

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

**Meeting No. 8 Summaries  
Teleconferences  
July 9, 2010 and July 13, 2010**

**Call Objective:**

- Review recommendations in preparation for finalizing report by August 31, 2010

<b>Upcoming Meeting</b>	<b>When and Where</b>	<b>Suggested Agenda Items</b>
Full <i>National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures</i> Monitoring Work Group Meeting	Teleconference, August 11, 2010 1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m., Eastern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review draft, including recommendations</li> <li>○ Determine steps to finalize report</li> </ul>

**I. Action Items**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
1. Revise recommendations based on points discussed on this call	Recommendation leads: No. 1 John Balbus No. 2 Roy Fortmann No. 3 Megan Latshaw No. 4 Jennifer Parker No. 5 Martha Stanbury No. 6 Megan Latshaw No. 7 Jay Feldman No. 8 Steve Whittaker No. 9 David Marker	Next call
2. Offer recommendations (No. 6b and expansion of NHANES to return to high level participants for further study) to <i>National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures</i> Scientific Understanding work group	Balbus	Next call
3. Learn more about mechanisms for reporting results back to study participants	Whittaker and Parker	Next call

## II. Call Summary

### Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review

John Balbus, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, thanked Monitoring work group members for their contributions to the project since the last call and said that the goal of this call was to review each recommendation and determine what the steps to make each one actionable and clear.

Kathy Grant, RESOLVE facilitator, announced that Monitoring work group member Henry “Andy” Anderson has been named co-chair of the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* Leadership Council.

### Discussion of Recommendations

Grant reminded the group that each recommendation needs to contain a bold, overarching recommendation; followed by one to two paragraphs on the expected outcomes; implementation including a potential actor, timeframe; and mechanism for tracking success.

#### Recommendation 1: Improve reporting of source, use and discharge information

Balbus described this recommendation as the Monitoring work group’s main recommendation regarding source, use, and discharge information. He noted that the recommendation focuses specifically on the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and its Inventory Update Rule (IUR), as this is where most information on toxic substances comes from, and on the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), which he described as the biggest single source of discharge information. The recommendation is to strengthen the IUR and address the shortcomings of TRI; the potential actor is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Balbus said he reviewed relevant public interest group recommendations and examples of governments deciding such recommendations are reasonable. The European Union’s (EU) Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) is one such example, but it is playing out in real-time, so its usefulness as a model is limited.

A member noted that since the IUR reports on only a one-year period (reporting is every five years, on the previous year’s volumes), the work group might want to recommend more frequent reporting so that it is a continuous function.

Balbus said that this issue is related to Confidential Business Information (CBI) concerns, which the work group addresses in Recommendation 9. He noted that we also get very poor information on actual downstream uses of chemicals. The last IUR was the first one that tried to get at whether products are used by children, and this information had to be reported only if it was “readily obtainable.” Balbus stated that this loophole needs to be closed. Recommendation 1 borrows the two-way communication recommendation from EU REACH. That is, users need to tell manufacturers how chemicals are used, at what volumes and concentrations, etc.

For the part of the recommendation addressing TRI (1b), the main source of information was OMB Watch. The high-priority goal is a means for expanding TRI. TRI covers 685 chemicals, mostly in EPA’s Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) database. Balbus would like to see other chemicals included, perhaps expanding to include National Toxicology Program (NTP) carcinogens, reproductive toxins, and others. Currently, the public can recommend chemicals, but the agency should review and expand the TRI.

A member expressed concern about the feasibility of this recommendation, and Balbus requested suggestions on how the work group can move forward with consensus on wording this recommendation.

A member suggested recommending a panel or NAS committee charged with doing this. Balbus said he is hesitant to recommend panels, which cost millions of dollars. He noted that the [National Pollution Prevention and Toxics Advisory Committee](#), an EPA federal advisory committee, made relevant recommendations but was disbanded in 2007. He said the work group might choose to recommend that this advisory committee be reinstated. The members discussed how much they should recommend related to TSCA, as TSCA reform discussions are already underway. A member noted that an advisory group's role would differ from that of legislative action and that both are useful.

A member asked whether the work group would consider expanding the broad recommendation to include pesticides. Balbus responded that while pesticides should be included, at this point it may be counterproductive to open each recommendation to additions. He said we will need to acknowledge limitations in the report, and asked for feedback via e-mail.

A member agreed to share the recommendation language with EPA staff for their comments during the week of July 19.

A member asked why the focus is on TRI when EPA also requires other relevant databases. Balbus responded that the recommendations reflect what has come up in the course of conversations. If a higher priority topic emerges, we could include it.

Recommendation 2: Make environmental monitoring more comprehensive and suitable for assessing total human chemical exposure

Roy Fortmann, EPA, stated the purpose of this recommendation is to address total human exposures by understanding microenvironments people occupy, persistent and non-persistent chemicals, in all media to which people are exposed. Fortmann said he tried to list examples of recent or planned surveys that could be used as opportunities to integrate environmental monitoring systems across agencies.

After discussing the proposed expansion of NHANES objectives to include returning to highly exposed populations to further investigate high levels in individuals, the work group decided that it did not belong within this recommendation. A member noted that the number of people identified as having high levels of specific chemicals may not result in a large enough sample size for a study. NHANES would also need to build this sort of follow-up investigation into the informed consent process so that individuals could be contacted after the study for this specific purpose.

A member suggested that this recommendation be placed within a larger recommendation to expand NHANES. Another member suggested that it might be appropriate to build this idea into Recommendation 4.

To make Recommendation 2 more actionable, Balbus suggested it could be built into the existing National Science and Technology Council's subcommittee on Toxics and Risks.

Fortmann agreed that recommending to identify or create a work group would be the most actionable.

Recommendation 3: Expand biomonitoring capacity

Megan Latshaw, Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), noted that the third recommendation needs a timeframe and an actor. Latshaw said the overview is written primarily from an APHL perspective and would benefit from others' input on next steps for expanding biomonitoring capacity.

A member said that the actionable recommendation is more money from Congress to support capacity in the states. In addition, local NHANES-like surveys to understand local and regional exposures through biomonitoring should be emphasized. Balbus said that the recommendation should express the idea that the federal government should provide a means to expand state-based laboratory capacity according to the existing national biomonitoring plan.

Recommendation 4: Expand health outcome surveillance

No discussion. Recommendation is in good shape.

Recommendation 5: Expand Environmental Public Health Tracking Network to include all 50 states and 10 largest MSA's

No discussion. Recommendation is in good shape.

Recommendation 6: Invest in research and development to improving monitoring and surveillance

It was decided that Recommendation 6b (federal investment in improvement of standard animal toxicology studies by additionally measuring concentrations of the administered chemicals in blood, urine, and tissues) would be offered to the Scientific Understanding work group. It was also determined that Recommendation 6a (investment in environmental and biomonitoring technology and assays) would be eliminated. Balbus suggested including language in support of continued investment in technology into Recommendation 3. Another member suggested this language could be added to Recommendation 2 as well.

Recommendation 7: Establish mechanisms for the public and state, local, and tribal officials to provide input into decisions about national data collection efforts and local community study design

Jay Feldman, Beyond Pesticides, described this recommendation, which calls for ensuring that the system include the public in whatever study is designed. Much of this is addressed in ATSDR's [Public Health Assessment Guidance Manual](#), which Feldman suggests needs revision to ensure adequate opportunities for public participation.

Grant asked whether ATSDR is the sole actor, or if there are others. Feldman responded that this recommendation speaks to any organization promoting a study.

A member said that the work group should recommend not only giving notice and providing opportunity for comment, but also working with members of the public so that they are truly informed and able to participate. For example, agencies should put issues into context, present concerns, and ask members of the public about their priorities.

A member said that it sounds as if we are recommending that agencies follow the principles of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR). Another member suggested recommending that every study have a health communicator assigned to it.

Balbus asked whether the recommendation might include suggestions for actors beyond the federal government. A member noted that state and federal actions are often linked, as with cooperative agreements.

Feldman agreed to continue working to develop the recommendation.

#### Recommendation 8: Standardization and Integration

Steve Whittaker, Seattle and King County, Washington, Public Health Department, provided an overview of Recommendation 8, which calls for the standardization and integration of monitoring and surveillance systems. He asked for the members' help in making the recommendation more actionable. The members were supportive of the recommendation's call for communities of practice but said the concept is unfamiliar to many and needs to be explained in detail earlier in the text.

The members discussed the need for the Environmental Public Health Tracking Network to move beyond the lowest common denominator in terms of dataset compatibility. Balbus said the recommendation still sounds like aspiration; it needs to be more actionable.

#### Recommendation 9: Balancing public access to data with confidentiality

David Marker, Westat, said that this recommendation could be achieved by implementing two actions. First, the Office of Management and Budget should sponsor a National Academy of Sciences study to address confidentiality and data quality issues, with a focus on local analyses. Second, focus on the need for a clearinghouse for quality local studies of chemical exposure. The recommendation currently calls for ATSDR (or other governmental agencies) to provide this function.

The members discussed what a clearinghouse would entail and whether it would go beyond peer reviewed studies. Marker said it was his understanding that the group was recommending a place to house small, local studies, beyond what can already be found in PubMed. The members discussed the challenge of one agency essentially judging the quality of another agency's studies. While the members continued to have reservations about one agency giving a "stamp of approval" to local studies, they said that the agency managing the clearinghouse would have to include a disclaimer and would not be able to comment on the interpretation of the data.

Balbus mentioned that EPA has taken a step to review all CBI claims and to more rigorously review CBI justifications moving forward. A member said that while EPA has made the announcement, this issue is not settled and will raise issues of intellectual property law before it is resolved.

Balbus asked whether the work group wants to recommend anything beyond a National Academies study. He mentioned previous discussion about urging the EPA to do what was already within its power to ensure that important information on potential hazards wasn't inappropriately kept from public access. While EPA has taken steps in this direction, it may still be worthwhile to include language to this regard and noting what has been done. Marker agreed to revise the recommendation and asked Balbus to insert text about EPA's actions in this area. Then other members can continue to revise the text.

The recommendation on providing study participants with access to their results also needs to be more actionable. Whittaker offered to speak with local investigators for the National Children's Study about how they intend to approach this issue. He will share information with the group regarding proposed mechanisms for returning information to study participants. Jennifer Parker, CDC, will also ask one of her contacts for suggested approaches.

A member questioned whether a liability issue arises in the case of providing data that individuals may not want. For example, another member said that some individuals have preferred not to know about lead level test results because they are fearful of implications for their property values. A member urged the work group to consider how the recommendation might be challenged based on this issue.

### **Next Steps**

Recommendation leads should continue to flesh out the text for their recommendation in preparation for finalizing the report in August. The report will be submitted to the *National Conversation* Leadership Council by August 31.

## **III. Participation**

### **Members Present [July 9, 2010]:**

Henry Anderson, Wisconsin Division of Public Health  
Jay Feldman, Beyond Pesticides  
Roy Fortmann, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Megan Latshaw, Association of Public Health Laboratories  
John Osterloh, U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health  
Jennifer Parker, U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics  
Karen Pierce, Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates  
Martha Stanbury, Michigan Department of Community Health  
Richard Van Frank, Improving Kids' Environment  
Steve Whittaker, Public Health—Seattle and King County  
Rosemary Zaleski, ExxonMobil Biomedical Sciences, Inc.

### **Regrets [July 9, 2010]:**

Herb Buxton, U.S. Geological Survey  
Alison Edwards, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition  
Daniel Goldstein, Monsanto  
Nancy John, Cherokee Nation  
Charlotte L. Keys, Jesus People Against Pollution  
Sam LeFevre, Utah Department of Health  
Dean Lillquist, U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
David Marker, Westat  
Sharyle Patton, Commonwealth  
Ruthann Rudel, Silent Spring Institute  
Trey Thomas, Consumer Product Safety Commission  
Alan Woolf, Children's Hospital, Boston

**Members Present [July 13, 2010]:**

Roy Fortmann, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Dan Goldstein, Monsanto  
Megan Latshaw, Association of Public Health Laboratories  
David Marker, Westat  
Jennifer Parker, U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics  
Martha Stanbury, Michigan Department of Community Health  
Dick Van Frank, Improving Kids' Environment  
Steve Whittaker, Public Health—Seattle & King County

**Regrets [July 13, 2010]:**

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  
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Sam LeFevre, Utah Department of Health  
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John Osterloh, U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health  
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Ruthann Rudel, Silent Spring Institute  
Trey Thomas, Consumer Product Safety Commission  
Alan Woolf, Children's Hospital, Boston  
Rosemary Zaleski, ExxonMobil Biomedical Sciences, Inc.

**Facilitation and Staff Team Members Present [July 9, 2010 and July 13, 2010]:**

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