



## Collaborative on Health and the Environment - Washington



Biweekly Bulletin December 16, 2009

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

#### Forum Presentations Online

Videos from presentations at the Children's Environmental Health Forum in October are being added to the Forum web page: <http://www.chenw.org/CEHforum.html>

#### New Resource: Climate Change and Children's Health

With several recent reports and statements regarding the impact of climate change on health, the Initiative on Children's Environmental Health is excited to provide a new resource page on Climate Change and Children's Health: [www.healthandenvironment.org/working\\_groups/childrens\\_health/climate](http://www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/childrens_health/climate) This page lays out why children are especially vulnerable, what health impacts may be caused or exacerbated by climate change, and actions that we can take as individuals and as groups. A resources section also links to additional information. This new resource will be updated as new information becomes available.

### Lessons Learned

#### Bhopal - 25 Years Later

by Steven G. Gilbert, PhD, DABT

The Bhopal Disaster occurred 25 years ago on December 3, 1984, in Bhopal, India, when a Union Carbide (now owned by Dow Chemical) pesticide plant released a highly toxic gas that killed between 8,000 and 10,000 in the first three days. It is estimated that 25,000 ultimately died and another 500,000 people were exposed. This was a tragic and preventable accident that brought a focus to plight of poor people living near a major industrial complex. This a classic lesson of environmental justice that ultimately spurred laws such as the Toxics Release Inventory. It was a preventable tragedy that lives on for many children.

Learn more: <http://toxipedia.org/x/kwU>



#### 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](mailto:Steve.Gilbert@chenw.org).

### Announcements

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

### **[National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals.](#)**

The blood and urine samples were collected from participants in CDC's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), which is an ongoing survey that samples the U.S. population every two years.

*[See related articles: [New CDC survey tracks mercury levels in Americans](#) and [New frontiers -- and limitations -- in testing people's bodies for chemicals](#)]*

### **[Loma Linda University inaugurates new Health Geoinformatics Lab.](#)**

The Health Geoinformatics Laboratory center will provide undergraduate and graduate students with hands-on experience in applying modern information system technologies that combine maps and satellite imagery with data about the geographic locations of diseases, health care resources, and sociodemographic characteristics of communities.

### **[Call for comments: EPA to strengthen oversight of pesticide's impact on children and farmworkers.](#)**

EPA's proposal would include a more thorough assessment of risks to workers, including farmworkers and farm children, as well as risks posed by pesticides that are not used on food. The agency is asking the public to comment on the new approach and how best to implement the improvements.

### **[EPA: Greenhouse gases threaten public health and the environment / Science overwhelmingly shows greenhouse gas concentrations at unprecedented levels due to human activity.](#)**

After a thorough examination of the scientific evidence and careful consideration of public comments, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced today that greenhouse gases (GHGs) threaten the public health and welfare of the American people.

### **[Call for comments: Primary national ambient air quality standard for sulfur dioxide.](#)**

EPA proposes to establish a new 1-hour SO<sub>2</sub> standard within the range of 50 - 100 parts per billion (ppb), based on the 3-year average of the annual 99th percentile (or 4th highest) of 1-hour daily maximum concentrations.

### **[New online forum increases public's access to EPA.](#)**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has launched an online discussion forum designed to enhance communication between EPA and the public on contaminated sites, waste management, and recycling issues.

### **[Sick Schools 2009.](#)**

"Sick Schools 2009 - America's Continuing Environmental Health Crisis for Children" offers peer-reviewed studies and compelling evidence of how polluted air inside and outside schools escalates health care costs, increases absenteeism, and reduces test scores.

*[See a related article: [EPA detects brain-damaging toxic near school](#)]*

### **[Summer Program in Environmental Health \(SUPEH\).](#)**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Summer Program in Environmental Health (SUPEH) is a 10-week internship for students majoring in environmental health.

### **[EPA announces proposal to withdraw the Emission Comparable Fuels Rule.](#)**

The ECF rule governs fuel that would otherwise be regulated as hazardous waste, but that generates emissions that are comparable to fuel oil.

### **[Job opening: Bethesda, Maryland.](#)**

The Health and Environmental Funders Network (HEFN) is currently seeking a part-time administrative assistant to support its small office in a 16-hour-per-week hourly wage position.

## **Upcoming Events**

**Online Calendar.** These and more upcoming events are listed in a searchable calendar:

<http://www.chenw.org/cgi-bin/searchevents.cgi>.

### **1) Public Meetings on the State's Climate Change Impacts Response Strategy**

Thursday December 30, 2009

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Wenatchee, Washington

Sponsor: Washington Department of Ecology in partnership with the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources, and Transportation

In 2009, the Washington legislature passed Senate Bill 5560 directing these agencies "to develop an integrated climate change response strategy to better enable state and local agencies, public and private businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals to prepare for, address, and adapt to the impacts of climate change." The strategy is due to the Legislature in December of 2011. The six state agencies tasked with developing the state climate change response strategy are requesting initial feedback from the public. These meetings will be used to provide an overview of the strategy framework, provide background on the need for such a strategy for Washington State, and most importantly to answer questions and gather feedback from the public on what issues the strategy should address.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Spencer Reeder, 360-407-6229 or [spencer.reeder@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:spencer.reeder@ecy.wa.gov)

### **2) Public Health, Prevention, and Health Reform: Opportunities and Challenges**

Tuesday January 12, 2009

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Pacific time

Sponsor: Northwest Center for Public Health Practice

Health reform, and what it means for public health, is at the top of mind for many public health professionals. This session will discuss public health's approach to expanding the important and cost-effective work around prevention and expanding the role of public health in important health decisions. If public health acts strategically, health reform provides the opportunity to remake the public health system. This session will also address the increased responsibility that comes with raised expectations about the capacity of the public health system and its ability to lower costs and deliver improved health outcomes.

Price: unknown

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Sarah Paliulis, [paliulis@u.washington.edu](mailto:paliulis@u.washington.edu)

### **3) CHE-Fertility Call: Disinfectants Overkill**

Thursday January 14, 2010

10:00 a.m. Pacific / 1:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment Fertility and Reproductive Health Working Group

This call will highlight the recently released Women's Voices for the Earth report, [Disinfectants Overkill](#). Featured speakers include Erin Switalski, executive director of Women's Voices for the Earth; Alexandra Gorman Scranton, MS, director of Science and research for Women's Voices for the Earth; Patricia Hunt, PhD, Meyer Distinguished Professor at the School of Molecular Biosciences, Washington State University; and Ann Blake, PhD, Environmental & Public Health Consulting.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Julia Varshavsky, [julia@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:julia@healthandenvironment.org)

## News and Journal Articles

### [Nanomaterial used for cancer tests.](#)

*Tuesday, December 15, 2009*

Scientists have used nanosensors for the quick detection of cancers through blood tests, with nanomaterial also enabling the release of medicine at targeted organs, said studies released on Sunday. Agence France-Presse. *[See a related article about safety concerns regarding nanomaterials: [Safety first](#)]*

### [CT scans linked to cancer.](#)

*Tuesday, December 15, 2009*

The risk of cancer associated with popular CT scans appears to be greater than previously believed, according to two new studies published Monday in the Archives of Internal Medicine. Wall Street Journal.

### [Plasticizer may be tied to boys' breast enlargement.](#)

*Tuesday, December 15, 2009*

A recent report points to yet another possible harmful effect of exposure to phthalates -- a controversial plastics chemical used widely in the manufacture of consumer products. Reuters. *[See a related journal article: [Prenatal di\(2-ethylhexyl\)phthalate exposure and length of gestation among an inner-city cohort](#)]*

### [Reclaiming health: Residents battle to overcome health inequities.](#)

*Sunday, December 13, 2009*

One-fifth of Sobrante Park's 2,800 residents live in poverty. It has far higher rates of asthma hospitalizations and diabetes, and deaths from cancer and heart disease, than more affluent East Bay neighborhoods. Contra Costa Times, California.

*[See related articles: [Life may be shorter in poorer neighborhoods](#) and [In East Bay, where pollution goes, health problems follow](#)]*

### [Household toxins.](#)

*Sunday, December 13, 2009*

As it has long been suspected, toxins and carcinogenic chemicals lurk around the house and, particularly, in the kitchen where food for the family is stored and prepared. Manila Bulletin, Philippines.

*[See a related article: [Choose non-toxic decor for a non-polluting apartment](#)]*

### [Oregon drops the ball on mercury.](#)

*Sunday, December 13, 2009*

Nearly every day, an eastern Oregon cement factory vents an invisible and toxic cloud of mercury into the skies above Durkee. Only one other factory in the country emits more mercury of the type most harmful to people. Portland Oregonian, Oregon.

### [Child diabetes blamed on food sweetener.](#)

*Sunday, December 13, 2009*

Scientists have proved for the first time that a cheap form of sugar [fructose] used in thousands of food products and soft drinks can damage human metabolism and is fuelling the obesity crisis. London Times, United Kingdom.

### [It's best to avoid BPA, federal official says.](#)

*Saturday, December 12, 2009*

The head of the primary federal agency studying the safety of bisphenol A said Friday that people should avoid ingesting the chemical - especially pregnant women, infants and children. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wisconsin.

*[See related articles: [Getting to the bottom of plastic bottle risks](#), [Chemical BPA may harm developing fetus](#), [Quebec study suggests](#) and [Plastics Bisphenol A \(BPA\) component affects intestine](#)]*

### [Is dirty electricity making you sick?](#)

*Friday, December 11, 2009*

In addition to the stunning new investigations into dirty electricity (which we'll return to), several developments have highlighted the growing hazards of EMF pollution -- and the crucial need to address them. Prevention.

[See a related article: [Pollutants cluster under power lines](#)]

#### **[Alcohol link to breast cancer recurrence.](#)**

*Friday, December 11, 2009*

Women who have had breast cancer should stick to three alcoholic drinks or less a week to reduce the chance of the disease returning, researchers suggest. BBC.

[See related articles: [Soy doesn't harm, and may even help, breast cancer survivors, study finds](#) and [Lonely rats more prone to breast cancer](#)]

#### **[Birth weight, early weight gain may hasten puberty.](#)**

*Friday, December 11, 2009*

A relatively low birth weight and early-age weight gain may increase the likelihood of early puberty, hint findings from a German study. Earlier onset of puberty has been linked to certain cancers, high blood sugar and obesity. Reuters Health.

#### **[EPA: No urgent concern over artificial field surfaces.](#)**

*Friday, December 11, 2009*

The U.S. EPA said yesterday that there was no cause for immediate concern from lead and other toxins in artificial-turf fields and playground surfaces made from recycled tires. It cautioned, however, that the 123-page study was too small to rule out potential health threats. Philadelphia Inquirer, Pennsylvania.

#### **[Tests link cancer to snarled freeway air.](#)**

*Wednesday, December 09, 2009*

In as little as three months, the brains of laboratory rats begin to change after being exposed to the air around congested Southern California freeways. Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, California.

#### **[Closer look finds chains test more often, impose stricter limits on bacteria.](#)**

*Wednesday, December 09, 2009*

In the past three years, the government has provided the nation's schools with millions of pounds of beef and chicken that wouldn't meet the quality or safety standards of many fast-food restaurants, a USA TODAY investigation found. USA Today.

[See related articles: [Why a recall of tainted beef didn't include school lunches](#) and [Senator seeks 'strict testing' for meat sent to schools](#)]

#### **[Pollution hotspots: Places we don't want to be.](#)**

*Tuesday, December 08, 2009*

As world leaders prepare to head to Copenhagen for talks aimed at reaching a deal to slow the pace of climate change, people around the world are experiencing environmental destruction in myriad ways, some subtle, others devastating. Reuters.

#### **[EPA unveils new policies on water at schools.](#)**

*Tuesday, December 08, 2009*

The Environmental Protection Agency unveiled a new national strategy to enforce safe drinking water laws in small, rural communities on Tuesday and pledged to redouble efforts to protect children from toxic water in schools. Houston Chronicle, Texas.

[See related articles: [EPA plan for improving schools' drinking water gets chilly reception at Senate hearing](#) and [Millions in U.S. drinking dirty water, records show](#)]

#### **[The unusual suspects.](#)**

*Tuesday, December 08, 2009*

As food production and preparation moves farther afield, tainted items become hard to avoid. Washington Post.

#### **[White House urged to help states with nuclear plants stockpile thyroid drug.](#)**

*Monday, December 07, 2009*

Citing lessons from Hurricane Katrina, advocates are seeking to reverse a Bush-era

policy and increase advance distribution of potassium iodide to protect people near nuclear power plants in the event of an accident or an attack. New York Times.

### **[Stain repellents linked to low birth weight and premature births.](#)**

*Monday, December 07, 2009*

Research finds that stain repellent and anti-adhesive chemicals may be linked to low birth weight and premature births in those born near a factory that both produces and uses the chemicals. Environmental Health News.

### **[New bleach alternative safe for kids.](#)**

*Monday, December 07, 2009*

The product's active ingredient -- trichloromelamine -- was invented in the 1940s by the military as a mess kit and fruit and vegetable treatment for soldiers. It is a different form of chlorine than the chlorine in bleach and kills contaminants quickly. Des Moines Register, Iowa.

### **[Patients deficient in vitamin D fare worse in battle with lymphoma.](#)**

*Sunday, December 06, 2009*

A new study adds lymphoma to the list of malignancies suspected of being more difficult to control in patients with vitamin D deficiency common in parts of the U.S. population. Science News.

### **[A whole new look at dietary benefits of fish.](#)**

*Sunday, December 06, 2009*

New research indicates levels of selenium, more so than mercury, are key to whether seafood may be beneficial or harmful. But some scientists have questioned the findings and no changes to state and federal health advisories are planned. Fort Myers News-Press, Florida.

[See related articles: [Selenium, omega-3s may stave off colorectal cancer](#) and [Fishing for facts](#)]

### **[Correlations between gene expression and mercury levels in blood of boys with and without autism.](#)**

*Saturday, December 05, 2009*

Autistic and typically developing children display different correlations between transcript levels and low levels of mercury and lead. Neurotoxicity Research.

[See a related article: [Correlations of gene expression with blood lead levels in children with autism compared to typically developing controls](#)]

### **[How Europe's discarded computers are poisoning Africa's kids.](#)**

*Saturday, December 05, 2009*

People in the West throw away millions of old computers every year. Hundreds of thousands of them end up in Africa, where children try to eke out a living by selling the scrap. But the toxic elements in the waste are slowly poisoning them. Der Spiegel.

### **[Cancer cells? Brain tumor numbers steady despite increased mobile phone use.](#)**

*Friday, December 04, 2009*

A new report has found no increase in the incidence of brain tumors in four European countries since mobile phones became widespread, but some in the research community still think the devices may prove harmful in the long run. Scientific American.

[See a related article: [Growing evidence that cell phones create tumors](#)]

### **[Black lung plan may not lower dust limits.](#)**

*Friday, December 04, 2009*

The Obama administration on Thursday kicked off a campaign to "end black lung," but said it may not follow through on a proposal to tighten the legal limits on coal dust that causes the deadly disease. Charleston Gazette, West Virginia.

### **[Agent Orange's lethal legacy: For U.S., a record of neglect.](#)**

*Friday, December 04, 2009*

In the 30 years since Agent Orange was recognized publicly as a potential health threat, the federal government has established a record of neglect, even as the health fallout

has spread, a Tribune investigation finds. Chicago Tribune, Illinois.

[See related articles: [Agent Orange: Congenital deformities plague Vietnam: US slow to help](#); [Agent Orange's lethal legacy: At former U.S. bases in Vietnam, a potent poison is clear and present danger](#); [Iraq/Afghanistan deployment tied to respiratory woes, Military: Burn pits caused illnesses and Navy will pay to restudy Lejeune water](#)]

#### **Out of plumb: When water treatment causes lead contamination.**

Thursday, December 03, 2009

In recent years contamination with lead has emerged as an unintended consequence of water treatment changes aimed at improving water quality. Environmental Health Perspectives.

#### **Expert panel recommends listing formaldehyde as known human carcinogen.**

Thursday, December 03, 2009

On November 4, a 10-member independent scientific expert panel convened by the National Toxicology Program (NTP) voted unanimously to list formaldehyde as a "known human carcinogen" in the upcoming 12th NTP Report on Carcinogens (RoC). Environmental Factor.

#### **Momentum builds for meaningful TSCA reform.**

Thursday, December 03, 2009

Two developments on Dec. 2 have encouraged backers of EPA's planned rewrite of the Toxic Substances Control Act that a meaningful reform is possible for the law, which is the key statute allowing the government to regulate industrial chemicals because of health risks they pose to the public. Occupational Health & Safety.

[See a related article: [States: Federal toxics laws too weak](#)]

#### **Toxic chemicals found in a third of children's toys: study.**

Thursday, December 03, 2009

A third of the most popular children's toys in the United States this year contain harmful chemicals including lead, cadmium, arsenic and mercury, a US consumer group said Wednesday. Agence France-Presse.

[See a related article: [Safety isn't guaranteed in Toyland](#)]

#### **Heavy metals raise risk of penis defects.**

Thursday, December 03, 2009

Pregnant women who work in occupations that may bring them into contact with heavy metals are at more than double the usual risk of having a baby boy with hypospadias. Sydney Morning Herald, Australia.

#### **Mouthwash multiplies risk of cancer up to nine times.**

Wednesday, December 02, 2009

Dental researchers warned yesterday that among people using mouthwashes containing alcohol, the risk of oral cancer was increased nine times if they smoked, and five times if they drank alcohol. Sydney Australian, Australia.

#### **Healthy, organic and cheap school lunches?**

Wednesday, December 02, 2009

For the first time, a small, privately held start-up is pushing to produce what are by all accounts fresh, healthful, all-natural school meals for just under \$3 apiece. USA Today.

Many of the news articles above come from [Environmental Health News](#).

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](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**

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Email Marketing by

