

**NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CHEMICAL EXPOSURES
POLICIES AND PRACTICES WORK GROUP**

**Meeting No. 7 Summary
Teleconference
June 10, 2010**

Call Objectives:

- Provide updates on the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures Leadership Council (Leadership Council)* meeting and other *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures (National Conversation)* activities.
- Review and prioritize a full list of *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* Policies and Practices Work Group (Policies and Practices Work Group) draft recommendations.
- Determine the next steps in developing the recommendations and Policies and Practices Work Group draft report.
- Determine a work plan for efforts leading up to the July 15 meeting.
- Determine the goals of, and identify agenda items for, the July 15 meeting.

Upcoming Meeting/Call	When and Where	Suggested Agenda Items
Eighth Policies and Practices Work Group meeting	Thursday, July 15, 9:30 a.m.– 5:00 p.m. EDT CDC-Washington Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the Policies and Practices Work Group approach to biomonitoring • Review, revise, and finalize draft final Policies and Practices report

I. Action Items

Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Subgroups		
Continue honing and refining recommendations based on feedback received during this call	All	July 7, 2010
Provide names of one subgroup member who can serve on the writing committee to Abby Dilley	Subgroup co-leaders	June 17, 2010
Leadership Team		
Send out an updated timeline to full Policies and Practices Work Group	Montrece Ransom	June 30, 2010
Full Work Group		
Work to draft an open letter to Congress and staffers regarding Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) reform	Kaatz Chary, Anne Rabe, Doug Farquhar	August 1, 2010

II. Meeting Summary

1) Welcome, Roll Call, Agenda and Objectives Review

Richard Jackson, UCLA School of Public Health and *Policies and Practices Work Group* chair, welcomed members, and thanked them for their work. Abby Dilley, RESOLVE facilitator, reviewed the meeting agenda and led a roll call.

2) National Conversation Updates

Montrece Ransom, NCEH/ATSDR staff member, offered an update on the June 1 Leadership Council meeting. She informed the group that the timeframe for the project has been slightly shortened and agreed to share the revised timeline via e-mail and the shared project site. Ransom also advised that Gail Shibley has agreed to serve as *Policies and Practices Work Group* representative on the Leadership Council, following Cal Baier Anderson's resignation.

Jackson provided an overview of the Leadership Council's advice to the *Policies and Practices Work Group* on its emerging recommendations. The Leadership Council:

- 1) would like to see the recommendations more aligned with the principles;
- 2) had some concerns about the *Policies and Practices Work Group* not explicitly using the terminology "precautionary principle";
- 3) expressed concern about the group's apparent rejection of risk assessment in favor of hazard analysis; and
- 4) expressed concern about using language that might freeze the work or recommendations "here and now."

Questions and Discussion

Discussion on Leadership Council feedback

The *Policies and Practices Work Group* members discussed the pros and cons of explicitly using the terminology "precautionary principle." Many members and Jackson noted that in their professional experience, use of that terminology often causes push back. After brief discussion, the members decided not use the terminology, but perhaps to include language explaining why, ensuring that the spirit of the precautionary principle is in the final report.

Should the *Policies and Practices Work Group* provide input into current TSCA reform discussions? And, if so, how?

The *Policies and Practices Work Group* members pointed out that the group's work differs from many of the current conversations on TSCA reform and noted that providing the principles developed by the work group to members of Congress or staffers might be pertinent. The group's work product is still a draft and not yet ready to share. Acting individually might be best because the work group is not an element in governmental decision making and, given the group's membership, should avoid the appearance of providing advice to Congress. *Policies and Practices Work Group* member Lin Kaatz Chary, Gary CARE Partnership, in coordination with Anne Rabe, Community Concerned About NL Industries, and Doug Farquhar, National Council of State Legislatures, will draft an open letter to Congress on these matters. The members may choose to sign it or not.

3) Discussion of Subgroup Recommendations

During this part of the call, the three subgroups reviewed their emerging recommendations and received feedback from the Policies and Practices Work Group.

Tertiary Prevention Subgroup

RECOMMENDATION 11: Increase the proportion of the nation's academic and public institutions that have sustainable chemical management systems.

Questions and Discussion

Tom Sinks, NCEH/ATSDR senior liaison, noted that it seems as if the group concluded that academia is a major source of chemical exposure. He expressed concern that this recommendation focused only on academic and public institutions, though it sounds appropriate for a much broader group. Also noted was that this recommendation might fit within the scope of the Tertiary or Secondary Prevention Subgroup. Policies and Practices Work Group member John McLeod noted that he added public institutions to broaden the scope, but any institution that uses or stores chemicals should have a chemical management plan in place. Chemical management and its two dimensions, management so that hazardous materials do not get released and exposure, were discussed. Nicholas Ashford, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, noted that he does not think this fits within the Tertiary Prevention Subgroup and suggested that it be merged to include public and private management of releases and exposures. Policies and Practices Work Group members McLeod and Pat Beattie will work on this recommendation, perhaps embedding it in another recommendation to make it clearer and applicable to broader groups.

RECOMMENDATION 12: Integrate and train state and local public health officials to use the ASTDR/CDC technical competencies to meet the increasing demand for health monitoring and health impact assessments in our contaminated communities.

Questions and Discussion

McLeod noted that the goal of this recommendation is to ensure that federal expertise and guidance regularly reaches the state and local levels. This recommendation also reflects a need to increase outreach to exposed areas. He noted that more communities are requesting health assessments and that the federal government, particularly ATSDR, can help with looking at broad exposure issues. Sinks questioned linking health monitoring with health assessments. Health monitoring may be ineffective in identifying issues having to do with a release of a chemical in the environment. An exposure assessment might be better, but the types of things that come to mind might be asthma and cancer surveillance. He noted that no good evidence base exists to suggest that asthma surveillance is helpful in identifying exposure. Ashford used cancer clusters as an example, and noted that with cancer clusters we tend to be in search of a disease rather than an exposure; the response is often that cancer is present, but no one can say why.

Policies and Practices Work Group member Kristin Hill, Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center, stated that the first part of the recommendation is the substantive

part of it, noting an increasing demand for both surveillance and exposure information, but that is not the essence of the recommendation. Sinks responded with suggestions that focused on using language such as “best practices for assessing contaminants in the community,” which might demand developing such best practices. Jackson noted that training is also important and needs to be articulated strongly from the Policies and Practices Work Group.

Chary pointed out that ATSDR’s work on health assessments has been a historically identified problem and inquired how health assessments would relate to training. Chary noted she is interested improvements in health assessment training. Sinks noted that health assessments are not the same as health impact assessments, but he agreed that ATSDR work can be improved. He noted that the key might be to establish best practices and train state and local officials to do the work. Chary noted that the subgroup needs to review the narrative associated with this recommendation to ensure that the subgroup is clear about the difference between environmental health assessments and health impact assessments. Ashford noted that the subgroup can avoid some of the problems in this recommendation by placing it after Recommendation 14. He recommended the group consider moving it.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Utilize state and local resources, via specific epidemiological programs and funding, to assist in identifying EPH hazards in populations before the hazards result in a public health emergency. Define each agency’s roles to address EPH in a specific situation to ensure that major gaps do not occur in the EPH safety net. Promote transparency at all levels through sharing databases, state information, and industry confidential information.

Questions and Discussion

Policies and Practices Work Group members noted that this recommendation should focus on environmental contamination as well as epidemiological programs, and that the results could be utilized to ensure prompt action was taken. Also, language that had appeared in earlier versions of this recommendation is now missing, thus the current recommendation lacks the action component.

RECOMMENDATION 14: Establish an independent Toxic Hazards Commission of scientists, epidemiologists, public health experts, and community and environmental health organization representatives to advise ATSDR on designing and implementing health assessments, health studies, and public health advisories using standardized protocols, policies, and programs to ensure proactive actions.

Questions and Discussion

Ashford reiterated that he would like to see the recommendations in the following order: 13, 14, and 12. Jackson thought databases could be captured elsewhere, and he reiterated that ensuring that the safety net has no gaps is important. The Policies and Practices Work Group members acknowledged the need for the action component to be included in all three recommendations. Sinks noted that ATSDR’s Board of Scientific Counselors (BSC) could do this work, and he wondered if this recommendation should focus solely on ATSDR. Rabe stated that a commission is needed because ATSDR is not doing an effective job, and that the BSC does not include non-governmental organizations or community members. Sinks advised that a commission which implies something different than what is being proposed, and that the subgroup seemed to be

seeking a group of credible advisors who can take action. Dilley noted that the composition the subgroup is proposing is different from the membership of the BSC. Rabe reflected on the credibility statements, noting that credibility and trust are lacking, and a group needs to work in partnership with ATSDR to help it achieve its mission. She noted that ATSDR should not hand-pick this group; rather, it should be an independent, comprehensive body. It could be a temporary group. Chary and Rabe noted that this recommendation needs some additional clarification.

Recommendation 15: Ensure prompt investigation, assessment, and remedial action for on-site and off-site alleged contamination areas to protect public health and the environment adequately.

Questions and Discussion

Rabe noted that this recommendation reflects that there are, for example, many fish advisories, but the source of exposure is not tracked to reduce or eliminate the source of exposure. She noted good chemical monitoring programs for broader environmental pollution problems do not exist and thus neither does any way to use that information collaboratively. Hill noted that the support language for this recommendation mentions that kind of activity, and asked Rabe to help with clarifying the language to address her concerns. Ashford noted that Recommendation 12 should be interjected after Recommendation 15.

Recommendation 16: Create a partnership with all Tribal Epidemiology Centers with the aim of 1) monitoring population health conditions resulting from chemical hazard etiology, 2) providing local capacity building through ongoing technical assistance to collect and use local data, and 3) dismantling barriers to accessing state and federal data sources to promote timely recognition of chemical threats and a rapid response.

Recommendation 17: Establish accountability performance measures to strengthen regulatory activities such as periodic systematic reviews of the regulatory agencies on their application of health recommendations and guidelines, and regularly report on effectiveness and quality of service and communication debriefing.

Questions and Discussion

Sinks noted that regulatory activities is a narrow field and that the subgroup might want to consider saying “public health and regulatory” to be more inclusive. No baseline for this kind of agency internal review exists.

Secondary Prevention Subgroup

RECOMMENDATION 5: Develop and implement strong chemical policy reform that will address the issues disproportionately exposed communities face.

Questions and Discussion

Rabe pointed out that exposed communities are under stress from different sources and that chemical exposures are exacerbated by social stresses. Ashford noted that he

thinks Recommendation 9 and Recommendation 7 should come before Recommendation 5.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Use population-based biomonitoring data as tools to set priority strategies to reduce the level of harmful environmental chemicals identified in persons.

Questions and Discussion

Jackson noted that the issue of biomonitoring is important and asked that it be on the agenda for the July in-person meeting.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Improve worker protection from chemical exposures by ensuring that OSHA Permissible Exposure Limits are modernized quickly and updated regularly, ensure information on Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) is comprehensive, and encourage industry use of the Chemicals Management system's approach to purchasing, using, and disposing of chemicals.

Questions and Discussion

Sinks noted some potential overlap between Recommendations no. 9 and no. 10 and that no. 7 should follow them. Sinks also noted that this looks like a melding of three recommendations; if looked at broadly, the recommendations are to get regulatory agencies to move. He noted that MSDS does not apply to communities. The subgroup agreed to have further discussion about this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) legislative reform is necessary to increase necessary information available on toxic chemicals and to enable prompt action to reduce and eliminate harmful exposures.

Questions and Discussion

Timothy Malloy, UCLA School of Law, noted that he has concerns about the number of "necessaries" in this recommendation with regard to consistency with the recommendations emerging from the Primary Prevention Subgroup. He noted a heavy reliance on safety measures and encouraging alternatives—the language is fuzzy when read in coordination with the Primary Prevention Subgroup's recommendations.

- Because of time constraints, Jackson asked that Policies and Practices Work Group turn to identifying a work plan for going forward and allow the subgroups to further hone recommendations for review during the group's July 15 in-person meeting. What follows are emerging recommendations that were not reviewed during this call.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Government, industry, research institutions, and non-governmental organizations should comprehensively and effectively join together to develop and improve tools to enable better interpretation of chemical hazards and provide the public with a greater understanding of the context of chemical use and exposure.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Chemical information is needed on consumer products and articles similar to other content disclosures.

Primary Prevention Subgroup

RECOMMENDATION 1: Expedite greater reliance on hazard evaluation through increased development and use of predictive toxicology methods, including structure activity relationships (SARs), computational toxicology, and high-throughput test methods (HTP).

RECOMMENDATION 2: Use management system-based regulation requiring firms at regularly mandated intervals to identify, evaluate, report, and consider for adoption viable, safer alternative technologies and approaches.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Integrate regulatory mechanisms for the phase-out of hazardous processes and hazardous chemicals where viable, safer substitute technologies, and approaches exist.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Create and support a network of government-supported centers for developing, commercializing, and diffusing safer alternatives.

4) Assessing Work Group Activity and Progress

Dilley asked the Policies and Practices Work Group to establish a work plan to ensure that it has a draft report for revision at the July 15 in-person meeting. The group discussed the best approach to finalizing the draft document. Malloy noted that he likes the idea of a writing or conference committee, composed of Policies and Practices *Work Group* leadership and one person from each subgroup. The subgroups will fine tune their recommendations, nominate someone to be on the writing or conference committee, and send the information to Dilley by June 17, 2010.

5) Preparation for July 15 Meeting

Dilley agreed to set up a conference call with the writing or conference committee with a goal of completing a draft of the final *Policies and Practices Work Group* report in preparation for the group's July 15 meeting. Dilley will also pull agenda items together for the July 15 meeting, based on incomplete discussions here and the discussions had on the call of the writing or conference committee.

6) Next Steps and Wrap-Up

Dilley reviewed the group's next steps. Ransom noted that the July 15 in-person meeting will be held at CDC's Washington office and that logistical information will be forthcoming as soon as the travel contractor has been solidified.

7) Adjourn

Jackson thanked the work group members for their active participation on today's call, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:51 p.m. EDT.

IV. Participation

Members Present:

Laura Anderko, Georgetown University

Nicholas Ashford, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Patricia Beattie, General Motors
Lynn Bergeson, Bergeson & Campbell, P.C.
Arlene Blum, Green Science Policy Institute
Linda Bruemmer, Minnesota Department of Health
Sascha Chaney, NCEH/ATSDR
Kerry Dearfield, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service
Pamela Eliason, Toxics Use Reduction Institute
Doug Farquhar, National Council of State Legislatures
Rick Hackman, Procter & Gamble Inc.
Kristin Hill, Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center
Richard Jackson, UCLA School of Public Health, *chair*
Lin Kaatz Chary, Gary CARE Partnership
Timothy Malloy, UCLA School of Law
John McLeod, Cuyahoga County Board of Health
Anne Rabe, Community Concerned About NL Industries
Kristin Ryan, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Gail Shibley, Oregon Department of Human Services/Public Health Division
Tom Sinks, NCEH/ATSDR *senior liaison*

Regrets:

Brenda Afzal, University of Maryland School of Nursing
Beth Anderson, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
Ken Cook, Environmental Working Group
Andrew Dennis McBride, City of Milford Health Department
Catherine Dodd, City and County of San Francisco
Robert Harrison, University of California, San Francisco
Brian Symmes, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Kristen Welker-Hood, Physicians for Social Responsibility

Facilitation and Staff Team Present:

Abby Dilley, RESOLVE *facilitator*
Montrece Ransom, NCEH/ATSDR *staff*