



Collaborative on Health and the Environment

July 2015



Upcoming Partnership Events

CHE Partnership call:
[Theories of Carcinogenesis: Assessing the Carcinogenic Potential of Low-Dose Exposures to Chemical Mixtures in the Environment](#)
Tues, July 21
Hosted by the CHE Cancer Working Group and the CHE EDCs Strategies Group

CHE Partnership call: [The Myth of Herbicide Safety in](#)



Diseases, Vectors, Specific Chemicals or Life Phases: What's Your Pleasure?

*Elise Miller, EdM
Director*

When many of us think of air pollution, images often come to mind of smoke stacks and diesel trucks spewing dirty fumes or thick brown smog enveloping cities. We think of people coughing or wearing masks on their faces to breathe, kids being rushed to emergency rooms for asthma attacks. These respiratory and lung

[Alaska: How Herbicides Threaten the Health of Fish, Wildlife and People](#)

Wed, July 29

Hosted by the CHE Alaska Working Group

Visit the [CHE Partnership call archives](#) and [CHE Working Group call archives](#) to listen to MP3 recordings of past calls.

**CHE does not host calls in August.*

Special Announcements

[CHE quarterly Top 10 environmental health stories now available](#)

CHE offers this selection of research, news and announcements that were of special significance during the second quarter of 2015. Items include research that made a noteworthy contribution to the field, news and announcements that took a conversation to a new level, and/or new audience and some welcome

conditions are of course part of our global reality today--and sadly so.

But I was truly struck by the plethora of new studies published during the last quarter implicating air pollution in a litany of other health outcomes. These conditions, not often associated with exposures to air particulates and other toxic airborne matter, include diabetes, autoimmune diseases, various forms of cancer, mental health, brain function, and birth defects. Nancy Hepp, CHE's Research and Communications Specialist, compiled a long [list of relevant studies](#) that appeared in journals and other media outlets from April through June 2015 highlighting these concerns.

Over the years, CHE has continued to make conscious choices about whether to bring attention to environmental contributors to specific health endpoints (such as diabetes or learning disabilities, which has been our traditional approach and the frame for our working group listservs) or to focus on a vector (like EMFs) or consider a particular set of chemical exposures (such as pesticides) or even a developmental phase (like children's health or healthy aging). There are strong arguments to be made for implementing all of these different strategies at different times and different ways to help prevent disease and promote health.

action. This quarter's selections include the Pope's contribution to the climate change discussion, a study relating DDT exposure in pregnancy to breast cancer rates in daughters, the US House's efforts to pass TSCA reform, and others. We invite comment and feedback.

Special offer for CHE Partners

CHE Partners can now [purchase the Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Toms River*, from Island Press at a 20% discount](#). The true story of a small town ravaged by industrial pollution, *Toms River* won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize and has been hailed by The New York Times as "a new classic of science reporting." Now available in paperback with a new afterword by acclaimed author Dan Fagin, the book masterfully blends hard-hitting investigative journalism, scientific discovery, and unforgettable characters. **Enter code**

For example, by targeting a vector like "air pollution", we can potentially reduce multiple health problems as noted above. This is also an approach being used on a global scale. As discussed on CHE's partnership call yesterday, "[Towards a New Global Commission on Environmental Health](#)", environmental pollution can be far more deadly and disabling than many of the major infectious diseases of our time combined. To address this, investing more in reducing pollution in air, water, and food (often neglected by Heads of States and Health Ministers) could more widely benefit people's health around the world, than simply working to eradicate a specific infectious disease such as HIV (which is of course an extremely worthy goal, but impacts fewer people than pollution does globally).

On the other hand, by framing an issue around a specific health endpoint, we also have an opportunity to improve the outcomes of other diseases and disabilities. For example, the pioneering work being done in Massachusetts to tackle high asthma rates (see: [Massachusetts Strategic Plan for Asthma](#)) is not just making sure everyone has access to inhalers, but includes steps to address a range of factors that all contribute to asthma-- including reducing health disparities and toxic exposures as well as strengthening state-wide and local collaborative partnerships in the implementation process. (This is described in

4CHE when ordering.

[New CHE column: Your Health This Week](#)

CHE has started a weekly column on the CHE Blog highlighting studies and resources that you might find useful in safeguarding or improving your own health or that of your family.

Resources

[CHE's Toxicant and Disease Database](#)

[CHE's searchable calendar](#) of events related to environmental health.

[CHE's blog](#) of commentary on current topics.

[CHE's podcast](#) of teleconference call recordings.

[CHE's news feed](#) of news articles, studies, reports, calls for proposals, job openings and other announcements. Relevant

more detail on the recent [podcast featuring Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, the science director for CHE and the Science and Environmental Health Network, and Polly Hoppin, CHE partner and Program Director for Environmental Health at the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production](#)). Though this strategic plan is intended to lower asthma rates, it can also help reduce the incidence of other diseases, since we know toxic exposures and health disparities (for example) contribute significantly to other health problems too.

Reflecting on these different approaches affirms two important concepts that underlie CHE's work:

1. Using an ecological health model to understand how multiple, interacting factors and systems impact health is the most accurate framework to reflect the reality of our world--and though we may target one approach or another, ultimately we have to see every intervention in the context of this complex, systems-based model; and
2. Implementing life-affirming interventions as far upstream as possible is most effective, but any positive action we can take--whether it's eating a more nutritious diet or banning phthalates in flooring--can effect the whole system for good.

items are sent to CHE's listservs several times each week, or visitors can subscribe via RSS.

[A Story of Health eBook](#), usable by parents and individuals who have no formal training in science or medicine, but it also has layers of additional information and materials for physicians, nurses, and other clinicians who want to dig deeper. [Free continuing education credits](#) are available.

Whatever approach you're taking this summer (including getting some rest and relaxation--an extremely important "intervention" on the individual level), may the ripple effects of your choices improve the health and well-being of all.

Warm wishes,



Working Groups and Initiatives

Visit the webpages of CHE's groups for the latest news, research, and announcements:

Topic-based Working Groups

[Asthma](#)

[Autism](#)

[Breast Cancer](#)

[Cancer](#)

[Children's Health](#)

[Climate Change](#)

[Cumulative Impacts](#)

[Database](#)

[Diabetes/Obesity](#)

[Electromagnetic Fields \(EMF\)](#)

[Fertility/Reproductive Health](#)

[Healthy Aging](#)

[Integrative Health](#)

[Learning and Developmental Disabilities](#)

[Mental Health](#)

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State-based and International Groups

[Alaska](#)

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Collaborative on Health and the Environment | P.O. Box 316 | Bolinas | CA | 94924