



# Collaborative on Health and the Environment

## eNewsletter - January 2012



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*In recognition of CHE's 10th anniversary, colleagues who have been particularly instrumental to shaping CHE this past decade will be invited to write an introduction. This month's introduction is by Philip R. Lee, MD, CHE's founding chairman.*

### The First Ten Years - and the Future

One fast decade ago, in early 2002, an invited group of about forty leaders from diverse disciplines met at the San Francisco Medical Society to talk about what might be done to improve research, education, practice and more in the broad field of environmental health. Some were longtime friends and colleagues and some were meeting one another for the first time. Various plans were made, but the most important result of that gathering was the organization and network we all know as CHE--the Collaborative on Health and the Environment.

I was honored to co-chair that first meeting, and to serve as CHE's Chairman since then. CHE was a somewhat amorphous concept, a vehicle for fostering closer links between scientists, clinicians, patients, advocates, and others concerned with--and impacted by-- environmental factors including but not limited to chemicals in our environment and bodies. A small core group of committed people took on the varied tasks of building this concept into something

more tangible, hopefully with varied positive impacts.

A "consensus statement" of concern and purpose went through fifteen drafts and became our unifying credo; a larger public conference at the University of California drew hundreds from around the nation and served as our public "launch." We began regular conference calls on topics of important and timely interest. A landmark authoritative database of knowledge about toxics was developed and made available to all. Working groups on specific issues were developed to foster all manner of activities. Further conferences on crucial issues were presented, and smaller, targeted initiatives mounted to educate and influence science and policy.

I think it is a striking, and in my experience unusual, mark of our success that with very few exceptions, most of the people "present at the conception" are still active with CHE today. CHE's unofficial motto of "science and civility" seems to have served us well, as even though we work in a heated realm, serious conflict has been rare. CHE's "membership" of partners is over 4,000, a very diverse cohort in terms of background, training, discipline, location, and yes, perspective. The profile of those who have joined us in our work in various ways speaks to our credibility and, we hope, judgment.

In this coming year you will hear from a number of our core CHE group about how they see CHE at this point, but I wanted to begin with a message of my pride in being involved with CHE, my gratitude to all CHE partners for joining us, and my encouragement that we all continue on in this important work in CHE's second decade. My best to you all.

Philip R. Lee, MD

Former United States Assistant Secretary of Health, Chancellor of the University of California at San Francisco, Professor of Social Medicine (Emeritus), Department of Medicine and Senior Advisor, Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies, School of Medicine, UC San Francisco

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This essay is available on [CHE's blog](#) for comment and further discussion.

## CHE Partnership Calls

### **CHE Partnership call:**

### **Gut Microbiota and Environmental Chemicals in Diabetes and Obesity**

Thursday January 19, 2012 at 10 am Pacific / 1 pm Eastern

[RSVP for this call](#)

Exposure to environmental chemicals has been associated with the development of diabetes and obesity in numerous epidemiological and animal studies. Gut microbiota, the microorganisms that colonize the intestine, also appear to play a role in diabetes and obesity. Do these two environmental factors interact? Our speakers will discuss evidence that suggests that they may on this call on Thursday January 19, 2012 at 10 am Pacific / 1 pm Eastern.

Dr. Jacobs has published numerous articles on exposure to persistent organic pollutants in relation to health, including diabetes and obesity. In a recent study, he and colleagues investigated the link between methanogen microbes, persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and obesity. These microbes biodegrade petroleum hydrocarbons in polluted environments,

and the authors hypothesized that a higher body burden of petroleum based chemicals may promote methanogens in the gut. The results show that the levels of methanogens were associated with measurements of obesity, as well as blood POP levels.

In a recent review, Dr. Snedeker and Dr. Hay integrate the evidence linking gut microbiota and environmental chemical exposures to diabetes and obesity, providing a framework for how these factors may interact in these diseases, and identifying future research needs. Gut microbiota may affect the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion of environmental chemicals. Variations in gut microbiota are likely to affect an individual's exposure to obesogenic and diabetogenic chemicals.

Featured speakers include:

- [David Jacobs, PhD](#), Division of Epidemiology and Community Health, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota.
- [Suzanne Snedeker, PhD](#), Department of Food Science, Cornell University.
- [Anthony Hay, PhD](#), Department of Microbiology, Institute for Comparative and Environmental Toxicology, Cornell University.

The call will be moderated by Steve Heilig, MPH, CHE Director of Public Health & Education, and Director of Public Health & Education, San Francisco Medical Society. The call will last one hour and will be recorded for archival purposes.

## Special Events and Announcements

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### Resources from recent CHE calls:

If you missed any of the following CHE calls, you may listen to MP3 recordings and find supporting materials at the following links:

- December 16, 2011 - [Breast Cancer and the Environment: A Life Course Approach: A New Report from the IOM](#)
- November 17, 2011 - [Food Additives: Do They Subtract from Our Health?](#)
- October 27, 2011 - [New Frontiers in Cancer Research: How Chemicals Can Interfere with Cancer Therapies and Implications for Health Policy](#)

You can subscribe via podcast to receive notifications of new call recordings added to the CHE archives. [View past calls and subscribe to the podcast.](#)

## CHE Working and Regional Group Updates

### **Stay in touch with CHE through social media:**

Visit [CHE's blog](#) to read a recent post by Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, Science Director of CHE and the Science and Environmental Health Network on low levels of vitamin D and health concerns.

Visit CHE's [Facebook page](#).

Join CHE on LinkedIn. CHE has set up a LinkedIn profile and a group for CHE Partners to better connect with one another. Join us and start a conversation, find Partners for networking and collaborations and otherwise expand your CHE conversations.

### **Cumulative Impacts Working Group hosted by CHE and SEHN**

~ coordinated by Elise Miller and Carolyn Raffensperger, for more information visit the [Cumulative Impacts website](#)

### **~ January working group call: Analyzing and Addressing Cumulative Impacts Using an Ecological and Complexity Model**

Thursday January 12, 2012 at 11:00 am Pacific / 2:00 pm Eastern

Dial in: 1-270-400-2000, Access code: 198686#

Cumulative impacts describe the harm to human health and environment resulting from multiple stressors over time. These impacts occur at progressively-nested levels--from the sub-cellular to individual, family, community, ecosystem, and planetary. Cross-talk flows back and forth across these levels; feedback loops influence behavior of the system and sub-systems; the timing and places of interventions also influence system behavior. This complexity can be modeled to help describe, analyze, understand, and predict system or sub-system behavior.

Models are interpretive descriptions of phenomena that provide intellectual access to the various features that the model describes. All models are representations; they are necessarily incomplete, often incorporate values and biases, and should be held lightly. Nonetheless, they can serve important purposes.

Ecological, eco-social, or complexity models attempt to incorporate and facilitate access to various aspects of cumulative impacts assessments. We can concentrate on the whole or part of the model, depending on our purpose and other factors that influence where we set boundaries when addressing a particular problem or question. Of course, where the boundaries are set will influence the approach and outcome.

On this call, Ted Schettler, MD, MPH, CHE Science Director, and Science Director of the Science and Environmental Health Network, will propose a general, higher-level, qualitative ecological model, focusing on several fundamental dimensions, that may be helpful in analyzing and addressing cumulative impacts.

Several examples will illustrate opportunities and challenges.

The call will be moderated by Carolyn Raffensperger of the Science and Environmental Health Network (SEHN). The call will last one hour and will be recorded for archival purposes.

**~ Save the date: February working group call scheduled: Climate Change Vulnerability and Cumulative Impacts**

Thursday February 16, 2012 at 11:00 am Pacific / 2 pm Eastern

Dial-in information: 1-270-400-2000, Access code: 198686#

Paul English, PhD, MPH, and his team at the California Environmental Health Investigations Branch have developed an innovative method to screen for climate change population vulnerability. The screening method can be easily implemented in regions where climate vulnerability is a key concern. Climate vulnerability includes three factors: exposure, population sensitivity and adaptive capacity, and Dr. English will discuss findings from his study in two California communities that identified high-risk populations within these communities by assessing and quantifying climate change impacts based on population vulnerability and other cumulative stressors.

The call will be moderated by Elise Miller, MEd, CHE Director. The call will last one hour and will be recorded for archival purposes.

**CHE Diabetes-Obesity Spectrum**

~ coordinated by Sarah Howard, for more information contact [info@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:info@healthandenvironment.org)

~ **Upcoming events of interest to partners:** "Programmed to be Fat?" Premiering Jan. 12 on CBC TV's *The Nature of Things* with David Suzuki.

[More information](#)

JDRF's Type 1 Diabetes Research Summit, Sat. Feb. 18, Bethesda MD. CHE will be presenting on "Environmental Chemicals and Type 1: Is There a Link?"

[More information](#)

~ **Calls for abstracts:** Abstracts for the book, "Obesity Interventions with Underserved US Populations: Evidence and Directions," due Jan. 23.

[More information](#)

*Journal of Environment and Public Health* issue on "Environment and Public Health Aspects of Diabetes." Manuscripts due May 4.

[More information](#)

~ **New research published in academic and scientific journals:**

Twum C, Wei Y. 2011. The association between urinary concentrations of dichlorophenol pesticides and obesity in children. *Rev. Environ. Health* 26(3):215-219.

[Read more](#)

Coogan PF, White LF, Jerrett M, et al. 2012. Air Pollution and Incidence of Hypertension and Diabetes in African American Women Living in Los Angeles. *Circulation*.

[Read more](#)

Zung A, Blumenfeld O, Shehadeh N, et al. 2011. Increase in the incidence of type 1 diabetes in Israeli children following the Second Lebanon War. *Pediatr. Diabetes*.

[Read more](#)

Javierre BM, Hernando H, Ballestar E. 2011. Environmental triggers and epigenetic deregulation in autoimmune disease. *Discov. Med.* 12(67):535-545.

[Read more](#)

Chighizola C, Meroni PL. 2011. The role of environmental estrogens and autoimmunity. *Autoimmun.Rev.*

[Read more](#)

Toperoff G, Aran D, Kark JD, et al. 2012. Genome-wide survey reveals predisposing diabetes type 2-related DNA methylation variations in human peripheral blood. *Hum.Mol.Genet.* 21 (2):371-383.

[Read more](#)

Jordan J, Zare A, Jackson LJ, et al. 2011. Environmental contaminant mixtures at ambient concentrations invoke a metabolic stress response in goldfish not predicted from exposure to individual compounds alone. *J.Proteome.Res.*

[Read more](#)

## **CHE-EMF**

~ coordinated by Michael Lerner, for more information contact [info@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:info@healthandenvironment.org)

~ The New Year marks a transition in CHE-EMF. Cindy Sage and Nancy Evans, who have served as co-coordinators of CHE-EMF for five years, are stepping back from the coordination role. All of us at CHE owe Cindy and Nancy our deep gratitude for the exceptional work they have done facilitating CHE-EMF. They have both assured us that they will remain active in CHE-EMF and will help us to craft an annual CHE Partnership Teleconference related to EMFs. They will also help us explore potential joint CHE-EMF calls with other interested CHE Working Groups and will post relevant EMF science to other CHE Working Groups as appropriate.

Michael Lerner will return as Interim CHE-EMF coordinator until we identify another CHE-EMF coordinator with the right skills, science background, objectivity, and commitment to civility that are the hallmark of CHE Working Group coordinators. If you believe you fit the description and would like to be considered for the position, please send a note to me and Erika Sanders, CHE's administrative coordinator ([erika@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:erika@healthandenvironment.org)). Please note this is a volunteer position. Also note that because CHE-EMF is a moderated list, the position requires daily review of proposed postings, and screening out posts that do not meet our criteria of science and civility, including direct advocacy. We welcome your interest.

As most of CHE Working Groups focus on health endpoints, CHE-EMF plays a unique role in the field charting the emerging science on the impact EMFs may have on human health. We are grateful to all CHE Partners who are part of CHE-EMF.

## **CHE Fertility**

~ coordinated by Karin Russ, [karin@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:karin@healthandenvironment.org)

~ **Study: Widespread occurrence of bisphenol-A in paper and paper products:** Bisphenol A seems impossible to avoid. It contaminates food, thermal receipts and drinks served in certain plastic bottles. A new study finds its reach goes even further. Researchers detected trace amounts of BPA in a wide variety of paper products most of us touch every day. *Environmental Science and Technology.*

[Read more](#)



~ **Study: Plume vapors linked to birth defects:** A new study links congenital heart problems, low birth weight and other birth defects to soil vapors from industrial contaminants that have lurked beneath Endicott--and in subterranean pockets across upstate New York--for decades. *Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin*, New York.

[Read more](#)

~ **Diabetes during pregnancy may raise ADHD risk:** Young children are far more likely to experience attention and hyperactivity problems if their mother develops diabetes during pregnancy and they are born into a poor or lower-middle-class household, a new study suggests. Children with both risk factors had a 14-fold increased risk of ADHD compared to children with neither risk factor. *Health.com*. [Read more](#)

~ **Can indoor swimming alter hormones in boys?** Swimming is generally considered an excellent form of exercise, and indoor swimming is common, especially in winter. However, there is evidence that swimming in a chlorinated indoor pool can cause respiratory irritation or genotoxicity in some people. A recent study suggests another possible consequence: altered levels of hormones in boys. *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

[Read more](#)

~ **EPA power plant rule delayed:** A federal court is suspending an Obama administration regulation intended to reduce pollution from power plants in 27 states and help improve unhealthy air downwind. *Associated Press*.

[Read more](#)

~ **Symposium: Prematurity Prevention:** Sponsor: March of Dimes, January 19-20, 2012, Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C. The March of Dimes is holding a Prematurity Prevention Symposium, providing attendees with an opportunity to meet key opinion leaders, showcase successful prevention programs, and engage in problem solving. The event also will launch the Prematurity Prevention Network, a coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to promoting prematurity prevention.

[Read more](#)

~ **Call for Abstracts: APHA 2012:** Sponsor: American Public Health Association, October 27-31, 2012, San Francisco, CA. The APHA's 140th Annual Meeting and Exposition Call for Abstracts is now open! This year's theme will be Prevention and Wellness Across the Lifespan. The deadline for full panel sessions is January 20, 2012. The deadline for submission of abstracts range from February 6 thru February 10, 2012 depending on the Section, SPIG, Caucus or Forum to which you wish to submit.

[Read more](#)

~ **Conference: Environmental Endocrine Disruptors Gordon Research Conference:** Sponsor: Gordon Research Conferences, June 3-8, 2012, West Dover, VT. The program for the Gordon Research Conference has been announced. Topics include: Endocrine Disruptors, Society, and Public Policy; Women's Health and Environmental Endocrine Disruptors; Men's Health and Environmental Endocrine Disruptors; Gene-Environment Interactions, Epigenetics, and EEDs; Thyroid and Immune System Disruptors; Neuroendocrine Disruptors; Resolving Controversies in Endocrine Disruption; Evolution in a Contaminated Environment; Endocrine Disruptors and Ecosystems: In Honor of Rachel Carson. Applications are available on the conference website.

[Read more](#)

~ **FOA: Administrative Supplements for Collaborative Activities to Promote Metabolomics Research:** Sponsor: NIH Common Fund, Receipt Date: March 15, 2012. This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is developed as a [Common Fund](#) initiative through the NIH Office of the NIH Director, [Office of Strategic Coordination](#). This initiative will support new collaborations that exploit metabolomics approaches to move basic and clinical research towards translational goals and will increase the number of investigators cross-trained in metabolomics methodology, bioinformatics analysis, biochemistry and physiology.

[Read more](#)

~ **RFA: Novel Technologies for Rapid and Sensitive Biomonitoring in Humans (SBIR [R43/R44]):** Sponsor: National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences, Letter of intent date: January 23, 2012. Through the National Biomonitoring Program (NBP) and The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), the CDC has established gold standard methods to measure over 450 chemicals and nutritional markers in blood, serum, urine, breast milk and meconium. There is an urgent need for technology development for biomonitoring capabilities to complement and expand the CDC's efforts.

[Read more](#)

~ **FOA: Maternal Nutrition and Pre-pregnancy Obesity: Effects on Mothers, Infants and Children (R01):** Sponsor: National Institute of Nursing Research, Open date: January 5, 2012. This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) issued by the National Institute of Nursing Research encourages R01 applications to improve health outcomes for women, infants and children, by stimulating interdisciplinary research focused on maternal nutrition and pre-pregnancy obesity. Maternal health significantly impacts not only the mother but also the intrauterine environment, and subsequently fetal development and the health of the newborn.

[Read more](#)

## **CHE Healthy Aging and the Environment Initiative**

~ coordinated by Maria Valenti, [mvalenti@igc.org](mailto:mvalenti@igc.org)

~ **New blog on healthy aging and the environment:** AARP has just launched a blog on Healthy Aging and the Environment, which can be found on the [AARP website](#). This inaugural piece links to a number of resources that can help educate AARP's 35 million members on environmental influences on health including the report *Environmental Threats to Healthy Aging* ([see CHE's Healthy Aging Initiative webpage](#)).

You can help ensure this becomes a regular weekly AARP blog. Visit the site, post a comment to the blog, "like" it on Facebook, Twitter it, etc. to show widespread support for this pivotal new initiative by AARP. If this is successful and AARP continues to reach out to their members with critical information on environmental influences on healthy aging, then many more highly influential people will have the science they need to promote healthy environments across generations.

~ **Healthy Environments Across Generations conference, June 7, 8th 2012:** We have renamed our upcoming conference previously titled "Promoting Intergenerational and Environmental Health Across the Lifespan" and now have over 35 co-sponsors, including these latest: American Society of Landscape Architects Health and Therapeutic Gardens Practice Group; Health Care Without Harm; HealthBarn USA; Children's Environmental Health Network; Children & Nature Network. Registration opens soon.

[Visit the conference website](#)



## **CHE Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative**

~ coordinated by Elise Miller, for more information contact [info@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:info@healthandenvironment.org)

~ **CHE-LDDI, the Autism Society of America and the UCLA School of Public Health host final workshop in series addressing environmental health and neurodevelopment on January 12th:** During this workshop, national experts--including Linda Birnbaum, PhD, DABT, ATS, Director, National Institute on Environmental Health--from diverse sectors will highlight the latest research on associations between environmental exposures and early neurodevelopment as well as the implications for prevention-based public health policy. This meeting is intended to catalyze cross-discipline discussions among leaders in environmental, experimental and epidemiologic fields as well as those involved in public policy and environmental health advocacy. Workshops are open to the public. Faculty, students, policy makers, and others concerned with environmental influences on neurodevelopment and public health are particularly encouraged to attend.

[Visit the workshop website](#) for complete details and registration information

## **CHE Regional Working Groups Updates**

### **CHE Alaska**

~ coordinated by Pam Miller, [pkmiller@akaction.net](mailto:pkmiller@akaction.net)

~ **Archived teleconferences:** CHE Alaska hosts regular statewide teleconference seminars and other public events featuring Alaskans and nationally-renowned scientists, health care professionals, and policy experts who are working on a range of environmental health concerns. To see the archive and listen to the MP3 recordings of calls held in 2011 visit the [CHE Alaska webpage](#).

### **CHE Washington**

~ coordinated by Steve Gilbert, [sgilbert@innnd.org](mailto:sgilbert@innnd.org) and Aimee Boulanger, [aboulanger@whidbey.com](mailto:aboulanger@whidbey.com)

~ **The CHE-WA Children's Environmental Health Working Group** meets monthly (with the exception of July and August) on the 2nd Thursday of the month from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM at various locations. Open to all. Fragrance-free. Often there is a speaker; this will not be the case for January. Here are the details for the January meeting, January 12th:

Location: King County Hazardous Waste Management Program, 130 Nickerson Street (Room 105) Seattle WA 98109

Calling in by phone? Call in number: 206-684-1467

For last minute help on the day of the event, call the front office at 206-263-3050.

RSVP to [julia.singer@kingcounty.gov](mailto:julia.singer@kingcounty.gov) by Tuesday, January 10, or call 206-263-3042.

Topic: We are planning our activities for 2012. Come with your ideas

~ **Particles on the Wall:** An exhibit of visual and literary works, science and memorabilia exploring elements of the nuclear age, Hanford history, their thread through our lives and their bearing on the Columbia River and natural world will be on display at the Odegaard Library at the University of Washington, Seattle Campus from January 9 - March 29. There

will be an opening reception on January 26, 2012 from 6:30 - 9:00 PM.

[Visit the event's website](#)

## Announcements and News Highlights

### **Built environment series to premier on PBS**

*Designing Healthy Communities* is a multimedia project that highlights people and communities trying to balance health and nature with work, play, and life, and offers best practice solutions for all citizens. Stories and methodologies explored in *Designing Healthy Communities* point the way toward a healthy and sustainable future.

The host of our series is Dr. Richard Jackson, pediatrician, former CDC head of environmental science, top public health official in California, and current UCLA Department Chair and Professor of Environmental Health Sciences in the School of Public Health.

[Read more about the series](#)

[Watch a YouTube preview of the series](#)

[Read an interview with Dr. Jackson for CHE's Partner Spotlight feature](#)

### **Healthy Food Action Webinar: Driven to Distraction: Food, Chemicals and Child Behavior**

Wednesday, February 8, 2012

12:00 noon eastern / 11:00 a.m. central

Compelling science now suggests synthetic food dyes and caramel colorings often added to candy--as well as junk food and other kids' foods--can affect their learning and behavior, and may increase cancer risk. This science forced the adoption of safer alternatives to food dyes in the UK; the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been petitioned to do the same. An FDA science advisory committee reviewed the new science in April 2011. Developmental brain toxins are also found as additives to other children's products, like toys and lunch boxes. Child advocates are pushing for policy reforms addressing these risks as well. Join speakers Karen Bowman, MN, RN, COHN-S, Michael Jacobson, PhD, Lawrence Rosen, MD, and David Wallinga, MD, for a discussion of the latest science and the policy reforms now being debated.

Register at: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/739194874>

### **Environmental Health News: email, Facebook, Twitter and a website archive**

EHN and its sister site, The Daily Climate, offer a wealth of valuable information each day at no cost to subscribers. The daily email subscriptions and the 350,000-item news archive have recently been supplemented by a Facebook page and Twitter feed.

[Visit the website](#)

[Visit the EHN archives page](#)

Friend EHN on Facebook by searching for Environmental Health News

### **Submission deadline extended**

The deadline for submission of articles to the Special Issue on Cumulative Health Risk Assessment for the *International Journal of Environment Research and Public Health* has been extended to January 15th, 2012. The previous deadline was Oct 31, 2011.

[Read more](#)

### **January 2012 issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives* available online**

[Read more](#)

## January 2012 issue of *Environmental Factor* available online

[Read more](#)

CHE maintains a [news feed](#) of environmental health related news announcements and events collected from a multitude of sources on CHE's website.

## Reports, Resources and Other Updates

### **Resource: A list of cans with, and cans without, BPA**

Are you willing to pay 2.2 cents more per can to get the BPA out of canned food? Steel cans coated with a 'baked-on oleoresinous c-enamel' do not contain BPA. Oleoresin is a non-toxic mixture of oil and resin extracted from plants, such as pine or balsam fir. The cost is currently 2.2 cents more (14%) than cans with industry-standard BPA epoxy liners. Inspiration Green.

[Read more](#)

CHE lists hundred of reports, books, videos, databases and other resources in a searchable [Portal to Science](#) on CHE's website.

Thank you for taking the time to read the latest about CHE. As always, we welcome your questions and suggestions. Please direct comments to Elise Miller, Director of CHE, at [elise@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:elise@healthandenvironment.org).

Best wishes,

Elise Miller, MEd, Director

Steve Heilig, Director of Public Health and Education at San Francisco Medical Society and CHE

Erika Sanders, Administrative Coordinator

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