



Collaborative on Health and the Environment

March 2015



Upcoming Partnership Events

CHE Partnership call:

[A Story of Asthma, A Story of Health: From Environmental Risk Factors to Prevention Strategies](#)

Thurs, March 12

CHE Partnership call:

[Endocrine Disruptive Effects of Bisphenol A Substitutes with Dr. Johanna Rochester](#)

Wed, March 18

Hosted by the EDC Strategies



Making the bottom line healthier for all: The economic argument for reducing exposures

*Elise Miller, MEd
Director*

What does it cost us to have more people than ever suffering from chronic illnesses? Last week a highly respected health economist in Europe, along with a number of scientists specializing in endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs), [released a groundbreaking report](#)

Group

CHE Partnership call:

[A High Price to Pay: Burden of Disease and Cost of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals in the European Union](#)

Tues, March 24

Co-hosted by HEAL

CHE Partnership call:

[An Introduction to Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals: New Resource on Health Threats Posed by EDCS](#)

Wed, April 8

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.

Special Announcements

[Reach the Decision Makers Fellowship accepting applications](#)

Are you a scientist, community member, public

indicating that the EU is spending at least \$175 billion (US) a year on chronic diseases related to EDC exposures. This was the first analysis of its kind to focus on the costs of neurological effects, obesity and diabetes (related to the disruption of metabolic function), and male reproductive disorders.

And this is of course not just a European concern. Over the past decade or two, leaders in environmental health have provided various estimates on the environmentally attributable fraction of costs for various health endpoints, such as ADHD, childhood cancers, and asthma, in the US. All of these analyses, even the most conservative ones, have indicated that society would save billions of dollars every year in health care costs and lost wages if we reduced exposures to certain chemical contaminants. As the director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences noted in response to the EU report, "If you applied these [health care] numbers to the US, they would be applicable, and in some cases higher."

Lizzie Grossman made this point even clearer in her [breaking article](#): "To put \$175 billion in perspective, it is more than the combined proposed 2016 budgets for the US Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, National Park Service, and Environmental Protection Agency combined."

health professional or clinician with experience in environmental or reproductive health? Do you want to effect change at the public policy level and engage the US EPA on issues that impact your community? This fellowship is an innovative program that trains scientists, community members, clinicians and public health professionals to effectively promote science and health-based policies at the US EPA. The 6th fellowship year starts in April 2015.

[Praise for A Story of Health, new multimedia eBook](#)

A Story of Health is superb and fun to use. This is a fantastic resource. It is compelling, educational and engaging, and will absolutely make a difference. I will recommend it to friends, colleagues, medical students and residents.

- Brian Linde, MD, with Kaiser Permanente in

Another way of thinking about this is even if the estimated health care costs related to exposures to EDCs were only about half of that, say \$90 billion, we could quintuple the budgets for Head Start and Child Care and Development Fund in the US with those savings alone. That would mean a lot more kids could get a far better start in life--and of course, a lot fewer adults would be suffering from preventable diseases.

On the federal level, the politics are so mired and convoluted that a bill to protect citizens more effectively from exposures to the tens of thousands of untested chemicals that are on the market has yet to pass Congress. The latest draft of the measure to reform the Toxics Substances Control Act (TSCA), circulated to lawmakers earlier this week, continues to have some serious flaws according to many colleagues. This means that it's not at all clear how the Senate hearing on this version will go next week.

But there is good news on the market front. On Monday, it was announced that [Ashley Furniture, the largest furniture retailer in the US, has agreed to stop using toxic flame retardants \(which are EDCs\) in their products.](#) This is of course a huge win for consumers and shows that leading companies can move away from using chemicals that impact human health

Oakland, CA

See [more testimonials](#)

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

without harming their bottom line--and perhaps even increasing it. Plus, health will improve more broadly because people won't be exposed to flame retardants--in turn, reducing health care costs across society. And that brings us back to the seminal report I mentioned at the beginning on health costs in the EU linked to EDCs.

The economic argument for minimizing exposures to toxic chemicals is a powerful one because it is grounded in evidence-based science. Naysayers can continue to try to make the case that these exposures are not really harmful to health and that removing them would undermine the economy. But it's clear that companies like Ashley Furniture aren't going to wait for politics to catch up with the science to do the right thing. Here's to more companies and decision-makers in every sector of society realizing that a healthy bottom line can in fact be healthier for 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 \(EMF\)](#)

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[Healthy Aging](#)

[Integrative Health](#)

[Learning and Developmental Disabilities](#)

[Mental Health](#)

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