

## ***National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures*** **Work Group Membership Selection Process Report**

As part of the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures*, six work groups will be instrumental in recommending actions to protect the public from harmful chemical exposures. These recommendations will be developed in coordination with the other work groups and informed by other forums convened as part of the *National Conversation* (e.g., web-based discussions). Work group recommendations, input from other forums, and the final action agenda will be reviewed by the Leadership Council of the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures*.

### **Work Groups**

- ***Monitoring:*** *collecting information on chemical use, exposure pathways, exposure levels, and health outcomes*
- ***Scientific Understanding:*** *filling knowledge gaps on the health effects of chemicals*
- ***Policies and Practices:*** *reducing harmful chemical exposures and adverse health outcomes, eliminating inequities, and spurring the development and use of safer alternatives*
- ***Chemical Emergencies:*** *preventing, preparing for, and responding to acute chemical incidents*
- ***Serving Communities:*** *addressing local chemical exposure concerns to promote environmental justice and improve health*
- ***Education and Communication:*** *ensuring a well-informed public and a competent network of health care providers*

The process for selecting members of *National Conversation* work groups is described below. For ongoing information on the *National Conversation* project, work groups, and the Leadership Council, please visit [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/nationalconversation](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/nationalconversation).

### **Work Group Nomination and Selection Process**

Nominations for *National Conversation* work groups were accepted via a publicly accessible website from June 26, 2009 to July 22, 2009. Nominations that were received after July 22, 2009 were placed on a waiting list.

Work groups include 25 – 30 members. All work groups also include one or more members of the Leadership Council to ensure that the work group's rationale for recommendations is fully articulated during Leadership Council discussions. To ensure that work groups are able to address and reflect different perspectives along the continuum of environmental public health, an overarching criterion for membership selection is that each work group includes at least one individual from each of the following categories<sup>1</sup>:

- Community and/or environmental justice organizations
- Federal government agencies
- Tribal health and/or environment
- State government agencies
- Local governmental agencies
- Healthcare
- Industry and small business

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<sup>1</sup> In some instances, a selected nominee was judged to adequately represent more than one of these categories.

- Public health and/or environmental NGOs
- Researchers, educators, and/or students

The Work Group Coordinating Committee (WGCC)<sup>2</sup> developed a three-stage process for selecting work group members. In stage one of this process, each work group leadership team met to discuss how to tailor this general criterion to each specific subject area. See “Work Group-Specific Considerations” below.

The work group leadership team reviewed the nominations from all those who listed the work group as a first or second choice, as well as nominees from the full pool, and selected an initial list of recommended work group members.

In stage two of the process, after all six work group leadership teams made initial selections, the WGCC reviewed the proposed composition of all work groups, identified and then reconciled overlaps (individuals selected by more than one work group), and discussed remaining gaps.

In stage three, all nominees were notified individually about whether they were selected for a work group or, if not, about other opportunities to participate in the *National Conversation*. If a selected nominee did not accept the invitation, another individual from a similar organization, perspective or skill set was invited.

In several instances, work group leadership teams noted that an important perspective or skill set was lacking from both the full nominee pool and waiting list. In looking to fill gaps, leadership teams had the flexibility to identify individuals from outside the nominee list, but gave strong deference to nominees over other individuals. Where a gap was identified but has not yet been filled, a seat on that work group is being held. In limited circumstances, work groups may choose to propose new members to the WGCC during the course of the *National Conversation*, as their understanding of the issues evolves, new expertise or perspectives are needed, and/or vacancies arise.

### **Work Group-Specific Considerations**

#### *Monitoring*

The additional skill sets and individual qualities the team chose to consider in selecting members for the Monitoring Work Group were subject matter expertise (e.g., chemical use, environmental fate and transport, biomonitoring, health surveillance, and statistics), expertise in various exposure settings and types (e.g., indoor and outdoor environments, industrial chemicals, consumer products, and pesticides); familiarity with monitoring and surveillance systems; representation of those affected by exposure outcomes (e.g., community-based groups) and those working to improve monitoring and surveillance systems (e.g., federal agencies); and sensitivity to privacy, ethical, and cultural issues of data collection. Furthermore, to achieve overall balance, the team sought to compose a diverse Work Group in terms of sector, discipline, perspective, and geographic region.

#### *Scientific Understanding*

The additional skill sets and individual qualities the team chose to consider in selecting members for the Scientific Understanding Work Group were technical expertise; experience in various routes of chemical exposure; ability to engage in technical and scientific discussions with a group of individuals with diverse perspectives and expertise; and reputation in the individual’s field and ability to reach out to others in the

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<sup>2</sup> The WGCC is comprised of the National Conversation Leadership Council co-chairs and staff and the work group leadership teams (chair, NCEH/ATDSR liaison, staff and facilitator) for the six work groups.

sector. Furthermore, to achieve overall balance, the team sought to compose a diverse Work Group in terms of discipline, perspective, gender, and geographic region.

#### *Policies and Practices*

The additional skill sets and individual qualities the team chose to consider in selecting members for the Policies and Practices Work Group were technical and policy expertise; experience or interest in formulating or implementing policy; ability to engage with people who have diverse perspectives and expertise; and, reputation in the individual's field and ability to reach out to others in the sector. Furthermore, to achieve overall balance, the team sought to compose a diverse Work Group in terms of discipline, perspective, gender, and geographic region.

#### *Chemical Emergencies*

The additional skill sets and individual qualities the team chose to consider in selecting members for the Chemical Emergencies Work Group were relevant area of expertise, depth of experience and reputation in the individual's field, an interest in serving on this Work Group, and suitability for this Work Group as opposed to other work groups. In particular, the Work Group considered those who have been a voice for community and environmental justice concerns. Furthermore, to achieve overall balance, the team sought to compose a diverse Work Group in terms of work experience, perspective, gender, and geographic region.

#### *Serving Communities*

The additional skill sets and individual qualities the team chose to consider in selecting members for the Serving Communities Work Group included, but were not limited to, depth and range of experience, unique disciplines or perspectives, well-respected individuals or organizations, and familiarity with community engagement processes and/or service delivery. Furthermore, to achieve overall balance, the team sought to compose a diverse Work Group in terms of discipline, perspective, geographic region, gender, race/ethnicity, age, and representation of low-income communities and communities of color.

#### *Education and Communication*

The additional skill sets and individual qualities the team chose to consider in selecting members for the Education and Communication Work Group were technical and clinical expertise; experience in outreach and community participation processes; ability to translate technical and scientific information for wider audiences; reputation in the individual's field and ability to reach out to others in the sector; and experience or interest in public and health professional education. Furthermore, to achieve overall balance, the team sought to compose a diverse Work Group in terms of discipline, perspective, gender, and geographic region.