

**NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CHEMICAL EXPOSURES
MONITORING WORK GROUP**

**Meeting No. 5 Summary
Teleconference
March 24, 2010**

Meeting Objectives:

- Provide update on *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures (National Conversation)*
- Hear update from the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures Monitoring Work Group (Monitoring Work Group)* subgroups, provide input, and discuss milestones for the future
- Review progress on data set inventory
- Agree on next steps

Upcoming Meeting	When and Where	Suggested Agenda Items
Full Monitoring Work Group Meeting	9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., EDT May 6, 2010 9:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m., EDT May 7, 2010 Westat Headquarters 1600 Research Blvd., Rockville, Maryland 20850-3129	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working sessions for subgroups ○ Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) report ○ National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) report ○ Web dialogue summary ○ Review subgroup work products ○ Identify information gaps in report ○ Discuss recommendations for inclusion in report

I. Action Items

Monitoring Work Group Update and Subgroup Discussion	Who	Completed by
1. RSVP for May 6–7, 2010, meeting by sending note to Jenny Van Skiver, National Center for Environmental Health/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (NCEH/ATSDR) staff member, at jvanskiver@cdc.gov	All members	ASAP
2. Submit suggested content for subgroup reports to subgroup chairs	All members	April 9, 2010
3. Submit suggested cross-cutting content to John Balbus, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; Monitoring Work Group chair	All members	April 9, 2010
4. Complete subgroup reports and post to project management site	Each subgroup	April 9, 2010

Monitoring Work Group Update and Subgroup Discussion	Who	Completed by
5. Report back to group on <i>National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures Community Conversation Toolkit (Community Conversation Toolkit)</i> pilot	Karen Pierce, Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates	May 6–7, 2010 in-person meeting

II. Agreements Reached

N/A

III. Call Summary

Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review

Kathy Grant, RESOLVE, opened the call and provided introductions. John Balbus, work group chair, welcomed members to the call and thanked them for their participation. He noted that the group would have to work hard during the next 6 to 8 weeks to meet its goal of sharing a draft report by late July.

National Conversation Update

Web Dialogue

Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR, provided an update on the upcoming April 5–7, 2010, *National Conversation* Web dialogue. The Web dialogue is an online conversation about the *National Conversation's* vision, structure, and key issues. The dialogue's agenda has predetermined topics and discussions for each of the 3 days. Once participants register, they may participate in the Web dialogue as much or as little as they would like over the 3 days. All registered participants will be able to post, see, and respond to messages on the site, similar to a blog. Gail Bingham, RESOLVE, will actively facilitate the Web dialogue during business hours.

The agenda was developed in consultation with work group members who volunteered to serve on the *National Conversations' Public Involvement Subcommittee*. Issues of direct relevance to the Monitoring work group will be discussed on Tuesday, April 6 in the "Improving Research and Information Collection and Management" agenda topic. This topic will cover discussions of data access and usability and biomonitoring, among other items.

Ms. Van Skiver encouraged all members to register for the dialogue and participate. She also asked members to share the announcement e-mail with others who might be interested. The Web dialogue is accessible from www.webdialogues.net/nationalconversation/vision. Subject matter experts will serve as panelists for each major topic the day that topic is on the agenda. Panelists will respond to participants' comments and questions. Monitoring work group members serving as panelists in the Web dialogue include Dan Goldstein, Henry Anderson, and John Osterloh.

A summary of the first Web dialogue will be shared at the Monitoring work group's May meeting. The *National Conversation Leadership Council* will have the primary responsibility for incorporating the Web dialogue results into its deliberations, but organizers hope that the online discussions will be useful to the *National Conversation* work groups as well.

ASTHO Report

On March 16, 2010, ASTHO met with representatives of state health and environmental departments who had applied for *National Conversation* work group membership but were not

selected. (More than 440 people applied for 180 work group member slots.) This group discussed the *National Conversation* process and issues relevant to each of the six work groups, focusing specifically on state needs to better protect the public's health from harmful chemical exposures. ASTHO will develop a report on the day's discussion to be made available to members at the May work group meeting.

NACCHO Forums

NACCHO has held two forums on the *National Conversation*. The first was held March 8 in Oakland, California, and the second was held April 8 in Columbus, Ohio. At both meetings, NACCHO discussed public health and chemical exposure issues with local health and environmental officials. Summaries of both forums will be made available to the work group.

Community Conversations

Several groups around the United States are piloting the *Community Conversation Toolkit*. The toolkit provides guidelines for hosting a community conversation on public health and chemical exposures, background information on the issues and the project, and a reporting form to feed discussion highlights back to the project. Community conversations will take place April through June 2010, and a summary report on all community conversations will be developed and provided to *National Conversation* work groups late this summer. More information is available on the [Community Conversations Web page](#).

Work Group Update and Subgroup Discussion

Progress on Data Set Inventory

Since our last call, Mike McGeehin, NCEH/ATSDR senior liaison, has shared additional databases from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Roy Fortmann, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has provided additional information from EPA.

Subgroup Updates

During the discussion of the subgroup reports, Dr. Balbus advised the subgroups not to limit the number of recommendations they generate at this point. The Monitoring work group can narrow the recommendations when it works on the full report. He also suggested that the aspirational goals in Section III be very high-level goals with specific examples of how to carry them out.

Exposure Levels/Biomonitoring Subgroup

Subgroup chair Megan Latshaw reported that the subgroup has put its outline into the work group report template. The biomonitoring subgroup's draft has been posted [here](#). The subgroup took questions and comments from the full work group.

A member suggested that biomonitoring efforts should be extended to include additional age groups. Dr. Latshaw noted that the report does identify children younger than 6 years old, infants, and fetuses as focus populations.

Dr. Balbus suggested adding language in the "Weaknesses" segment of Section II (Current Status of Issues) that captures the community perspective regarding biomonitoring.

Health Outcomes Subgroup

Jennifer Parker, *subgroup* chair, reported that the subgroup has [three major recommendations](#). Following this call, subgroup members will develop content for Sections II and III of the report. The subgroup took questions and comments from the full work group.

A member asked for clarification on Recommendation 2. Dr. Parker said the subgroup is recommending better research to support connections between exposures and health outcomes. She offered the example of autoimmune diseases, stating that we do not currently collect data on these diseases and, therefore, would not be able to link them to chemical exposures. Dr. Balbus said that the wording of Recommendation 2 (i.e., “definitive”) is problematic and should be changed. A member stated that the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey already collects some of the data suggested by Recommendation 2, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and thyroid condition data. Another member mentioned the critical need for background-level data from the general U.S. population.

A member suggested recommending improving the channels for members of the public to talk with CDC if they suspect a link between exposures and health outcomes. He noted that people do not know whom to go to if they suspect such an association, and the CDC Web site has no information on the steps to take. Another member said that CDC is currently in regular contact with state labs and epidemiologists.

Dr. Balbus emphasized the need for the public to get a response from government, and Ms. Grant noted that the Serving Communities work group is addressing this issue.

A member suggested that the group explicitly mention those most seriously affected, such as children or others with greater exposures because of location or occupation. This member suggested that high-risk populations should be identified both before and after data collection. A member suggested that California’s “communities of concern” definition might be appropriate. Dr. Balbus encouraged all members to send content suggestions to subgroup chairs.

When populations are being considered for prioritizing for exposure studies, a member said that states and localities need to identify their priorities themselves.

Chemical Use and Release Subgroup

The full work group discussed the [draft subgroup report](#) posted to the project management site by member Daniel Goldstein. A member suggested adding to this report a proposed recommendation regarding the use of large-population biomonitoring efforts for case study investigations of people with high-level exposures.

Next Steps

Dr. Balbus encouraged all members to propose any text for inclusion in subgroup reports to subgroup chairs. Each subgroup should complete its draft report and post it to the project Web site by Friday, April 9.

Ms. Grant confirmed that the next Monitoring work group meeting will take place May 6–7, 2010, at Westat’s headquarters in Rockville, Maryland.

IV. Participation

Members Present

Henry Anderson, Wisconsin Division of Public Health

Herb Buxton, U.S. Geological Survey

Alison Edwards, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

Jay Feldman, Beyond Pesticides

Roy Fortmann, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Megan Latshaw, Association of Public Health Laboratories
Sam LeFevre, Utah Department of Health
David Marker, Westat
John Osterloh, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health
Jennifer Parker, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics
Sharyle Patton, Commonweal
Karen Pierce, Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates
Ruthann Rudel, Silent Spring Institute
Martha Stanbury, Michigan Department of Community Health
Trey Thomas, Consumer Product Safety Commission
Richard Van Frank, Improving Kids' Environment
Rosemary Zaleski, ExxonMobil Biomedical Sciences, Inc.

Regrets

Jose Emilio Esteban, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service
Daniel Goldstein, Monsanto
Nancy John, Cherokee Nation
Charlotte L. Keys, Jesus People Against Pollution
Dean Lillquist, U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Paul Lioy, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School/University of Medicine and Dentistry New Jersey
Richard Matheny, Farmington Valley Health District
Michael McGeehin, NCEH/ATSDR senior liaison
Steve Whittaker, Public Health—Seattle & King County
Michael Wilson, University of California, Berkeley
Alan Woolf, Children's Hospital, Boston

Facilitation and Staff Team Members Present

John Balbus, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; Monitoring Work Group chair
Kathy Grant, RESOLVE facilitator
Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR staff