



Collaborative on Health and the Environment

eNewsletter - June 2013

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Chemical policy reform: A major spike in the action on the federal level

By Elise Miller, MEd, CHE Director

with Davis Baltz, MS, Co-coordinator, CHE Special Projects

While CHE's primary mission is to bring attention to the emerging environmental health science, how that science is translated into public health policy is of course crucial to improving public health. Along these lines, some unexpected and important developments have taken place on federal chemical policy reform over the last few weeks.

On May 22, 2013, Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and David Vitter (R-LA) introduced the [Chemical Safety Improvement Act](#) (S.1009 or CSIA) with broad bipartisan support. The introduction of the new bipartisan bill was closely followed by the passing of Senator Lautenberg, who died on June 3 of viral pneumonia at age 89. He has been widely remembered and lauded as a champion for public, environmental, and occupational health.

Though CHE, as a whole, does not take a stand on any specific legislation, we wanted to ensure our full membership-on state, national and international levels-is aware of this significant and quickly-evolving process.



Senator Frank Lautenberg

First, as a bit of background, there is widespread



Senator David Vitter

agreement across the political spectrum that chemicals policy in the United States is broken and needs an upgrade. The only law that regulates industrial chemicals in the US, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), dates to 1976 and is considered ineffective and outdated by stakeholders across the political spectrum.

Senator Lautenberg had previously been the author of a different bill known as the Safe Chemicals Act (S. 696), which he had championed for several years, and in fact had reintroduced again in the current Congress. That bill passed the Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee in the last Congress, but did not advance further and never had any Republican support. Meanwhile, Senator Vitter worked on a different bill, the intent of which was also to improve the way chemicals are regulated, but which was never made available to the public.

The introduction of the Chemical Safety Improvement Act, however, took many by surprise. When first announced, the CSIA was described as a compromise where both sides have made concessions. However, industry has mostly embraced the new CSIA language, while public interest organizations, state governments, legal entities, and others have expressed the need for substantial improvements.

The question currently under debate is whether CSIA is strong enough to reform TSCA in a meaningful way. The bipartisan sponsorship of the bill is big news in politically gridlocked Washington, and for this reason there is momentum for the bill to move. At the same time, there are a number of contentious issues that various entities-many of which have been focused on chemical policy reform for years-strongly believe need to be resolved if this bill is to improve upon TSCA. These include CSIA's pre-emption of state and local laws, its lack of timelines and deadlines, a weak safety standard that closely parallels the failed TSCA statute, no consideration of aggregate exposure, no acknowledgement of disproportionately affected fenceline communities, and the use of cost-benefit analysis in regulatory decision-making.

In light of Senator Lautenberg's recent death, concern has also been expressed about who will take on Senate leadership regarding this bill. Senator Barbara Boxer, chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works committee, has publicly stated that she is strongly committed to TSCA reform and it is expected that she will play a key role in next steps in moving a stronger bill forward.

In short, this is a very nuanced, fast-paced and ongoing discussion about various aspects of the bill and how to respond to its introduction. To stay abreast of the latest media reports and other relevant information, please see the [Environmental Health News coverage of this topic](#).

Elise Miller, MEd, CHE Director

CHE Partnership Calls

CHE Partnership call: Primary Prevention of Asthma: A Roadmap

Tuesday June 18, 2013 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

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

In many parts of the US, asthma rates continue to increase, resulting in a substantial societal burden of human suffering, lost capacity and productivity, and direct fiscal costs. As with other chronic diseases, far more resources focus on managing asthma in people who have it than on preventing the disease. There remains an urgent need to better understand the root causes of asthma and to develop strategies for reducing the rate of new cases.

A growing body of research documents associations between asthma onset and a range of risk factors, many of which are modifiable, such as exposure to contaminants and allergens in indoor air, maternal health, including stress associated with poverty and racism, as well as obesity, outdoor air pollution, traffic, and occupational chemicals. Several studies have demonstrated reduced rates of new onset asthma among recipients of an intervention to address multiple risk factors as compared to a control group. A review of these studies suggests that a more systemic, multi-factorial approach may be effective.

CHE Cafe call: The Rise of the US Environmental Health Movement: A Conversation with Kate Davies

Thursday June 20, 2013 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

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

The Rise of the US Environmental Health Movement by Kate Davies is the first book to offer a comprehensive examination of the environmental health movement, which unlike many parts



of the environmental movement, focuses on ways toxic chemicals and other hazardous agents in the environment effect human health and well-being. Born in 1978 when Lois Gibbs organized her neighbors to protest the health effects of a toxic waste dump in Love Canal, New York, the movement has spread across the United States and throughout the world. By placing human health at the center of its environmental argument, this movement has achieved many victories in community mobilization and legislative reform. On this call Kate Davies and Elise Miller, CHE's director and author of the book's forward, will discuss the environmental health movement's historical, ideological, and cultural roots as well as talk about its strategies and successes.

CHE Partnership call: Policy and Practice: The US Food System and Health

Tuesday July 16, 2013 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

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

A major social determinant of health is our food system--not only what we eat, but how that food is grown, processed and made available to the market. From pesticide use to fertilizer nanomaterials to antibiotics in animal feed, science raises important public health concerns around agriculture, but these concerns are largely ignored at the policy level, include by the Food and Drug Administration. Every five years, the federal Farm Bill--the nation's largest

piece of food and farm related legislation--strongly steers how these and related issues are handled. Congress failed to pass any Farm Bill last year, and health professionals are increasingly troubled by the direction of the 2013 version.

Special Announcements

Visionary Leadership Awards Reception at the Endocrine Society Meeting

Join the UCSF Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment (PRHE) in honoring three extraordinary women for their visionary leadership to improve reproductive health by preventing harmful environmental exposures. Teresa Woodruff, PhD, President-elect of The Endocrine Society, Linda Ciudice, MD, PhD, MSc, President of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, and Jeanne Conry, MD, PhD, President of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists will all be celebrated. The reception will take place at the Marriott Marquis in San Francisco on June 14th.

[Read more](#)

Environmental Science Leader Receives Award

Pete Myers, founder, CEO and chief scientist of [Environmental Health Sciences](#), was awarded the \$50,000 Frank Hatch "Sparkplug" Award for Enlightened Public Service by The John Merck Fund today. Dr. Myers is the seventh recipient of the prize that the foundation presents annually to a grantee whose work embodies extraordinary creativity, dedication and foresight. Environmental Health Sciences is based in Charlottesville, VA.

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:

- June 6, 2103: [Stress as an Endocrine Disruptor: Maternal Psychosocial Stress During Pregnancy and Fetal Development](#)
- May 28, 2013: [Cancer: The Professional and the Personal: A Conversation with Dr. Susan Love and Susan Braun](#)
- May 23, 2013: [25 Years of the Superfund Research Program: Highlights and Hope](#)

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.

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Join CHE on [Twitter](#). Update: CHE now tweets during Partnership calls. Join the online conversation by following CHE on Twitter.

CHE Asthma

~ coordinated by Genon Jensen, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ **Indoor air pollution essays**

The Physicians for Social Responsibility's Environmental Health Policy Institute highlights indoor air pollution with a series of essays from several authors.

[Read more](#)

~ **New report on barriers to reducing the use of asthma-related chemicals**

The Office of Technical Assistance and Technology (OTA) prepared and completed in May 2013 *A Report on Barriers to Reducing the Use of Asthma-Related Chemicals*. The report compares what is known about the use of three asthma-related chemicals, (chlorine, formaldehyde, and isocyanates), showing how the lack of information about use and chemical use reduction options is a barrier to reducing use outside of TURA. (The use of these chemicals by companies covered by TURA has significantly reduced over time). The report contains recommendations to the Toxics Use Reduction (TUR) Administrative Council on actions that might help reduce the use of asthma-related chemicals.

[Read more](#)

CHE Climate Change

~ coordinated by Genon Jensen, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ **WHO, climate change and health**

Ahead of a high-level meeting of the World Health Organisation, HEAL teamed up with the Climate and Health Alliance, Climate and Health Council, Health Care Without Harm and other health professional organisations for a letter to the WHO Director General. Groups recall the Doha Declaration on Climate, Health and Wellbeing, and stress how important it is that all WHO member states take action on climate change.

[Read the letter](#)

~ **Which future for EU climate policy?**

The public consultation on the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies is still open for comments. Stakeholders are encouraged to share their views on the EU's climate emission reductions, energy savings and renewables.

[View the consultation](#)

~ **Climate Change Linked to More Pollen, Allergies, Asthma**

Researchers say climate change is leading to more pollen production--bad news for those with allergies.

[Read the article](#)

~ **Climate change in the Arctic affecting health in parts of Europe**

Europeans may be being exposed to new chemical contaminants such as BFRs and BPA as a consequence of climate change, according to new research.

[Read the article](#)

~ **New report: International Energy Agency (IEA) urges policies on climate and economic growth**

The International Energy Agency released an important new report as UNFCCC climate negotiations continue in Bonn. The report urges governments to enact four proposed near-term measures to put the world on track for limiting global warming to safer levels - all delivering co-benefits for public health and energy security while not hampering economic growth.

[Read more](#)

CHE and SEHN Cumulative Impacts Working Group

~ coordinated by Carolyn Raffensperger and Elise Miller, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ Cumulative Impacts Working Group call: National and International Perspectives on Nutrition, Food, Food Security, and Agricultural Systems: Reconnecting the Personal, Public, and Environmental Health

Thursday June 27, 2013 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

[RSVP for this call](#)

On this call Danielle Nierenberg, co-founder of Food Tank, will give a general global overview of a variety of food and food policy issues including: hunger, malnutrition, stunting, micronutrient deficiencies, and obesity. She will also discuss the impact of climate change and food price volatility. Ted Schettler, MD, Science Director at the Science and Environmental Health Network (SEHN) as well as at CHE, will discuss long-term cumulative impacts of inadequate diet, nutrition, and lack of access to healthy food. Both will address the need for fundamental changes in the agricultural system(s) that dominate throughout much of the world not only to address current needs but also those of future generations

CHE Diabetes-Obesity Spectrum

~ coordinated by Sarah Howard, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

Numerous studies were published this month that linked diabetes and obesity to environmental chemical exposures. Please join our listserv to be alerted to these studies (contact info@healthandenvironment.org to request to join the listserv). To highlight one study, Liu and colleagues aimed to identify critical windows and long-term consequences of perinatal BPA exposure on the later development of glucose abnormalities in mice. They found that the effects of BPA exposure depended on timing, dose, and sex. Fetal exposure appeared to be the most critical, as compared to pre-implantation or lactation exposure. BPA exposure during fetal development can induce long-term changes in adult glucose homeostasis.

Liu J, Yu P, Qian W, Li Y, Zhao J, Huan F, Wang J, Xiao H. 2013. [Perinatal Bisphenol A Exposure and Adult Glucose Homeostasis: Identifying Critical Windows of Exposure](#). PLoS. One. 8(5):e64143.

Upcoming meetings

If you are attending the [American Diabetes Association's 73rd Scientific Sessions](#) this month in Chicago, make sure to make it to this symposium: *Environmental Risk Factors for Type 2 Diabetes: Epidemiologic and Mechanistic Evidence*. It will be held on Sunday, June 23 at 4:30 pm.

CHE Fertility and Reproductive Health

~ coordinated by Karin Russ, karin@healthandenvironment.org

~ MP3 available: CHE Fertility call: Stress as an Endocrine Disruptor, June 6th

This call, featuring Drs. Tracy Bale, Shanna Swan and Emily Barrett, examined current research on prenatal stress in relation to neurodevelopment and reproductive development,

discussed ways stress may alter endocrine function, and presented data from recent studies that illustrate these concepts.

[Listen to the MP3 recording](#)

~ **RCOG press release: Mothers-to-be should be aware of unintentional chemical exposures, say experts**

Pregnant women should be made aware of the sources and routes of chemical exposure in order to minimize harm to their unborn child despite current uncertainty surrounding their effects, say experts from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) in a new Scientific Impact Paper launched this month.

[Read more](#)

~ **Chemical Exposures During Pregnancy (Scientific Impact Paper 37)**

This is a new Scientific Impact Paper published by the RCOG's Scientific Advisory Committee and is designed to inform women who are pregnant or breastfeeding of the sources and routes of chemical exposure in order for them to take positive action in regard to minimising harm to their unborn child.

[Read more](#)

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

[Cancer and non-cancer health effects from food contaminant exposures for children and adults in California: a risk assessment](#). The authors compared exposure estimates for eleven toxic compounds (acrylamide, arsenic, lead, mercury, chlorpyrifos, permethrin, endosulfan, dieldrin, chlordane, DDE, and dioxin) based on self-reported food frequency data by age group. Environmental Health.

[Sex-specific epigenetic disruption and behavioral changes following low-dose in utero bisphenol A exposure](#). The authors demonstrate that low-dose prenatal BPA exposure induces lasting epigenetic disruption in the brain that possibly underlie enduring effects of BPA on brain function and behavior, especially regarding sexually dimorphic phenotypes. Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences.

[Association of caesarean delivery with child adiposity from age 6 weeks to 15 years](#).

Caesarean delivery is associated with increased body mass in childhood and adolescence. Research is needed to further characterize the association in children of normal weight women. Additional work is also needed to understand the mechanism underlying the association, which may involve relatively enduring changes in the intestinal microbiome. International Journal of Obesity.

[Semen quality of environmentally exposed human population: The toxicological consequence](#).

The purpose of the study is to confirm the toxicity of organochlorine pesticide B- and Y-hexachlorocyclohexane (HCH), DDE and DDD, and metals lead or cadmium on sperm motility in epidemiological study among fertile and infertile men and to determine whether in vivo and in vitro results are in the same direction. Environmental Science and Pollution Research International.

[Review: Targeting testis-specific proteins to inhibit spermatogenesis: Lesson from endocrine disrupting chemicals](#). The authors highlight recent findings in the field illustrating testis-specific proteins are also targets of EDCs. This information should be helpful in developing better therapeutic approach to manage ECD-induced reproductive toxicity. This information is also helpful to identify potential targets for male contraceptive development. Expert Opinion

on Therapeutic Targets.

~ **New journal: *Endocrine Disruptors***

The first issue of this new academic journal is available online. This month's issue features an article "Phthalates in our Food" by Drs. Linda Birnbaum and Thaddeus Schug of NIEHS.

[Read more](#)

~ **Presentation: Cell phones & WiFi- Are Children, Fetuses and Fertility at Risk?, June 28**

Children's expert panel presents on cell phones & WiFi electromagnetic radiation and health effects. Featuring Dr. Devra Davis, Hugh Taylor MD, David Carpenter MD, Martin Blank PhD, and Camilla Rees, MBA. Learn ways you and your family can adjust your environments to minimize exposures and to optimize cognitive function, learning capacity and health and fertility prospects in a wireless world.

[Read more](#)

CHE Healthy Aging and the Environment Initiative

~ coordinated by Maria Valenti

CHE's [Healthy Aging and the Environment Initiative](#) continues to bring information about environmental influences on health across the lifespan to new audiences and to foster ongoing collaborations across sectors.

~ **Recent and upcoming events**

Most recently, we helped organize a 2 ½ day retreat on "Ecological Health Across the Lifespan" at Commonweal, with participants from a wide range of disciplines including community planning, healthy food, funding, neuroscience, the arts, behavioral epidemiology, social services for elders, architecture, academia, environmental justice, health-affected communities, medicine and more. We examined influences on health of the chemical, food, social, built, and natural environments, how they interact, and the systems that drive current practices and policies. We discussed strategic interventions in the systems that would have the greatest impact to promote health and wellness across sectors. We developed a "Charter of Interdependence" with key principles that are universal to human and ecological health. A number of collaborative efforts have emerged from the retreat and the group continues to communicate on important issues.



Retreat participants learn about Commonweal's organic garden from James Stark

In upcoming events, we will participate in a multi-sector panel on environmental health on August 1st organized by Kathy Sykes of the EPA Aging Initiative at the [Generations United 17th International Conference](#) in Washington DC, July 30-August 2nd.

We will also be providing a plenary presentation on September 17th in Atlanta for a summit on healthy aging being organized by the [Atlanta Area Agency on Aging](#) and other partners.

~ **CHE Partners with Boston University Superfund Research Project (BU SRP)**

CHE is a partner in the [BU SRP Research Translation Core](#) (RTC), whose goal is to make research outcomes from the Superfund hazardous waste program available to governmental organizations, the scientific community, and other SRPs. Many people are unaware that in addition to cleaning up hazardous waste, the Superfund program also includes this critical

research component investigating health effects of toxic substances, as well as translating this research for affected communities and others.

On May 23rd CHE held the second in a series of Partnership Calls on the BU SRP entitled "[25 Years of the Superfund Research Program: Highlights and Hope](#)" featuring Dr. Bill Suk, director of the Superfund Research Program since its inception, and Dr. Joseph Graziano, director of the Columbia University SRP. Dr. Jennifer Schlezinger discussed her experience as a trainee of the BU SRP working in the laboratory of two BU SRP investigators before becoming a principal investigator of her own BU SRP study focused on receptor-mediated toxicity and chemical mixtures. The special guest discussion leader was Dr. David Ozonoff, Director of the BU SRP. To hear the recording or access resources visit the [call page](#).

Our next call will be October 24th on Environmental Justice issues.

BU SRP has developed with partners a [Health Studies Guide](#) to assist individuals and community groups in understanding community health studies and when they may be valuable in their communities. The first four chapters are now available online.

For more discussion on this topic, you are invited to attend the following online event: [Health Studies: A New Guide for Communities](#) on Tuesday, June 18th at noon (EST), organized by the Center for Health and Environmental Justice (CHEJ). Learn about the range of possible community health studies, how to match an appropriate study to your community's concerns, and some benefits and pitfalls of different types of studies, from Gregory Howard, DSc, MPH. A brief presentation will be followed with discussion. The event is free, but space for the session is limited, and you must [register](#) prior to the event.

CHE Regional Working Groups Updates

CHE Alaska

~ coordinated by Pamela Miller, pamela@akaction.org

~ **CHE Alaska call: The Rise of the US Environmental Health Movement: A conversation with activist and author Kate Davies** June 26, 2013 at 9:00 am Alaska / 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

[RSVP for this call](#)

Join environmental health expert Kate Davies for a discussion of the roots, strategies and successes of the environmental health movement. By placing human health at the center of concern, the movement has achieved many victories in community mobilization and legislative reform since it was born in 1978 when Lois Gibbs organized her neighbors to protest a toxic waste dump in Love Canal, New York. Join this call to share why the environmental health movement is important to you and hear Kate Davies' perspective on what it will take to fully protect public health.

CHE HEAL

~ coordinated by Lisette Van Vliet, lisette@env-health.org

~ **EEA report outlines environmental risks for people's health**

The European Environmental Agency's assessment underlines how EU environmental policies contributed to better health but also warns that work still needs to be done to address

pollutants and new environmental health risks, and environmental health inequalities.

[Read the report](#)

~ **89 scientists join call for EU action on hormone-disrupting chemicals**

Eighty nine of the world's leading scientific experts on endocrine disrupting chemicals made the strongest ever call for regulatory action in the Berlaymont Declaration.

[Read more](#)

~ **Global call from the Endocrine Society and IPEN to take action on endocrine disrupting chemicals in consumer products and pesticides**

A group of influential scientists from the Endocrine Society have called on the UN, the WHO and other global players to take action to prevent harm from endocrine disrupting chemicals in consumer products and pesticides. These chemicals likely play a role in increased incidences of reproductive diseases, cancer, obesity, and type-2 diabetes worldwide.

[Read the statement and more background information](#)

~ **Chemicals in children's food**

The presence of toxic substances and chemical residues in food is a concern for children. The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) launched a statement for parents, carers and health professionals with information, based on up-to-date evidence of peer-reviewed scientific research.

[Read the IBFAN statement](#)

~ **Endocrinologists' expertise needed in EU deliberations on EDCs**

As the European Commission prepares to take action on EDCs, the Endocrine Society submitted an open letter urging the governing body to call upon the expertise of endocrinologists during its deliberations.

[Read the letter](#)

~ **Road traffic noise increases risk of diabetes**

The body of evidence on health impacts of noise is growing. After links to heart disease and children's impaired learning, a new Danish study shows how noise may be associated with an increased risk of diabetes, a public health challenge in Europe.

[Read more](#)

CHE Washington

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

~ **CHE-WA Children's Environmental Health Working Group meeting**

Thursday June 13, 2013 from 9:30 am to 11:30 am Pacific with an optional reception beginning at 9:00 am

The June meeting of the CHE-WA Children's Environmental Health Working Group is hosted by Change Your Food-Change Your Life. It will include a presentation titled "Get Those Toxins Out of Your Mouth!" featuring Dennis Weaver, Founder of Change Your Food-Change Your Life, Pastor Gary Wyatt, and Jenevieve Fisher. The reception prior to the start of the meeting will include organic coffee, tea, juice, fresh fruits and donuts.

The meeting will take place at the [Graham Visitor Center](#), Washington Park Arboretum, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, 2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle. To RSVP or to participate by phone contact Gail Gensler, gail.gensler@kingcounty.gov or 206-263-3082.

This is the last meeting of the group before the summer break.

~ **Particles on the Wall is going to Portland!**: A modest installation of the [Particles on the Wall](#) exhibit, hosted by Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, will be on display at the Ecotrust Building, in Portland, OR. The exhibit will be open for viewing from May 3 - June 14, 2013.

Announcements and News Highlights

Scientists' Consensus Statement: Maintaining Humanity's Life Support Systems in the 21st Century

520 scientists from 44 countries released a consensus statement agreeing that the evidence that humans are damaging their ecological life-support systems is overwhelming and identifying five global problems where action must be taken immediately.

[Read more](#)

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

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June 2013 issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives* available online

[Read more](#)

June 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

New report highlights link between bisphenol A and breast cancer

A new report published in May by Breast Cancer UK provides an overview of the low dose effects of bisphenol A in relation to breast cancer. The report entitled *Body of Evidence* draws together some of the latest science on BPA and highlights how much evidence there is that this chemical affects the structure and development of the mammary gland, increases breast density, and disrupts DNA. All of these factors are known to increase the risk of developing breast cancer.

[Read more](#)

New report shows significant decline in use and release of carcinogens in Massachusetts industries

The Toxics Use Reduction Institute at the University of Massachusetts Lowell released a report today showing that Massachusetts companies have dramatically reduced their use and environmental releases of chemicals known or suspected to cause cancer.

[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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