

**NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CHEMICAL EXPOSURES  
EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION WORK GROUP**

**Meeting Summary  
November 12, 2009**

**Meeting Objectives:**

- Get to know each other
- Finalize the draft work group charge
- Learn about the status of the *National Conversation* process, project milestones, and the work group's role
- Begin describing what each target audience needs to know
- Identify tasks and task group membership
- Initiate survey of existing resources and programs in each task group
- Decide on next steps and assignments

<b>Upcoming Meeting/Call</b>	<b>When &amp; Where</b>	<b>Suggested Agenda Items</b>
Full Work Group Call	Mid-January (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Update on December 11 Leadership Council meeting</li> <li>○ Progress check</li> <li>○ Identify areas where NCEH/ATSDR project staff can assist work group</li> </ul>
Public Sub-Group Call	Mid-December (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Progress check</li> </ul>
Health Professionals Sub-Group Call	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prioritize and assign tasks</li> <li>○ Progress check</li> </ul>

**I. Action Items**

<b><i>National Conversation</i> Process Update and Milestones for the Work Group</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
1. Share idea of vetting community conversation toolkit through Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units with toolkit team	Jenny Van Skiver	December 4, 2009

<b>Discussion of Draft Work Group Charge</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
2. Finalize draft charge based on full work group discussion	Kathy Rest Yanna Lambrinidou Marc Kusnitz John Stine John Sullivan Mary Lamielle	November 30, 2009 [DONE]

<b>Tasks and Task Group Breakout Sessions</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
3. Choose a sub-group and commit to one or more tasks identified for that sub-group.	All work group members, particularly members not present at the November 12, 2009 meeting	December 4, 2009
4. Schedule next public sub-group call	Diana Degen	December 4, 2009 [DONE]
5. Schedule next health professionals sub-group call	Robert Washam	December 4, 2009
6. Schedule next full work group call	Dana Goodson	December 3, 2009

<b>Work Group Membership</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
7. Consider whether there might be an industry gap on the work group, and, if so, how it might be filled	Kathy Rest, Jana Telfer, Dana Goodson, and Jenny Van Skiver	December 2, 2009

## II. Agreements Reached

- The Education and Communication work group will operate under two sub-groups: a public sub-group and a health professionals audience sub-group. Tasks sub-groups. Bi-directional communication and learning will be addressed within the two sub-groups.

## III. Call Summary

### Welcome, Agenda Review, and Introductions

Following welcoming remarks by Dr. Kathleen Rest (Kathy), work group chair, and Jana Telfer, NCEH/ATSDR senior liaison, Dana Goodson, facilitator, reviewed the meeting agenda and ground rules. The group then participated in an activity to get to know one another and shared introductions around the room.

Some members felt that more industry representation was needed on the work group in order to ensure that the industry was involved and bought into the final work group product. Others questioned whether greater industry participation was necessary, given that there is already one industry member on the work group. The chair will take the comments under advisement and confer with the rest of the leadership and facilitation team on whether there is an industry gap on the work group and, if so, how it might be filled.

### National Conversation Process Update and Milestones for the Work Group

Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR project staff, reviewed the “National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures: Milestones” document (Appendix A), identifying the Leadership Council, work groups, and the public as key project participants. Jenny explained that work groups will each issue reports to the Leadership Council, and the Leadership Council

will issue the final action agenda. Work group reports will be included in the final action agenda as appendices. Interested members of the public will be involved in the project through several public engagement mechanisms: a community conversation toolkit, web-based discussions, and public meetings. Public input will be fed into the work group process. The project timeline has been extended to April 2011.

Jenny emphasized the following major work group milestones:

- April – June 2010: Work groups to hold second in person meetings
- June 2010: Work groups to issue draft reports
- July – September 2010: Work groups to hold third in person meetings
- September 2010: Work groups to issue final reports to Leadership Council

Members asked questions for clarification on the Leadership Council, the action agenda, public outreach, and the community conversation toolkit. NCEH/ATSDR staff provided the following responses:

- The Leadership Council includes approximately 40 environmental and public health professionals. Names of the Leadership Council members are provided on the project Web site, accessible at [http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/nationalconversation/docs/leadership\\_council.pdf](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/nationalconversation/docs/leadership_council.pdf).
- The Leadership Council will not alter work group reports in any way; final work group reports will be included unedited as appendices to the action agenda. There is no guarantee that each recommendation made by each of the work groups will ultimately be included in the body of the Leadership Council's final action agenda.
- The project team has reached out to the public primarily through its partners and through its e-mail list of nearly 29,000 persons. The project team is interested in suggestions for enhancing public outreach.
- The Community Conversation Toolkit will include background information on National Conversation issues and process, a series of discussion questions, and a mechanism for reporting back to project staff. Staff will share input from the Toolkit with work groups.
- The draft Operating Procedures document sent to work group members by e-mail on November 11, 2009 outlines key process and role issues. Members should follow up with Ben Gerhardstein ([bgerhardstein@cdc.gov](mailto:bgerhardstein@cdc.gov)) with any questions on the Operating Procedures.
- NCEH/ATSDR staff clarified that exposure to electromagnetic fields is beyond the scope of the project and that nanomaterials are within the scope of the project.

### **Discussion of Draft Work Group Charge**

The version of the work group charge presented at this meeting reflected two rounds of revisions following the initial work group call on October 2, 2009. The most recent revision was the addition of point 3b, on reviewing current efforts of government and other important stakeholders to receive information and knowledge about public concerns about chemicals and health and recommending strategies and mechanisms for the public to better communicate their concerns to government agencies, health care providers, public and environmental health professionals, and other relevant institutions and actors.

Kathy Rest summarized that the three major components of the charge at this point were ensuring a well informed public, a competent network of health professionals, and two-way communication between the public and government, health professionals, and other

stakeholders. Members requested various language and substantive changes to the charge, including the following:

- Include prevention and solutions throughout the charge
- Incorporate point three (bi-directional communication) into both of the other sections (public audience and health professionals audience) instead of addressing it as a separate section
- Include specific language on health providers and professionals serving disadvantaged communities
- Define the terms in the charge
- Check with other groups to ensure we are not duplicating or missing key areas
- The word “concerns” in the charge comes across as patronizing; replace it with another word.

Based on the extensive comments, the members agreed that the charge needed more than minor editing. Kathy requested the assistance of a sub-group to finalize the draft charge following the meeting. Kathy Rest, Yanna Lambrinidou, Marc Kusnitz, John Stine, John Sullivan, and Mary Lamielle volunteered and will complete their revision over the next couple of weeks.

### **Brainstorming – What do the target audiences need to know?**

The group completed a brainstorming exercise to consider the needs of target audiences. They considered the following questions:

1. What questions do members of the public frequently ask about chemical exposures and health?
2. What would you like the public to know or understand about chemical exposures and health?
3. What do you think health professionals should know or understand about chemical exposures?
4. What information do government agencies and health professionals need from the public in order to be effective in their work related to chemical exposures and health?

Members’ contributions to the four discussion questions are listed in Appendix B.

### **Tasks & Task Group Breakout Sessions**

Kathy Rest proposed that the group might be most efficient if it divides into sub-groups. Members agreed to break into two sub-groups, divided by audience and incorporating multi-directional communication and learning within each group rather than as a separate sub-group. One sub-group was formed around the public, and the other was formed around health professionals. The full work group considered potential tasks the sub-groups might take on. Tasks were further discussed in the sub-group breakout sessions, summarized below.

#### **Public Sub-Group Breakout Session**

The public sub-group identified tasks and assigned responsibilities as follows:

Diana Degen agreed to serve as the Public Sub-Group co-chair.

*Inventory Task Group*

- Task: Inventory current and prior efforts of government and other stakeholders to communicate with and educate the public on public health and chemical exposure issues, noting gaps, inconsistencies, and evaluation components. Aim to create an exhaustive inventory and then select several examples with evaluations for analysis.
- Members: Elizabeth Grossman (task group lead), John Sullivan, Philip Wexler

*Identification of Target Audiences and Definition of “well-informed public” Task Group*

- Tasks:
  - (1) Identify target audiences within the public for which education and communication on public health and chemical exposure issues are most critical, and
  - (2) Characterize a “well-informed public.”
- Members: Cynthia Warrick (task group lead), Rosemary Ahtuanguaruak, Peter Dooley, Marc Kusnitz, Mary Lamielle, John Stine

*Literature Review Task Group*

- Task: Review both peer-reviewed and grey literature on issues relevant to communication and education about health and chemical exposures.
- Members: Alan Bookman (task group lead), Julia Brody, Elise Miller

*Bi-Directional Learning/Communication Task Group*

- Task: The group needs to flesh out its task but will aim to assess efforts for government and other stakeholders to receive information from the public.
- Members: Yanna Lambrinidou (task group lead), Diana Degen, John Stine, John Sullivan

Health Professionals Sub-Group Breakout Session

The health professionals sub-group identified tasks and assigned responsibilities as follows:

Robert Washam agreed to serve as the Health Professionals Sub-Group co-chair.

*Tasks Identified*

- Develop a specific list of target audiences (specialties)
- Conduct an inventory of professional association, NGO, and industry programs addressing chemicals or toxins
- Conduct an inventory of government resources available to support professional education
  - Leyla McCurdy and Amy Liebman will develop questions for government agencies on existing health professional education resources.
- Survey grey literature to identify relevant reports
- Conduct demographic analysis of target audiences to begin to understand preferences for receiving information/education
- Identify health professional competencies and practice guidelines and characterize as existing or lacking in current health professional network
- Create recommendations for clinical diagnostic tools and biomonitoring of exposures

## **Wrap-Up and Next Steps**

### Full Work Group

Dana Goodson confirmed with members present that Monday afternoons from 2:00 pm Eastern on and Tuesday afternoons from 2:30 pm Eastern on are generally good times for 90 minute calls. Dana will aim to schedule the next full work group call for mid-December; if this is not possible, she will schedule it for January. Dana also noted that the draft operating procedures state that missing three meetings will be considered resignation from the work group. Members were urged to send questions or comments on the operating procedures to Ben Gerhardstein.

A member asked that the topic of the legislative context be considered as a possible future presentation for a work group meeting or call.

### Public Sub-Group

The public sub-group agreed to take less than two months to complete its initial products. Small task groups will begin work and the sub-group will hold a check-in call in mid-December.

### Health Professionals Sub-Group

The health professionals sub-group will hold a call on assignments and next steps. Leyla McCurdy and Amy Liebman will begin developing questions for government agencies to learn about existing resources.

#### IV. Participation

##### **Members Present**

###### Members

Rosemary Ahtuanguak, Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope  
Alan Bookman, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
Julia Brody, Silent Spring Institute  
Stephanie Chalupka, Worcester State College  
Alison Cohen, Brown University (*by phone*)  
Diana Degen, The Cadmus Group, Inc.  
Peter Dooley, Laborsafe  
Elizabeth Grossman, Freelance writer  
Marc Kusnitz, U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
Yanna Lambrinidou, Parents for Nontoxic Alternatives  
Mary Lamielle, National Center for Environmental Health Strategies (*by phone*)  
Amy Liebman, Migrant Clinicians Network  
Leyla McCurdy, National Environmental Education Foundation  
Elise Miller, Collaborative on Health and the Environment (*by phone*)  
Karen Miller, Huntington Breast Cancer Coalition/Prevention is the Cure, Inc.  
Jerome Paulson, Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment  
Anne Rolfes, Louisiana Bucket Brigade  
Matthew Stefanak, Mahoning County District Board of Health  
John Stine, Minnesota Department of Health  
John Sullivan, University of Texas Medical Branch/NIEHS Center in Environmental Toxicology  
Susan Waldron, Ottawa County Health Department  
Cynthia Warrick, Elizabeth City State University, School of Mathematics, Science and Technology  
Robert Washam, Martin County Health Department  
Philip Wexler, National Institutes of Health – National Library of Medicine

##### **Regrets**

Jeffrey Jenkins, Oregon State University  
Lena Jones, Jackson Roadmap to Health Equity Project  
Debra Waldron, University of Iowa and Iowa Department of Public Health  
Mark Wysong, IHS, Inc.  
Lina Younes, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

##### **Facilitation & Staff Team Members Present**

Ben Gerhardstein, NCEH/ATSDR staff  
Dana Goodson, RESOLVE facilitator  
Kathleen Rest, chair  
Jana Telfer, NCEH/ATSDR senior liaison  
Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR staff