



## Collaborative on Health and the Environment - Washington



Biweekly Bulletin December 30, 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 continue to be 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

#### Percivall Pott - Cancer in Chimney Sweeps

by Steven G. Gilbert, PhD, DABT



Young boys made the best chimney sweeps and also suffered from scrotal cancer. Percivall Pott, born in London (January 6, 1714 - December 22, 1788) made groundbreaking discoveries in the fields of cancer research and surgery techniques. He discovered the link between occupational carcinogens and scrotal cancer in chimney sweeps and wrote multiple scientific articles in his lifetime. To reduce the likelihood of cancer, frequent washing away of the soot was the primary preventive measure. To prevent / reduce many childhood exposures (lead, phthalates ...) the best advice remains to wash hands often.

Learn more:

<http://toxipedia.org/x/HQQ>

#### 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>.

**[EPA strengthens transboundary hazardous waste shipment regulations.](#)**

The final rule announced today aligns EPA's hazardous waste import/export/transit shipment regulations with the procedures of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an international consortium that comprises 30 countries including the United States.

**[U.S. EPA releases annual enforcement results and mapping tool.](#)**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released enforcement results for fiscal year 2009, and has developed a new Web-based tool and interactive map that allows the public to get detailed information by location about the enforcement actions taken at approximately 4,600 facilities.

**[EPA adopts strong standards for large ships to curb air pollution.](#)**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has finalized a rule setting tough engine and fuel standards for large U.S.- flagged ships, a major milestone in the agency's coordinated strategy to slash harmful marine diesel emissions.

**[Call for comments: EPA proposes to expand the Lead Monitoring Network.](#)**

EPA is proposing to require air quality monitoring around sources that emit a half ton or more of lead a year, lowering the current threshold from one ton a year to include more sources. The proposal also modifies the current requirement for monitoring in larger urban areas.

**[EPA releases first-ever baseline study of U.S. lakes.](#)**

The draft study, which rated the condition of 56 percent of the lakes in the United States as good and the remainder as fair or poor, marked the first time EPA and its partners used a nationally consistent approach to survey the ecological and water quality of lakes.

**[Call for proposals: Community-Based Participatory Research.](#)**

The Northwest Health Foundation invites innovative, community-driven research proposals that seek to reduce the burden of chronic diseases using community-based participatory research approaches. Concept papers are due February 1, 2010.

**[EPA seeks applications for environmental community grants.](#)**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is making \$2 million available in 2010 to reduce pollution at the local level through the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program.

**[Job opening: Chicago, Illinois.](#)**

The Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC) is seeking a Communications and Public Policy Analyst to support the organization's federal, state and local policy initiatives and programs.

## 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 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)

## 2) 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)

## 3) CHE Science Cafe Call: A Conversation with Elizabeth Grossman, Author of *Chasing Molecules*

Tuesday January 19, 2010

11:00 a.m. Pacific / 2:00 p.m. Eastern time

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

Known for her book *High Tech Trash*, an exposé of the electronic waste industry, Elizabeth Grossman's new book, *Chasing Molecules: Poisonous Products, Human Health, and the Promise of Green Chemistry*, reveals the dangers and the extent of the chemicals that are found in everyday products such as BPA, perfluorinated compounds, brominated flame retardants and phthalates, and offers up hope for a future without them. With *Chasing Molecules*, Grossman reveals that we can do better; that we can make materials that we have come to rely on with chemicals that have been tested to be safe and are in fact "benign by design." In a radical departure from how synthetic chemistry has been practiced, Grossman suggests that green chemistry should be used to create new materials for use in everything from sippy cups to carpets.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: CHE, [info@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:info@healthandenvironment.org)

## 4) CHE Partnership Call: Upstream: Complex Chemical Contributors to Thyroid Function and the Potential Impacts on Policy

Thursday January 21, 2010

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

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

This call will involve a discussion of the complex array of chemical contributors to thyroid function. Presenters will cover chemicals linked to thyroid function, upstream biological impacts to thyroid hormones during pregnancy that can lead to a variety of health problems later in life, and the policy implications given all the complexity. In particular,

speakers will address perchlorate, which inhibits the uptake of iodide into the thyroid gland, an essential part of the process of making thyroid hormone. Small changes in maternal thyroid hormone are associated with significant decreases in IQ.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: CHE, 360-331-7904 or [info@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:info@healthandenvironment.org)

### **5) Essentials for Healthy Homes Practitioners Course**

Tuesday and Wednesday, January 26 - 27, 2010

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Seattle, Washington

at the Ravenna Training Room, UW Tower, 4333 Brooklyn Avenue NE

Sponsor: Northwest Center for Public Health Practice

If you visit homes to provide health or inspection services of any type, you will benefit from the Essentials for Healthy Homes Practitioners Course. The training will help you understand the connection between health and housing and how to take a holistic approach to identify and resolve problems which threaten the health and wellbeing of residents. The training complements hazard-specific training in lead-based paint, radon, mold, pests and asbestos. It identifies root causes of health problems in a home and links them to seven principles of healthy housing: keep it dry; keep it clean; keep it pest-free; keep it ventilated; keep it safe, avoid contaminants; and maintain the house. Course participants will have a better understanding of how to collaborate to make healthy homes a reality in their community. The Healthy Home Specialist Credential Exam can be taken as an optional addition to the course at the Lung Association Office, 2625 Third Avenue, on January 28th.

Price: \$100, plus an additional cost of \$205 to take the optional credentialing exam

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Trudy San Jose White, 206-685-2931 or [sanjose@uw.edu](mailto:sanjose@uw.edu)

### **6) Report from the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen: Implications for Human Health**

Thursday January 28, 2010

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

Sponsor: SeaTrust Institute, IGI Global, Collaborative on Health and the Environment

According to the United Nations Framework Convention in Climate Change in Stepping up International Action on Climate Change: The Road to Copenhagen, "Climate change is today widely recognized as one of mankind's greatest challenges in the 21st century. If left unchecked, climate change can seriously harm economies, societies and ecosystems all around the world, especially in developing countries." Dr. Lynn Wilson returns from participating in the international climate change meetings in Copenhagen to engage webinar participants in what is being called "the forgotten discussion" in the climate-change equation: human health. Besides offering reflections as representative for an admitted civil society organization in the official negotiations, Lynn will share insights from participation in working groups on climate and health, informal discussions and side events to present a picture of international collaboration and conflict, knowledge and progress in this critical scientific and policy arena.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: SeaTrust Institute, 360-961-3363 or [lwilson@nasw.org](mailto:lwilson@nasw.org)

## News and Journal Articles

### [Plants can break down persistent pollutants.](#)

*Tuesday, December 29, 2009*

New research reports that the enzymes in the roots of a poplar tree can alter the chemical structure of a common type of PCB pollutant, rendering it less harmful than the original chemical. Environmental Health News.

### [Pressure rises to stop antibiotics in agriculture.](#)

*Tuesday, December 29, 2009*

Researchers say the overuse of antibiotics in humans and animals has led to a plague of drug-resistant infections that killed more than 65,000 people in the U.S. last year -- more than prostate and breast cancer combined. Associated Press.

[See a related article: [Disinfectants 'train' superbugs to resist antibiotics](#)]

### [Childhood exposure to tobacco smoke raises risk of emphysema.](#)

*Tuesday, December 29, 2009*

Scientists have long thought that people who quit smoking recover some of their lung function and health. That may be true, but it appears children exposed to secondhand smoke are not so lucky. Los Angeles Times, California.

[See related articles: [15 cigarettes: All it takes to harm genes](#) and [Cancer genomes reveal risks of sun and smoke](#)]

### [What happens when the microbes that keep us healthy disappear?](#)

*Monday, December 28, 2009*

The human body has more microbial than human cells, but this rich diversity of micro-helpers that has evolved along with us is undergoing a rapid shift--one that may have very macro health consequences. Scientific American. 28 December 2009.

### [Toxic metals may influence autism severity.](#)

*Monday, December 28, 2009*

The severity of a child's autism coincided with the levels of toxic metals excreted in their urine after treatment with a metals removal therapy, finds a study published in the Journal of Toxicology. Environmental Health News.

[See a related article: [Sharp rise in autism, but causes are unclear](#)]

### [Labeling standards for caffeine.](#)

*Monday, December 28, 2009*

Caffeine turns up in expected places, in unexpected amounts. A lack of labeling guidelines leaves many consumers in the dark about just how much caffeine the products contain. Los Angeles Times, California.

[See a related article: [Coffee may have health benefits and may not pose health risks for many people](#)]

### [Studies: Curbing warming saves lives.](#)

*Sunday, December 27, 2009*

Slashing carbon dioxide emissions could save millions of lives, mostly by reducing preventable deaths from heart and lung diseases, according to studies released recently and published in a special issue of *The Lancet* British medical journal. Statesman Journal, Oregon.

[See a related article: [Disproportionate effects of global warming and pollution on disadvantaged communities](#)]

### [Some disease prevention measures can pay off.](#)

*Sunday, December 27, 2009*

The majority of preventive measures happen in the community and workplace. And here the cost-benefit balance sheet is very different, some studies say. Antismoking campaigns and exercise programs can yield major savings. Los Angeles Times, California.

[See a related article: [Healthcare: Prevention efforts can be costly](#)]

### [Assessing risks from bisphenol-A.](#)

*Sunday, December 27, 2009*

Evaluating human health risks from endocrine disruptors such as BPA is difficult, but animal studies suggest trouble is afoot. American Scientist.

[See related articles: [Waiting on science to say if plastic chemical is safe](#) and [Polyethylene terephthalate may yield endocrine disruptors](#)]

#### **[AP Enterprise: Feds mull regulating drugs in water.](#)**

*Saturday, December 26, 2009*

Federal regulators under President Barack Obama have sharply shifted course on long-standing policy toward pharmaceutical residues in the nation's drinking water, taking a critical first step toward regulating some of the contaminants while acknowledging they could threaten human health. Associated Press.

#### **[Do multivitamins curb kids' allergy risk?](#)**

*Saturday, December 26, 2009*

Starting multivitamins at the age of 4 or younger may curb the risk of food allergies and seasonal or inhaled allergies. Reuters Health.

#### **[Cola drinking linked to diabetes in pregnancy.](#)**

*Saturday, December 26, 2009*

Drinking lots of sugar-sweetened cola may increase women's likelihood of developing diabetes during pregnancy, a condition known as gestational diabetes, new research shows. Reuters Health.

#### **[Two of three California homes had excessive formaldehyde levels.](#)**

*Friday, December 25, 2009*

Two-thirds of single-family homes built in California in recent years had substandard indoor air quality and excessive formaldehyde levels, partly because residents didn't open their windows for ventilation, according to a new state report. USA Today.

#### **[Insecticide exposure tied to increased risks for arthritis and lupus.](#)**

*Thursday, December 24, 2009*

Regular or long-term exposure to consumer insecticides may increase the risk of developing autoimmune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. Arthritis Today.

[See related articles: [EPA announces plan to require disclosure of secret pesticide ingredients](#) and [More herbicide use reported on genetically modified crops](#)]

#### **[Mercury levels considered safe pose a risk to the heart.](#)**

*Thursday, December 24, 2009*

Researchers in Japan have found that eating fish tainted with methylmercury -- at levels currently considered safe for human exposure -- can lead to a slightly unstable resting heart rate. Over time, these types of changes are associated with an elevated risk of developing coronary heart disease. Environmental Health News.

#### **[Systematic review of epidemiological studies on health effects associated with management of municipal solid waste.](#)**

*Thursday, December 24, 2009*

For populations living within two kilometres of landfills there was limited evidence of an increased risk of congenital anomalies and low birth weight with excess risk of 2 percent and 6 percent, respectively. Environmental Health Journal.

#### **[Environmental fears over U.S. shale gas drilling.](#)**

*Thursday, December 24, 2009*

The boom in shale natural gas drilling has raised hopes the United States will be able to rely on the cleaner-burning fuel to meet future energy needs. But concerns about its impact on water quality could slow the industry's ability to tap this bountiful resource. Reuters.

[See related articles: [Hydrofracking for gas](#) and [Concerns spreading about air quality from gas drilling](#)]

#### **[Toxic releases decrease nationwide.](#)**

*Wednesday, December 23, 2009*

The TRI provides communities with valuable knowledge and encourages facilities to

reduce their releases of toxic chemicals into the environment through process design, source reduction, or other pollution prevention measures. Environmental News Network.

### **[The city that said 'no.'](#)**

*Wednesday, December 23, 2009*

Across the country, studies have increasingly shown that low-income, minority communities endure a disproportionate share of poor living conditions and contamination. Maywood, California, has become a 'culture of participation' to help solve its pollution problems, particularly with contaminated water. Christian Science Monitor.

[See a related article: [Poverty shortens healthy years](#)]

### **[Dietary estrogens have little effect on cancer risk.](#)**

*Tuesday, December 22, 2009*

Dietary "phytoestrogens" -- plant substances that have weak estrogen-like activity -- have little impact on the risks of developing hormone-sensitive cancers like breast and prostate cancer or colorectal cancers, new research suggests. Reuters Health.

[See related articles: [Experts warn of cancer linked to certain herbs](#) and [Eating our way to nirvana](#)]

### **[No link seen between acetaminophen, birth defects.](#)**

*Tuesday, December 22, 2009*

Researchers found no evidence linking mothers' acetaminophen use in the first trimester to a heightened risk of any birth defect. In fact, women who took the medication to treat a first-trimester fever had a lower risk of certain birth defects. Reuters Health.

[See a related article: [Prenatal baby aspirin not harmful to infants: study](#)]

### **[Study suggests link between occupation and birth defects.](#)**

*Tuesday, December 22, 2009*

Women in certain professions face a high risk of having children with physical problems, research shows. Women working as janitors faced the highest risk of giving birth to children with certain defects, while teachers faced the lowest risk. Toronto Globe and Mail, Ontario.

[See a related article: [Chefs lead on unhealthy habits](#)]

### **[Living in a less toxic world -- an interview with Heather Sarantis of Commonweal](#)**

*Monday, December 21, 2009*

Health problems including asthma, cancer and infertility affect more than 100 million people in the U.S., about one third of the population. Examiner.com.

### **[Cell phone-cancer link remains unclear, but some scientists urge caution.](#)**

*Monday, December 21, 2009*

U.S. cell phone use has quadrupled over the last decade; meanwhile, brain cancer remains as rare as ever. Nevertheless, nagging worries that cell phones cause brain cancer continue to gain traction. St. Petersburg Times, Florida.

### **[Drinking problems.](#)**

*Sunday, December 20, 2009*

Like many water utilities across the U.S., disinfectants like chlorine are added to the supply to remove life-threatening microbes. But when the disinfectants interact with organic material that seeps into drinking water, new chemicals are formed that could be a potential health hazard. Glens Falls Post Star, New York.

### **[Industry to phase out decaBDE.](#)**

*Saturday, December 19, 2009*

Following negotiations with the EPA, three companies have agreed to phase out production and sale of the brominated flame retardant decabromodiphenyl ether for most uses within three years. Chemical & Engineering News.

### **[Military: Burn pits could cause long-term damage to troops.](#)**

*Friday, December 18, 2009*

The military is backing off its previous position and acknowledging that some troops exposed to the burning of refuse on military bases could be susceptible to long-term

health effects. CNN.

### **[Life expectancy gap narrows as men get healthier.](#)**

*Friday, December 18, 2009*

The life expectancy gap between the sexes in Scotland is narrowing because men are more likely to adopt a healthier lifestyle. London Times, United Kingdom.

### **[CPSC delays lead testing enforcement.](#)**

*Friday, December 18, 2009*

The Consumer Product Safety Commission voted to delay for another year -- until February 2011 -- the certification and independent third-party testing rules on the amount of lead allowed in children's products. Those rules were set to kick-in last February but have been delayed twice. Associated Press.

*[See related articles: [CPSC making safety reforms during busy month for recalls](#); [Half of kids jewelry tested contains pure lead](#); [Health Canada](#); [Alert over levels of lead in children's cosmetics](#); [Make-up 'peril' for teen girls](#); [Many thrift stores wary of used toys, children's clothes](#); [Officials: Beware of dangerous toy imports](#); [Miami customs agents seize dangerous toys from China](#); [N.J. lead poisoning proposal could save \\$27M in social costs, study says](#) and [Oak Brook toymaker RC2 Corp. to pay \\$1.25 million fine over lead in paint](#)]*

### **[Shining a night-light on breast cancer hazard.](#)**

*Thursday, December 17, 2009*

Obesity and high-fat diets have long been known to be risk factors for breast cancer. But recent research is pointing to an altogether different hazard: the artificial light that shift workers are routinely exposed to at night. Georgia Straight, British Columbia.

### **[Childhood brain power tied to adult heart health.](#)**

*Thursday, December 17, 2009*

People who had greater intellectual ability as children may have fewer heart disease risk factors in middle-age, a new study suggests. Early environment -- starting in the womb -- may affect both a child's intellectual ability and long-term disease risks. Reuters Health.

*[See a related article: [Premature birth tied to later behavioral problems](#)]*

### **[That tap water is legal but may be unhealthy.](#)**

*Thursday, December 17, 2009*

The 35-year-old federal law regulating tap water is so out of date that the water Americans drink can pose what scientists say are serious health risks -- and still be legal. New York Times.

*[See a related article: [Nebraska, other states' water worries flow in watchdog analysis](#)]*

### **[Heavy metal: Some airborne particles pose more dangers than others](#)**

*Thursday, December 17, 2009*

A growing body of research -- much of it in New York City -- suggests that breathing nickel and other metals may put acute stress on the lungs and heart, resulting in illnesses and deaths at particulate levels below national standards. Environmental Health News.

*[See related articles: [Fine particulate air pollution and its components in association with cause-specific emergency admissions](#), [Traffic cops at higher cancer risk](#), [Long-term exposure to ambient air pollution and risk of hospitalization with community-acquired pneumonia in older adults](#), [Residential traffic exposure and pregnancy-related outcomes: a prospective birth cohort study](#), [Impaired cognition in elderly women linked to traffic pollution](#), [Air pollution may lessen asthma inhaler benefits](#), [Pollution report a breath of fresh air for county](#) and [Ozone pollution 'poses serious risk' to environmental health](#)]*

### **[FDA investigates radiation overdose at hospitals.](#)**

*Wednesday, December 16, 2009*

More than 300 patients may have received an overdose of radiation from a special type of CT scan used to image the brain. All Things Considered, NPR.

### **[Study: Airport noise increases risk of strokes.](#)**

*Wednesday, December 16, 2009*

Living under a flight path can seriously damage your health. German researchers have discovered that people who are exposed to jet noise have a substantially increased risk of stroke, high blood pressure and heart disease. Time Magazine.

**[26,500 school cafeterias lack required inspections.](#)**

*Wednesday, December 16, 2009*

More than 8,500 schools failed to have their kitchens inspected at all last year, and another 18,000 fell short of a requirement in the Child Nutrition Act that calls for cafeteria inspections at least twice a year. USA Today.

**[Potency issues prompt recall of swine-flu vaccine.](#)**

*Wednesday, December 16, 2009*

Sanofi Aventis SA is recalling about 800,000 doses of children's H1N1 vaccine after tests showed some batches didn't meet potency standards, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday. Wall Street Journal.

[See related articles: [The long-term evidence for vaccines](#) and [Advisers on vaccines often have conflicts, report says](#)]

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

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