



Collaborative on Health and the Environment - Washington



Biweekly Bulletin December 1, 2010

This bulletin lists upcoming events plus recent announcements, news and journal articles, calls for proposals and other items related to learning environmental contributors to human health in Washington State and the Pacific Northwest. They are archived and searchable on our website: <http://washington.chenw.org/bulletins.html>

CHE-WA Highlights

[2010: Environmental Health Highlights of the Year, December 8th.](#)

For our last CHE partner call of the year, we decided to invite 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.](#)

New members

CHE-Washington welcomes these new members:

- Jennifer Major, MPH, Seattle
- G. Wirz, Seattle

For a searchable database of organizations with which CHE-WA members are affiliated, please visit the CHE-WA website: <http://washington.chenw.org/members.html>

Lessons Learned

Clean Air? - Don't Take It for Granted

by Steven G. Gilbert, PhD, DABT

In the vast majority of the United States we take clean air for granted. But this was not always the case, and worldwide, clean air is often a luxury. Worldwide, some of the worst air pollution is in Beijing, China; New Delhi, India; Mexico City, Mexico, and other places.

Historically, two important air-pollution disasters brought attention to air quality. The first was the Donora Smog of 1948, in Donora, Pennsylvania. On October 27, 1948, Donora suffered a classic air inversion, trapping sulfuric acid, nitrogen dioxide, fluorine and other gases produced by the local steel industry. Twenty residents of Donora died and thousands were sickened, with many never recovering from chronic respiratory effects.

The second major incident was the London Smog starting December 5, 1952, and lasting until December 9, 1952. Over 12,000 people died from respiratory distress.



Donora, Pennsylvania: industry

In response to these incidents the British Parliament introduced the Clean Air Act of 1956. The US passed

the Air Pollution Control Act of 1955, followed by the Clean Air Act of 1963, signed by Lyndon B. Johnson.

Those most vulnerable to respiratory and cardiovascular effects are children and the elderly. Children are more vulnerable because of their small airways and higher respiratory rate than adults. Children exposed to air pollutants develop asthma, pneumonia and other lower respiratory infections. Regulation to set standards to control air quality and ongoing monitoring of air quality are essential for children to have an environment in which they can reach and maintain their full potential free from asthma and respiratory disease.



Claude Monet London smog (between 1899 and 1901)

London Smog at Toxipedia - <http://toxipedia.org/x/TA4>

Donora Smog at Toxipedia - <http://toxipedia.org/x/cLhb>

See also book on Donora by Devra Davis: *When Smoke Ran Like Water: Tales of Environmental Deception and the Battle Against Pollution*. (2002)

Looking back to go forward

Lessons Learned is a CHE-WA bulletin feature focusing on an historical event that provides an important lesson for ensuring a more sustainable and healthy environment. Please feel free to send suggestions to [Steve Gilbert](#).

Announcements

A daily news feed with articles and announcements is available on CHE's website: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/news/announce>.

[Holiday shopping guide for greener electronics.](#)

The 2010 Holiday Shopping Guide for Finding Greener Electronics (PDF), compiled by the Center for Environmental Health, works to tie all the other studies together into one, easily readable chart.

[CDC unveils Learning Connection Website.](#)

Many environmental health offerings are there, along with material about infectious diseases, chronic diseases, food safety, injury and violence prevention, epidemiology, and more. Environmental Protection.

[EPA calls for nominations for 2011 Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Awards.](#)

This year the agency is encouraging nominations for the design of safer and more sustainable chemicals, processes, and products that will protect the public, particularly children and other sensitive populations, from exposure to harmful chemicals.

[EPA to expand chemicals testing for endocrine disruption.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified a list of 134 chemicals that will be screened for their potential to disrupt the endocrine system.

[EPA releases new draft voluntary guidelines for selecting safe school locations.](#)

Major investments in our children's schools can be compromised if environmental hazards are not fully understood prior to selecting a school site.

[Call for papers: Health Affairs.](#)

Health Affairs journal's theme issue "Health and the Environment" will be published in May 2011. Papers are invited; submissions are due December 15th.

[Call for proposals: Developing the Next Generation of Air Quality Measurement Technology.](#)

EPA is interested in projects that will improve air pollution measurement technologies to

address emerging air pollution issues and improve the spatial and temporal coverage of air pollution measurement data.

[Job opening: Salt Lake City, Utah.](#)

The State of Utah has an opening for an assessment manager, This position, in collaboration with the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the US Environmental Protection Agency directs, manages, and supervises the Site-Specific Health Hazards Assessment cooperative agreement and the National Toxic Substances Incidence Program. Applications are due December 5th.

Upcoming Events

Online Calendar. These and more upcoming events, including calls for proposals and for abstracts, are listed in a searchable calendar: <http://www.chenw.org/cgi-bin/searchevents.cgi>.

1) Motivating Cycling in North American Cities: Evidence from the Cycling in Cities Research Program

Thursday December 2, 2010
12:30 - 1:20 p.m.
Seattle, Washington
in room HSB T-625

Sponsor: University of Washington School of Public Health, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

The lecturer will be Kay Teschke, PhD, professor in the School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia.

Price: free
[Visit the website](#)

2) A Review of Chemistry Principles Associated with Contaminant Transport, Fate, and Remediation

Monday December 6, 2010
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Bellevue, Washington
at the Bellevue Hilton, 300 112th Avenue SE

Sponsor: EOS Alliance

This course provides participants with an overview and refresher of key chemistry concepts associated with environmental contamination, contaminant transport, fate, and remediation. It also includes a review of chemical naming rules (e.g., understanding what 1,1,1-TCA is) and the ways in which they can be used to predict molecular geometry and environmental behavior. This material is intended for nonchemists in the environmental field seeking a fundamental understanding of chemistry principles to use in their work. Moreover, this course is recommended for all environmental professionals working with contaminated soil and water who have had minimal formal training in the subject. It is also recommended for project managers seeking a review of contaminant chemistry. Price: \$350/\$295 for employees of Native American tribes, government agencies, and nonprofits; students; and NAEP members

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Northwest Environmental Training Center, 425- 270-3274

3) Cross-sectional Evaluation of Formaldehyde Levels of Portable Classrooms (= 3 years old) and Traditional Classrooms - Georgia, 2009 Pilot Study

Tuesday December 7, 2010
2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Eastern time / 11:00 a.m. - noon Pacific time

Sponsor: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
Environmental Health Initiative

High levels of formaldehyde measured in FEMA-supplied trailers and mobile homes used in recent hurricane events have prompted similar assessments in portable classrooms (350,000 in use in US), where school-aged children spend significant time in the course of a day. This presentation will describe the results of a pilot investigation conducted to assess formaldehyde levels and potential factors that could affect formaldehyde levels in portable and traditional classrooms in use in one school district in Georgia. Formaldehyde levels ranged from 7-36 ppb. In both traditional and portable classrooms, overnight formaldehyde median levels were higher than day median levels. Levels were slightly higher in traditional than in portable classrooms. This study did not identify levels of formaldehyde that are associated with adverse health effects. Isabela C. Ribeiro, PhD, will be the presenter. This presentation is open to the public.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Laura Abulafia, Laura@aaidd.org

4) Phone Seminar - Robin Guenther, Architect and Designer, Sustainable Health Leader, Perkins+Will

Wednesday December 8, 2010

3:00 p.m. Eastern / noon Pacific time

Sponsor: Great Lakes Green Chemistry Network

"Linking Public Health, Regenerative Design, and Sustainability." As a Principal at Perkins+Will and a national leader in the conversation linking public health, regenerative design and sustainability, Robin Guenther synthesizes newly developing ideas and diverse groups to further the values she promotes. Robin is particularly skilled at achieving consensus for sustainable ideas, a quality valued by clients as well as the many advocacy groups with whom she works. Her work has helped shape healthier, more welcoming facilities for nearly every medical institution in New York City. Robin's many accomplishments include the second LEED™-certified healthcare project in the world, the Discovery Center. She was the principal author of the *Green Guide for Health Care*, the most commonly used method of tracking sustainability in health care spaces today. Her book, *Sustainable Healthcare Architecture*, was released in 2008, and she is currently working with the US Green Building Council to create the *LEED™ for Healthcare Reference Guide*. Robin was the recipient of the 2005 Changemaker Award from The Center for Health Design for her efforts in improving and supporting the environment.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

5) Health Impacts of Coal Symposium

Wednesday December 8, 2010

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Seattle, Washington

Sponsor: Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, Sierra Club and Earth Justice
This training for health professionals on the health impacts of coal pollution and how to advocate for a coal-free Washington. Speakers will be Alexander M. Hamling, MD, pediatrician at Seattle Children's Hospital; Doug Howell, senior representative with the Sierra Club Coal-Free Northwest Campaign; and Cherie Eicholz, executive director of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Price: unknown

Contact: Cara, 631-241-0483 or DolanCara@gmail.com

6) Obesity and Food Environments

Thursday December 9, 2010

5:00 p.m. Eastern time / 2:00 p.m. Pacific time

Sponsor: Health Care Without Harm

The medical community has long recognized the importance of good nutrition; new food-related diseases have created a public health crisis and exacerbated the financial health concerns of medical institutions. Obesity is now the leading health concern. Diet-related medical costs for six health conditions - coronary heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, hypertension and obesity - exceeded \$70 billion in 1995. And, by virtue of the increased resources focused on obesity, the crisis has become an issue for everyone, overweight or not. Our current food system favors the production of animal products and highly refined, calorie-dense foods, rather than the fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and other high-fiber foods important in prevention of these diseases. These food industry offerings are supported by US Federal Government subsidy programs, which favor five crops - corn, wheat, cotton, soybeans and rice - and account for two thirds of all subsidies. As a result, if we were to compare food pyramid recommendations with government subsidies, they would be almost perfectly at odds. Fruits and vegetables, those foods recommended by the pyramid, receive little support, while meat and grains receive by far the most support. Moreover, whether or not community residents have access to healthy foods in their communities has implications for individual health. There are several aspects of the neighborhood food environment that can ultimately influence dietary behavior, including the types of retail outlets present, the product mix offered, the quality and cultural appropriateness of available foods, and whether foods are affordable. Low-income people and people of color, in particular, face well-documented challenges to buying fresh fruits and vegetables and other nutritious foods: either they're not available in the neighborhood or the quality is poor and the price is exorbitant. Research suggests that the scarcity of healthy foods makes it more difficult for residents of low-income neighborhoods to follow a good diet, compared to people in wealthier communities. This presentation will provide an understanding of our food choices on health, the significance of the food environment on these choices, and opportunities for clinicians to influence food environments in service of health. Presenters will be Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, of the Science and Environmental Health Network; Leslie Mikkelsen, RD, of the Prevention Institute; and Judith Bell of Policy Link. Continuing education for physicians (CME) is available.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)**News and Journal Articles****[Manganese tied to higher rates of Parkinson's disease.](#)***Tuesday, November 30, 2010*

A recent study finds that Medicare recipients who live in urban areas with high levels of manganese emissions are about 75 percent more likely to develop Parkinson's disease compared to those in urban areas with lower manganese emissions. Environmental Health News.

[Smoking during pregnancy affects genes involved in brain development.](#)*Tuesday, November 30, 2010*

New research from the University of Virginia Health System shows that nicotine use during pregnancy affects genes important in regions of the brain associated with neurobehavioral development. Staunton News Leader, Virginia.

[See other articles about smoking and tobacco: [CDC: Air travelers at risk from secondhand smoke](#); [Passive smoking 'kills 600,000'](#); [Smoking increases blacks' arthritis risk](#); [Tobacco prevention working in the state of Washington](#) and [WHO seeks regulation of flavored tobacco](#); [Global health officials target tobacco additives](#)]

[The 10 cities with the world's worst air.](#)*Tuesday, November 30, 2010*

With the latest round of global climate change talks set to begin this week in Cancun, Mexico, the assembled delegates should be thankful they're not meeting in, say, Beijing or New Delhi. Daily Finance.

[See another article about air quality: [56 religious groups to U.S. Senate: Save the clean air act](#)]

[Simultaneous exposure of non-diabetics to high levels of dioxins and mercury increases their risk of insulin resistance.](#)

Monday, November 29, 2010

We hypothesize that simultaneous exposure to dioxins and mercury heightens the risk of insulin resistance more than does individual exposure. Journal of Hazardous Materials.

[Climate change will cost a billion people their homes, says report.](#)

Sunday, November 28, 2010

A special report, to be released at the start of climate negotiations in Cancun, Mexico, will reveal that up to a billion people face losing their homes in the next 90 years because of failures to agree curbs on carbon emissions. London Guardian.

[Synthetic turf: Study urges tests for fake grass.](#)

Saturday, November 27, 2010

The stuff in synthetic turf that helps make it green needs routine monitoring for lead hazards and guidelines to assess them, a UNLV professor and six colleagues concluded after a recent study. Las Vegas Review Journal.

[Environmental toxin may play important role in multiple sclerosis: Hypertension drug possible treatment.](#)

Friday, November 26, 2010

The toxin acrolein was elevated by about 60 percent in the spinal cord tissues of mice with a disease similar to multiple sclerosis, said Riya Shi, a medical doctor and a professor of neuroscience and biomedical engineering in Purdue University's Department of Basic Medical Sciences. ScienceDaily.

[Buckets of green for painters.](#)

Thursday, November 25, 2010

Every occupation has its hazards and it seems as if painters who work indoors face some of the most serious health and safety problems, But by choosing paint low in volatile organic compounds, known as VOCs, painters can avoid many health problems caused by vapors from chemicals used to make paint. Houston Chronicle, Texas.

[Science and the safety of BPA part 1: Of mice and men.](#)

Wednesday, November 24, 2010

New evidence comparing how mice, monkeys and humans metabolise BPA suggests that not only does it take longer for the body to excrete it than EU regulators currently believe, human exposure to BPA may also be much higher than currently thought, and non-dietary exposure more important than currently suspected. Health & Environment.

[See other articles about BPA: [Feinstein pushes BPA restrictions in food safety bill](#); [Tests show cancer-causing chemical in some canned foods](#); [The impact of bisphenol A and triclosan on immune parameters in the US population. NHANES 2003-2006](#); [A warning by key researcher on risks of BPA in our lives](#) and [EU bans bisphenol A chemical from babies' bottles](#)]

[More people dying of lung cancer in PH.](#)

Wednesday, November 24, 2010

More and more Filipinos are dying of lung cancer, alarming the Philippine Society of Medical Oncology (PSMO). Quezon City ABS-CBN News, Philippines.

[See other articles related to cancer risk: [Endless summer a complexion killer](#); [Women's lung cancer rate catching up with men's](#); [Malignant flab](#); [Government refuses to act on cancer-causing insulation](#) and [Perils of firefighting linger long after the blazes are out](#)]

[Teach your children to be wary of cellphones: Expert.](#)

Wednesday, November 24, 2010

Devra Davis, one of the foremost critics of the phone-making industry, believes cellphone radiation is a pending public health crisis that, if not checked, will see a surge in brain cancers within the next decade. Ottawa Citizen, Ontario.

[See other articles about cell phones and related electronics: [A case-control study of risk of leukaemia in relation to mobile phone use](#); [Association between exposure to radiofrequency electromagnetic fields assessed by dosimetry and acute symptoms in children and adolescents: a population based cross-sectional study](#) and [Electrosensitivity: Is your mobile really a threat to your health?](#)]

[International research study focuses on human health effects of 'e-waste.'](#)

Tuesday, November 23, 2010

A new international population study, led by the University of Cincinnati, will be the first to examine the human developmental effects of environmental exposure to the complex metal mixture found in electronic waste (e-waste). Medical News Today.

[See related articles: [Living off toxic trash in the Philippines](#), [Auctions launder e-waste](#) and [California recyclers find market for toxic trash](#)]

[Allotment gardening and health: a comparative study among allotment gardeners and their neighbors without an allotment.](#)

Tuesday, November 23, 2010

These findings are consistent with the notion that having an allotment garden may promote an active life-style and contribute to healthy aging. Environmental Health.

[Study: Home pesticides linked to childhood cancer.](#)

Monday, November 22, 2010

A new study of children in the Washington, D.C., area and published in the journal Therapeutic Drug Monitoring links one form of childhood cancer to exposure to common organophosphate pesticides used around the home to kill bugs. Seattle Post Intelligencer.

[See other articles about pesticides: [Different reaction patterns of dopamine content to prenatal exposure to chlorpyrifos in different periods](#); [Arugula operation in Shady Valley the focus of pesticide investigation](#) and [Strawberry pesticide targeted by environmentalists, farmworkers](#)]

[Growing up digital, wired for distraction.](#)

Sunday, November 21, 2010

The risk, they say, is that developing brains can become more easily habituated than adult brains to constantly switching tasks -- and less able to sustain attention. New York Times.

[New era, new curriculum.](#)

Sunday, November 21, 2010

In laboratories across the country chemists are trying to come up with new formulas to make safer products. And students at many universities are learning how to do it. It's called green chemistry. Living On Earth.

[Eating a variety of fruit cuts lung cancer risk.](#)

Saturday, November 20, 2010

The European EPIC study carried out by researchers from 10 countries has shown that, in the case of lung cancer, the important thing is not just the quantity but also the variety of fruit consumed, which can reduce the risk by up to 23%. EurekAlert.

[See other articles about diet and health: [Palm oil 'will be phased out'](#); [Chronic high cholesterol diet produces brain damage](#); [Genes marked by stress make grandchildren mentally ill](#); [Impact of maternal diet during pregnancy and breastfeeding on infant metabolic programming: a prospective randomized controlled study](#); [Effects of a low-glycemic load diet in overweight and obese pregnant women: a pilot randomized controlled trial](#) and [Report questions need for 2 diet supplements](#)]

[New report: Toxic Toys R Us.](#)

Friday, November 19, 2010

Testing conducted on toys purchased at Toys R Us using a portable X-Ray Fluorescence

(XRF) analyzer by the Ecology Center in Ann Arbor, MI shows that 72.5% of all toys/children's products tested contained high levels of chlorine, indicating they were likely made of PVC.

[See other articles about toxic children's products: [Before you buy that train set, do your homework](#); [Cadmium, lead found in drinking glasses](#); [Dangerous toys](#); [Tips to keep kids safe](#); [PIRG releases latest on toxic toys](#) and [Report warns of toys posing choking hazards, chemicals](#)]

Researchers trace toxins' links to reproductive health.

Friday, November 19, 2010

Researchers say consumers are swimming in a sea of chemicals, and get exposed through "air, water, food, drink, cosmetics, pesticides, herbicides and other household items." There are some 80,000 chemicals on the market and only a couple hundred have been tested for safety. New America Media.

[See a related article: [Doctors see rise in second-birth infertility](#)]

Government insists full-body scanners are safe.

Friday, November 19, 2010

As the government rolls out hundreds more full-body scanners at airports just in time for crowds of holiday travelers, it is working to reassure the public that the machines are safe. Associated Press.

[See other articles about radiation risks: [The downside of a cancer study extolling CT scans](#); [PG&E considers SmartMeter compromise](#); [Hospitals, doctors and patients try to cut radiation from CT scans](#); [Radiation worries for children in dentists' chairs](#); [Veterans' long battle for nuclear tests' compensation](#); [Radiation risk from flying dwarfs body scanners](#); [PUC consumer division pushes for SmartMeter health probe](#); [SmartMeter revolt persists](#); [Experts assess health risks of airport full-body scanners](#) and [CT scan use rising in emergency rooms, study says](#)]

FDA opens investigation into reusable grocery bags.

Friday, November 19, 2010

The U.S. FDA has opened an official probe into reusable grocery bags, following a Tampa Tribune report that found some highly decorated bags contained elevated levels of lead. Mobile WKRG, Alabama.

Skiers, beach goers face similar sun dangers.

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Just because it's cold outside doesn't mean the sun can't cook your skin, hints a new study of ultraviolet radiation and people's behavior at mountain ski resorts. Reuters.

Household cleaners could be hazardous.

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

Scientists at the University of Washington, Battelle Memorial Institute and the U.S. EPA tested 25 household consumer products. All of the household cleaning supplies contained volatile organic compounds, which can be hazardous and can also affect indoor air quality Springfield WWLP TV, Massachusetts.

[See a related article: [Being too clean hazardous to health](#)]

Could your seafood contain toxic chemicals?

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

When you think of tainted seafood, you may think of the Gulf oil spill. But 80 percent of the fish and shrimp Americans eat comes from overseas and some of that seafood may contain toxic chemicals. Today Show.

[See other articles about food: [The quest to put some bite into foreign food inspections](#); [Greens might not be that healthy that after all](#); [The big challenge in making farmed shrimp safe to eat](#) and [Beware E. coli when drinking raw milk: study](#)]

UC Berkeley gets \$16.5 million for three children's environmental health centers.

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley's School of Public Health are getting

\$16.5 million to support three research centers as part of a federal initiative to examine the environmental factors influencing children's health. UC Berkeley News.

Major U.S. cities violate new EPA lead standards.

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

Sixteen areas, including Los Angeles, Tampa and Cleveland, have unhealthy amounts of lead in the air that violate national standards, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Tuesday. Scientific American.

[See other articles and announcements about lead: [Wind whisks lead across the Pacific Ocean to California](#); [EPA seeks small businesses input on exterior lead paint for public and commercial buildings](#); [Lead in bags, other products result of global economy](#); [New EPA regulations take aim at lead paint](#); [Getting the lead out](#) and [Canada toughens limits on lead in consumer products](#)]

Association of residential dampness and mold with respiratory tract infections and bronchitis: a meta-analysis.

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

Residential dampness and mold are associated with substantial and statistically significant increases in both respiratory infections and bronchitis. Environmental Health.

[See a related article: [Tribal court: Blackfeet housing responsible for black mold](#)]

The Collaborative on Health and the Environment offers this information as a service but does not endorse any of the events, articles or announcements.

Companion bulletins are available for different audiences:

- For those interested in general children's environmental health: http://www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/childrens_health/bulletins
- For those interested in environmental health and learning and developmental disabilities: <http://www.iceh.org/LDDIbulletins.html>

While there is overlap with this bulletin, there are some events and announcements unique to those bulletins.

If you would like to join the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE) and the Washington State Regional Group, please complete the application on the CHE website: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/application> Joining CHE means receiving up to four email messages a month from the CHE National listserv. CHE costs nothing to join and the benefit is shared information and opportunities for further engagement, if you choose. Be sure to mark that you want to join the Washington State regional group at the bottom of the application.

Nancy Snow
Collaborative on Health and the Environment

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