

Preventing Harm to Growing Brains Conference - January 21, 2006
Humphrey Institute, University of Minnesota

Follow-up meeting February 23, 2006 - Meeting Notes

1. Attendance: see below and attached list of attendees. Kathleen Schuler (IATP) facilitated.

2. Introductions and responses to: *“After the conference, was there one thing that you wanted to do or were willing to do to address this problem as a result of what you learned?”*

- Tracy Reid and son Max-(Arc Greater Twin Cities) include environmental advocacy in my job description, use safer cleaners
- Joyce LeMay-had environmental allergies, now has safe product business
- Diana McKeown(Clean Water Action) build a movement for chemicals policy reform
- Jan Weinhold- safe products business, build awareness about chem. sensitivities,
- Elizabeth Tilak (St. Ben's) dietician, lactation consult., raise awareness about environment and nutrition connections
- Dale Handeen (Unitarian church) safer nurseries
- Shaun Murphy (Roseville schools) safer/sustainable purchasing
- Susan Breedlove (EJAM, teacher) work on legislative issues
- Michelle Albrecht de Grados (parent) work with Fraser on safer environment for kids, develop resource book for parents and agencies
- Carlos de Grados (teacher Henry HS, parent) educate newlyweds, safer work environment and safer home renovation
- Susan Nordbye (WCRC, dietician, parent) raise awareness among health affected people, Organic Lawn Care Initiative in Minneapolis parks
- Julia Earl (Preventing Harm MN) education and policy change
- Samuel Yamin (MN Center for Environmental Advocacy), prevention, chemicals policy reform
- Beth Waterhouse (Chance to Grow) focus on brain, health and healing connections
- Susan Freivalds (LDA-MN)
- Kitty Christiansen (LDA-MN) form a MN LDDI coalition
- Jerri Johnson (Natural Health Coalition) mercury free vaccines
- Gene Woods (Melaleuca, former chemical engineer) safer cleaners, toxin-free living
- Nicki Silness (Melaleuca) safer cleaning, personal care products
- Janelle Sorensen (Women's Environmental Institute) healthy schools initiative, chemicals policy reform
- David Wallinga (IATP) political engagement to make communities safer, cleaner
- Carol Greenwood (Seward Neighborhood) neighborhood initiatives, especially focused on seniors, nursery schools, new immigrants and safer product purchasing
- Jolene Pearson (Mpls Schools Early Intervention) develop curricula for parent educators on environmental health
- Collie Graddick (Mn Dept Ag) pesticides
- Jean Mendenhall (Mpls Schools Early Intervention) parent education
- Virginia Maldonado (Mankato State) parent education, env. education for teachers, information for new Americans
- Doug Ganss (Mankato State) work with affected people, cooperative work
- Cathi Lyman-Onkka (St. Paul Ramsey Co Public Health) get information to the community
- Darcy Rowe (spec. ed. teacher) detoxify environment, prevention, include exposure information in 4 year screen
- Penin Chang (UN MN, Pediatric Psychology) protecting children from birth to 3 years

- [Emily Dalbec](#) (parent) avoid exposures
- [Nancy Farnham](#) (Chance to Grow) MN Learners resource center
- [Monica Buckhorn](#) (Health and Environment Funders Network) work with Minnesota and funders to secure funding for a broad chemicals policy reform campaign, based on a broad coalition working to protect public health from toxic chemicals in the environment
- [Kathleen Schuler](#) (IATP) chemicals policy reform

2. Action Planning: Kathleen reviewed the attached summary of current initiatives and ideas generated at the conference. We focused on the following:

- **National:** Folks are encouraged to join CHE and the LDDI workgroup. This will enable you to participate in CHE science calls and LDDI conference calls. The calls are free. (To join, go to www.healthandenvironment.org/ and click on "Join CHE", then "application" on which you can designate the LDDI work group as your interest area. You can join as an organization and/or as an individual and membership is free.)
- **Healthy Schools:** There was quite a bit of interest among participants in working on healthy schools initiatives. Janelle Sorensen is working with Women's Environmental Institute (WEI) to develop an initiative. Lead: Janelle Sorensen
- **Curriculum development on environmental health:** for teachers, early childhood educators, child care professionals, New Americans, students, parents, health practitioners, newly weds and other consumers. Lead: Janelle Sorensen
- **Local initiatives:** Especially city ordinances like the Minneapolis organic lawn care initiative (WCRC), children's health, safer cleaning products, (PHM) precautionary policies, etc. Possible leads: Susan Nordbye & Julia Earl
- **Mercury:** Coal plant campaign (Mercury Free Minnesota), mercury products legislation (IATP) and City ordinance for Minneapolis (EJAM)
- **Pesticides:** Bills proposing transfer of authority to MDH and public notification (MCEA), study on exposures and notification to migrant farm workers of pesticide use (Ellison), organic lawn care initiative in Mpls. (WCRC)

3. Next steps:

- Set up email list of those interested in this issues
- Add those who wish to be on the MnKids listserve
- Individual work groups meet over the next month
- Whole group meets again in April: Proposed date: April 27, 4:00-6:00 pm at LDA-MN

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From Science and Education to Advocacy: Policy Initiatives for Schools, Clinics and Communities

1. National

- Join CHE LDDI Coalition (Go to www.healthandenvironment.org to join CHE and designate LDDI working group)
- Their issues: mercury, Lindane, PBDEs, developmental neurotoxicity testing - and sign-on's
- LDA-MN- Kitty Christensen

2. Healthy Schools

- Get involved in your children's school through PTA or other
- WEI idea- Janelle Sorensen
- Healthy School Report Card on the State web site to recognize schools that use non-toxic cleaning products, etc. Parents could use the report as a tool when buying a house.

3. Public Health / Health Practitioners

- Promote funding for the National Children's Study
- Public health tracking, including environmental health-related conditions – not just cancer
- Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units
- Push for educational and environmental clinics

4. Local Initiatives

- Organic Land Care Initiative, Minneapolis Parks
- Precautionary policies in St. Paul and Minneapolis
- Awards programs for green building and sustainable practices
- Reward businesses that implement changes positively impacting environmental health. E.g. Highland Grill and Edina Grill both use "Restore" non-toxic cleansers. Challenge McDonald's to do the same.
- Use of solar energy e.g. St. Mathew's Center has solar panels, and the SE Como Neighborhood Association is planning to use NRP funds for a flat-plate solar collector
- "Green City" ordinance
- Local ordinances on mercury e.g. EJAM working with City of Minneapolis

5. State legislative Initiatives

- Lower blood lead threshold of action from 15 ug/dL to 5 ug/dL
- Phase-out the remaining mercury-containing products, including thermostats, blood pressure devices etc.
- Phase-out PBDE flame retardants, including penta, octa, and deca-BDE by 2010
- Mercury Free Minnesota's bill to reduce coal plants emissions of mercury by 90% by 2009-2011
- Phase out mercury in vaccines

- Long term reform of chemicals policy in line with Louisville Charter, in line with these suggestions:
 - Get industry out of the regulatory process
 - Companies have to pay for the pollution they create
- Other ideas:
 - Regulate application of sludge
 - Ban mercury amalgams
 - Require mercury fillings be removed before cremation
 - Lead in imported candies and other products
 - legislative auditor report on brain toxins in breast milk
 - require warnings be posted by lakes, to include pictures for those who don't read English.
 - statewide ban of pesticides
- Pesticides
 - Regulate agricultural pesticides (Clark, Ellison)
 - MDH authority over the most toxic pesticides- MN Center for Environmental Advocacy- Samuel Yamin
- Environmental justice (Clark, Ellison) use GIS tracking to highlight the issue of healthcare disparities, show connection between environmental exposures and race and/or income

6. Consumer actions

- Buy windsource energy from your electric utility
- Reduce home use of pesticides, use IPM
- Use non- toxic products at home
- Reduce waste, recycle
- Avoid mercury products, dispose of old mercury products as hazardous waste
- Avoid foods higher in contaminants, especially high fat animal products
- Educate new immigrants about preventing exposures, such as Julia Earl is doing
- Promote breastfeeding
- Installation of solar equipment on homes for electric and heating
- Taxpayers have to pay for the pollution they create
- Ask for mercury-free vaccines