and emerging issues. Find speaker PowerPoint files and panel videos on the forum's webpage in the next month.

For more information about the CHE-WA Children's Environmental Health Working Group, contact Gail Gensler at gail.gensler@kingcounty.gov.

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:

- December 10, 2013: The Link Between EMF and Autism?: A Conversation with Cindy Sage and Martha Herbert
- December 2, 2013: Chemical Brain Drain: A Conversation with Philippe Grandjean
- November 21, 2013: Presidents on Prevention
- November 12, 2013: Cumulative Impacts and the US Environmental Health Movement

You can subscribe via podcast to receive notifications of new call recordings added to the CHE archives. View a list of past calls and subscribe to the podcast.

CHE Working and Regional Group Updates

Stay in touch with CHE through social media:
Visit CHE's blog to read recent posts.
Visit CHE's Facebook page.
Join CHE on Twitter. CHE now tweets during most Partnership calls. Join the online conversation by following CHE on Twitter.

CHE Asthma
~ coordinated by Genon Jensen, info@healthandenvironment.org
~ Cough4coal: HEAL's work inspires creative action in Berlin and Warsaw

An eight-meter-tall set of inflatable pink lungs were recently created by artist Artur van Balen as a tool for the international Cough4Coal campaign, which made an appearance outside a Coal and Climate Summit in Warsaw. Medical students, NGOs and the general public joined the 'people before coal' protect, and HEAL provided expertise on the health impacts of coal during the development phase of the campaign.

Read more

~ HEAL 'meets and greets' EFA members at workshop on air quality

On the occasion of a 'Meet and Greet the EU Institutions' training session by HEAL member the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients Association (EFA), we were given the opportunity to participate in a workshop on air quality.

Read more

~ UK parliament urged to recognize health costs of coal

On December 2, 2013 HEAL released new figures on the harm to health in the United Kingdom associated with air pollution from coal-fired power plants.

Read the briefing (included the released figures)
Read the press release

CHE Breast Cancer

~ coordinated by Michael Lerner and Jeannie Rizzo, info@healthandenvironment.org

~ The Breast Cancer Fund hosts upcoming webinars

Breast Cancer and the Environment 101
December 12, 4:00 pm Pacific / 7:00 pm Eastern
The Breast Cancer and Environment 101 presentation features the Healthy Home and Healthy World Tour, which presents common-sense tips and advocacy actions for prevention based upon the evidence linking chemicals and radiation in our environment to breast cancer.

Read more and RSVP

Breast Cancer Fund Study Group on Occupation and Breast Cancer: Steelworkers, Microelectronics and Other Industries
January 6, 2014 at 11:00 am Pacific / 2:00 pm Eastern
In this, the third session of the virtual occupational study group series, we will feature presentations on work with women in industries that work with various chemicals and solvents.

Read more and RSVP

CHE Climate Change

~ coordinated by Genon Jensen, info@healthandenvironment.org

~ Health and medical organizations convene successful summit in Warsaw

On November 16, 2013 the second International Climate and Health Summit took place in Warsaw alongside the official COP19 climate negotiations. The Summit was organized by the Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA) together with the World Medical Association and the World Health Organization. HEAL is a founding member of the Alliance and the local convening partner of the summit.

Read more

~ HEAL promotes health benefits at COP19

During the COP19 climate negotiations in Warsaw in November, HEAL's delegation successfully brought forward the messages from the health and medical professionals and representatives of patients' organizations into the climate debate.

Read more

~ HEAL speaks to parliamentarians about health impacts of climate change
On November 6, 2013 HEAL Executive Director Genon K. Jensen spoke about the climate impacts on health at a European Parliament event hosted by CAN Europe, Globe EU and Climate Parliament.

**CHE/SEHN Cumulative Impacts**
~ coordinated by Carolyn Raffensperger and Elise Miller, info@healthandenvironment.org

**~ Working group call featuring Ted Schettler and Michael Lerner**
Monday December 16, 2013 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern
On this call (see full description above) Dr. Ted Schettler and Dr. Michael Lerner will discuss Dr. Schettler’s new book: *The Ecology of Breast Cancer: The Promise of Prevention and the Hope for Healing.*

**~ Save the date: January working group call featuring Dr. Rosalind Wright**
Tuesday January 21, 2013 at 11:00 am Pacific / 2:00 pm Eastern
On this call, Dr. Wright will discuss some of her recent findings on the physiological pathways through which chemical and psychological stressors may influence health and how this research underscores the need for more effective upstream intervention strategies to promote public health.

**CHE Diabetes-Obesity**
~ coordinated by Sarah Howard, sarhow@gmail.com

**~ 6th Diabetes Atlas now available**
The International Diabetes Federation released its *6th Diabetes Atlas*. Some highlights:

- 382 million people have diabetes in 2013.
- The number of people with type 2 diabetes is increasing in every country.
- 80% of people with diabetes live in low- and middle-income countries.
- Diabetes caused 5.1 million deaths in 2013.
- Diabetes caused at least USD 548 billion dollars in health expenditure in 2013; that is 11% of total spending on adults.
- More than 79,000 children developed type 1 diabetes in 2013.
- 175 million people with diabetes are undiagnosed.

**~ Webinar available**

**~ New articles and research published in academic and scientific journals**

**CHE Working Group on Electromagnetic Fields**
~ coordinated by Antoinette Stein, nettestein@gmail.com

**~ MP3 recording available: Cindy Sage and Martha Herbert discuss EMF and Autism links**
The MP3 recording from the CHE EMF Working Group call: *The Link Between EMF and Autism: A Conversation with Cindy Sage and Martha Herbert* is now available for download.

**~ Human disease resulting from exposure to electromagnetic field**
This review summarizes the evidence stating that excessive exposure to magnetic fields...
from power lines and other sources of electric current increases the risk of development of some cancers and neurodegenerative diseases, and that excessive exposure to RF radiation increases risk of cancer, male infertility, and neurobehavioral abnormalities. The relative impact of various sources of exposure, the great range of standards for EMF exposure, and the costs of doing nothing are also discussed.

Read more

CHE Fertility and Reproductive Health
~ coordinated by Karin Russ, karin@healthandenvironment.org

~ New articles and research published in academic and scientific journals

DNA methylation in oocytes and liver of female mice and their offspring: effects of high-fat-diet-induced obesity. These results indicate that DNA methylation patterns of several metabolism-related genes are not only changed in oocytes of obese mice, but also in oocytes and liver of their offspring. Environmental Health Perspectives.

Evaluation of exposure to contaminated drinking water and specific birth defects and childhood cancers at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina: a case-control study. Although confidence intervals were wide, odds ratios (ORs) suggested associations between drinking water contaminants and neural tube defects. ORs suggested weaker associations with childhood hematopoietic cancers. Environmental Health.

Long-term effects of prenatal exposure to perfluoroalkyl substances on female reproduction. In adjusted regression analyses, daughters exposed to higher levels of PFOA in utero had a 5.3 months later age of menarche compared with the reference group of lower PFOA. Human Reproduction.

Prenatal glucocorticoid treatment and later mental health in children and adolescents. Prenatal synthetic glucocorticoids (sGC) treatment was consistently associated with adverse mental health in childhood and adolescence, supportive of the idea that sGC has a programming effect on the fetal brain. PlosOne.


Environmental phthalate exposure and preterm birth. Women exposed to phthalates during pregnancy have significantly increased odds of delivering preterm. Steps should be taken to decrease maternal exposure to phthalates during pregnancy. JAMA Pediatrics.

Micronuclei in cord blood lymphocytes and associations with biomarkers of exposure to carcinogens and hormonally active factors, gene polymorphisms, and gene expression: the NewGeneris Cohort. We measured in utero exposure to selected environmental carcinogens and circulating hormonally acting factors and detected associations with micronuclei frequency in newborns circulating T-lymphocytes. Environmental Health Perspectives.

BPA, semen quality and embryo development in assisted reproduction. Urinary BPA concentrations in male partners of subfertile couples may influence semen quality parameters, but do not affect embryo development up to the blastocyst stage after medically assisted reproduction. Fertility and Sterility.

~ Call for proposals

Review of nonmonotonic dose-responses of substances for human risk assessment. The European Food Safety Authority has issued a call for proposals that aims at evaluating the extent of evidence and the validity of the studies supporting the nonmonotonicity hypotheses for adverse effects and underlying toxic modes of action of substances (including man-made chemicals) in the area of food safety. The deadline is...
February 28, 2014.

~ New resources


There was a significant relationship between mercury intake from fish consumption and blood mercury, although mercury intake did not fully explain the differences observed across the survey releases. The analysis showed few changes in fish consumption and mercury intake over the study period. EPA.

**Video: Transgenerational Inheritance of Prenatal Obesogen Exposure.**

The video recording of the webinar presentation by Dr. Bruce Blumberg of University of California, Irvine, entitled "Transgenerational Inheritance of Prenatal Obesogen Exposure", is now available on the Michigan Green Chemistry Clearinghouse.

**New fact sheet: Autism: What Do Environment and Diet Have to Do with It?**

A child's prenatal and postnatal environments, including diet, clearly impact immune health. Growing evidence suggests environmental and dietary factors play a significant role in increasing the risk for autism. This report is from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

**CHE Healthy Aging and the Environment Initiative**

~ coordinated by Maria Valenti, mvalenti@igc.org

~ CHE call featured in December issue of NIEHS newsletter

CHE's October 24, 2013 Partnership call: Environmental Justice and the Superfund Research Program: Community Collaborations Making a Difference was featured in the December issue of the NIEHS newsletter Environmental Factor, with a link to the audio recording. The CHE call presented three of the Superfund Research program's Community Engagement Cores, and their innovative community engagement work in the Northeast, South, and on the US-Mexico border. You can subscribe to the NIEHS Environmental Factor here.

~ Winners of the 7th Annual Rachel Carson Intergenerational Sense of Wonder Contest

Winners of the annual Sense of Wonder contest included those in the categories of photo, essay, song, poetry, mixed media and dance. First place winners in photography were daughter and father team Mira (15) and David (49) who submitted this intergenerational photo. "...My family is in the process of opening a goat dairy...me and my dad were down at the goats one day when we saw this wonderful picture opportunity. We discovered that not only humans have special bonds with each other but so do animals of all kinds," said Mira.

~ New census-based apps for assessing some local environmental conditions, including public transportation and affordable housing

The US Census Bureau has released dwellr, a new mobile app that delivers access to key demographic, socio-economic and housing statistics for thousands of places across the nation, such as where there is good public transportation. Because housing and transportation costs combine to consume almost half of the average household's budget, the DOT and HUD developed a new cost calculation tool that allows users to estimate housing and transportation costs for neighborhoods across the country, the Location and Affordability Portal.

~ New articles and research published in academic and scientific journals

Cognitive health begins at conception: addressing dementia as a lifelong and preventable
Article authors consider the evidence that lifelong prevention strategies may be an effective way to tackle the national burden of dementia in the absence of a cure.

New Insights into the Dementia Epidemic. Although demographics will drive an increase in the number of dementia cases, recent reports--generally based on population-based community studies or survey data--point to declining age-specific prevalence or incidence rates among people born later in the first half of the 20th century.

The role of social engagement and identity in community mobility among older adults aging in place. The purpose of this study was to understand how neighborhoods--as physical and social environments--influence community mobility.

Green space and stress: evidence from cortisol measures in deprived urban communities. Contact with green space in the environment has been associated with mental health benefits, but the mechanism underpinning this association is not clear. This study extends an earlier exploratory study showing that more green space in deprived urban neighborhoods in Scotland is linked to lower levels of perceived stress and improved physiological stress as measured by diurnal patterns of cortisol secretion.

Mental health benefits of neighbourhood green space are stronger among physically active adults in middle-to-older age: evidence from 260,061 Australians. In comparison to residents of the least green areas, those in the greenest neighbourhoods were at a lower risk of psychological distress and were less sedentary.

~ Recent and Upcoming Events

New Partners for Smart Growth Annual Conference
February 13-15, 2014, Denver, CO
"Building Safe, Healthy, Equitable and Prosperous Communities". Pre-conference on "Advancing Healthy Equitable Food Systems".

Making the Connection 2014: Environmental Health Across the Lifespan
February 28-March 1, 2014, Madison, WI

This conference is hosted by the Wisconsin Environmental Health Network. Maria Valenti will present on healthy aging and the environment.

CHE Regional Working Groups Updates

CHE HEAL
~ coordinated by Lisette van Viliet, lisette@env-health.org

~ HEAL to co-host health and environment film screenings and debates
From February 4-11, 2014, HEAL is co-hosting a Health and Environment documentaries program and debate as part of the 31st International Environmental Film Festival in Paris. Expert panels will feature film directors, relevant scientific experts and those affected by the themes highlighted in the selected films.
Read more

~ Symposium of the Environmental Health Economics Network
In October, HEAL's Deputy Director Anne Stauffer took part in the second symposium and advisory group meeting on environmental health and economics in Bonn, Germany, organised by the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH).
Read more

~ HEAL welcomes manifesto on breast cancer launched in UK
Breast Cancer UK presented its manifesto on 23 October 'Prevention is better than cure: 5 pledges for 2015 and beyond’ calling on the UK Government to stop breast cancer before it starts. HEAL and other UK health groups co-signed this manifesto.
Read more
~ Collaboration with Global Alliance on Health and Pollution at European Parliament event on the global health footprint of development
In October the Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (GAHP) collaborated with MEP Michele Rivasi, the World Bank, HEAL and the European Cancer Leagues at a seminar in the EP to raise awareness about the burden of disease from chemicals, waste and toxic pollution.
Read more

CHE Washington
~ coordinated by Steve Gilbert and Aimee Boulanger, info@healthandenvironment.org

~ CHE-WA Children's Environmental Health Working Group monthly meeting
Thursday December 12, 2013 from 9:30-11:30 am Pacific

RSVP to: Gail Gensler at gail.gensler@kingcounty.gov

At this month's meeting of the CHE-WA Children's Environmental Health Working Group, staff from Public Health-Seattle & King County will describe three of their current community outreach projects: 1) investigating and reducing lead exposures to children, 2) developing a network of trusted community members (Promotoras) who carry environmental health messages to their neighbors, and 3) working together with a selected community to develop a project to reduce chemical hazards and exposures in the community's homes. This presentation includes some great visuals and stories.

The meeting is hosted by Public Health-Seattle & King County and will take place at Public Health-Seattle & King County, Chinoook Building, Room 126, 401 5th Ave, Seattle, WA, 98104. You can also attend by phone: 1-206-684-1467.

Announcements and News Highlights

GMO study retracted
A French study in 2012 led by Gilles-Eric Seralini found animals fed Monsanto's Roundup Ready corn had increased mortality and more tumors than a control group. Amid heavy industry criticism, the journal that published the research has retracted the study from its archives. Living On Earth.
Read more

Editorial: Public health focus can save chemical reform effort
Andy Igrejas, director of Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, a coalition of 450 health and environmental organizations, businesses and unions, comments on the Chemical Safety Improvement Act and health.
Read more

California tamping down use of flame retardants
California officials approved a new standard that furniture manufacturers can meet without using flame retardants, which have been linked to cancer, neurological deficits, developmental problems and impaired fertility. That rule now becomes a template for the rest of the country. Chicago Tribune, Illinois.
Read more

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Environmental Health News (EHN) and its sister site, The Daily Climate, offer a wealth of valuable information each day at no cost to subscribers. The daily email subscriptions and the 350,000-item news archive have recently been supplemented by a Facebook page and Twitter feed.

Environmental Health News: email, Facebook, Twitter and a website archive
Visit the website
Visit the EHN archives page
Sign up for EHN's free weekly e-newsletters focused on children's health and energy and health
Friend EHN on Facebook by searching for Environmental Health News

December 2013 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives available online
Read more

December 2013 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

Book: Textbook of Children's Environmental Health
With an emphasis upon integrating theory and practice, this textbook edited by Philip J. Landrigan and Ruth A. Etzel offers practical approaches to channeling scientific findings into strategies for preventing and identifying environmental hazards that cause disease in children.
Read more

Abstracts available from environmental health conference in Basel, Switzerland
EHP is pleased to present the abstracts from the 2013 conference Environment and Health-Bridging South, North, East and West, held 19-23 August 2013 in Basel, Switzerland, and hosted by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute. The conference was a joint meeting of the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology (ISEE), the International Society of Exposure Science (ISES), and the International Society of Indoor Air Quality and Climate (ISIAQ). More than 1,700 participants from all continents and over 70 countries attended.
Read more

CDC Health Disparities and Inequalities Report--United States, 2013 is the second agency report examining some of the key factors that affect health and lead to health disparities in the United States.
Read more

NEEF and CEHN's environmental health webinar archives available
Watch the National Environmental Education Foundation and Children's Environmental Health Network 2013 children's environmental health webinar series. These webinars preview the release of newly revised, peer-reviewed resource: "Pediatric Environmental Health: Putting it into Practice."
Read more

Report: The Nexus of Biofuels, Climate Change, and Human Health--Workshop Summary
On January 24-25, 2013, the IOM Roundtable on Environmental Health Sciences, Research, and Medicine held a workshop on the intersection of biofuels, climate change, and human health. The workshop focused on air, water, land use, food security, and social impacts of biofuels as an energy resource. This document summarizes the workshop.
Read more

CHE lists hundreds 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

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