

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

**Meeting No. 9 Summary
In person: Washington, D.C.
August 5, 2010**

Meeting Objectives:

- Review, edit, and finalize *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* Education and Communication work group report to the greatest extent possible
- Review the bibliographies and appendices in the report, and determine a plan to finalize it
- Determine the next steps to finalize the draft work group report for presenting it to the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* Leadership Council by the end of August 2010

Upcoming Meeting	When and Where	Suggested Agenda Items
Education and Communication Work Group call (meeting No. 10)	October 2010 (date TBD) Teleconference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss feedback on the draft Education and Communication work group report from the <i>National Conversation</i> Leadership Council and members of the public • Determine steps to finalize work group report by October 31, 2010

I. Action Items

Member Tasks	By Whom	By When
1. Send in final language for recommendations Each recommendation must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expected outcomes and improvements if the recommendations were implemented; • how the recommendations will be implemented; • timeframe for implementing (near-term or long-term plans); • mechanisms for evaluating and tracking outcomes; and • potential actor(s) accountable for implementing the recommendations and tracking outcomes. 	See summary for members assigned to each recommendation	August 9, 2010
2. Submit language for a vision statement	Any and all members	August 9, 2010
3. Draft language to introduce inventory work	Elizabeth Grossman	complete
4. Edit "Caveats and Limitations" section	Elizabeth Grossman	complete

Leadership Team Tasks	Who	By
5. Compile member input and send report to Kathy Rest for review	Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR	August 13, 2010
6. Return report to members for final draft	Leadership Team	TBD

II. Meeting Summary

Welcome, Meeting Objectives, and Agenda Review

Education and Communication work group chair Dr. Kathleen Rest, Union of Concerned Scientists, welcomed members and thanked them for their attendance and participation. Jen Peyser, RESOLVE, reviewed the meeting objectives and the agenda, noting that the day's discussions must be specific and solution-oriented.

Overview of Work Group Report

Rest identified the actionable recommendations as the most important section and that in need of the most work. Rest and Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR, explained the process that led to the current draft. In July, a small drafting team of the Education and Communication work group met twice in teleconference. They revised the draft report, prioritized the proposed recommendations, and shared their revisions with the full work group for comment. The next steps are to provide the draft work group report to the Leadership Council by August 27, and to then obtain comments from the Leadership Council and members of the public in September.

The following information was provided in response to clarifying questions:

- All six work group reports and the action agenda will be posted to a publicly accessible Website.
- The action agenda is not a binding document. While proposed actors will not be mandated to implement recommendations, the issue of how to facilitate implementing recommended actions has been at the forefront of Leadership Council discussions since their initial meetings.
- Education and Communication work group members are encouraged to review and comment on draft reports of the other *National Conversation* work groups during the public comment period, which will occur this September.

Overarching Comments

The members of the Education and Communication work group shared high level comments on the current version of the report. They noted that the following issues were not yet sufficiently addressed:

- Focus on prevention
- Diversity in the workforce
- Integration of occupational exposures throughout the report (i.e., specify "environmental and occupational health" instead of "environmental health" throughout)
- Attention to affected and vulnerable populations, including environmental justice communities, geographically isolated areas, chemically sensitive communities, and the workforce
- Mention of tribal governments when listing different types of government bodies

In addition, members suggested that connections between recommendations should be made whenever possible to make the report more cohesive, and the multidirectional communication concept should be referenced throughout the report. Once recommendations are finalized, the work group should ensure that the text in Sections I–III of the report still aligns with the final recommendations. Also, a member said that the actors who are named in the recommendations should respond to them. Rest agreed to share with the Leadership Council that work group members are very interested in tracking outcomes of this process.

Report Section IV: Actionable Recommendations

Rest reviewed the [work group report template](#), including recommendation criteria and characteristics. She provided a document with proposed work group recommendations, noting that many of them are not yet actionable. Each needs to contain the following components:

- Expected outcomes and improvements if the recommendations were implemented;
- How the recommendation will be implemented
- Timeframe for implementation (near-or long-term plans)
- Mechanisms for evaluating and tracking outcomes
- Potential actor or actors that are accountable for implementing the recommendation and tracking outcomes

Working from the existing report and recommendations document, Rest and Peyser led the group in a discussion to determine the 10–12 highest priority recommendations. The work group members suggested the following:

1. Incorporate environmental health competencies into health professional education

This tactic will incorporate the earlier recommendation to “strengthen and build faculty champions” as a strategy for incorporating competencies into professional education. It should include diversity considerations and occupational health, and needs to define competencies.

The members who are assigned to work on this recommendation are Leyla McCurdy, National Environmental Education Foundation, and Robert Washam, Martin County Health Department.

2. Provide practicing clinicians with the guidelines and tools they need

The members suggested convening a group with representation from each major specialty to determine key specialty specific and overarching needs for clinicians to successfully address health issues that are related to chemical exposures. A member asked for clarification on the recommendation’s point about the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). This member said that the recommendation’s current language gives the impression that FIFRA is an effective model for dealing with pesticides that could be applied to chemicals more broadly, and that she would not support this. Recommendation drafters explained that this was not the intention of the recommendation, and agreed to tighten the language in this part of the recommendation. The members also said that the work group should recommend building on existing clinical diagnostic tools.

The members who are assigned to work on this recommendation are McCurdy and Washam.

3. Create incentives for change in clinical practice

The members identified funding as a key incentive and acknowledged that occupational health needed to be incorporated into this recommendation. The members discussed whether this recommendation might be combined with recommendation No. 4 (to “demonstrate model programs”).

The members who are assigned to work on this recommendation are Amy Liebman and Sophie Balk.

4. Demonstrate model programs

This recommendation may be combined with No. 3 as a strategy for encouraging changes in clinical practice. Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units were discussed as a model program for education. The members said models that are applicable to primary care would be useful.

The members who are assigned to work on this recommendation are Amy Liebman, Migrant Clinicians Network, and Sophie Balk, Children's Hospital at Montefiore, Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

5. Build competence and capacity of public health agencies and professionals in environmental public health

This recommendation aims to address health professionals in addition to clinicians (e.g., environmental health professionals in public health agencies). A member suggested returning to the suggestions from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials and the National Association of County and City Health Officials to ensure the work group’s recommendations respond to needs that the partner organizations have identified. The members contemplated whether the recommendation should address only the competence and capacity of agencies, or also that of professionals within these agencies. Rest suggested that the work group could split this recommendation into two.

The members who are assigned to work on this recommendation are Washam; Matthew Stefanak, Mahoning County District Board of Health; and John Stine, Minnesota Department of Health.

6. Create, update, and leverage resources, technologies, and strategies to educate and communicate with the public about public health and chemical exposures

Rest commented that although this recommendation touches on many disparate ideas, a possible theme is that government agencies need to do a better job of getting the information they house to the public. A member said government offices have no defined practice for hosting documents from a wide range of authors and no clear, easy way for the public to use or critique information on government Websites. Another member suggested referring to the report’s theme of multidirectional communication in this recommendation.

The members who are assigned to work on this recommendation are Stine; Elizabeth Grossman, freelance journalist; Diana Degen, The Cadmus Group, Inc.; and Alan Bookman, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

7. Institutionalize a multi-directional model of education and communication

Rest said this recommendation seems to be on track. The members will continue to work on the language to ensure it conveys a single recommendation, contains all required pieces, and is succinct.

The members who are assigned to work on this recommendation are Yanna Lambrinidou, Parents for Nontoxic Alternatives; Marc Kusnitz, U.S. Food and Drug Administration; John Sullivan, University of Texas Medical Branch / NIEHS Center in Environmental Toxicology; and Peter Dooley, Laborsafe.

8. Build public trust in government studies, publications, and communications

This recommendation needs to strengthen the link to education and communication issues. A member expressed concern that the language could be insulting to government scientists. Members will work on achieving a more neutral, supportive tone. The work group discussed whether this recommendation should continue to address only government or be extended to nongovernmental scientists, as all scientists are expected to uphold the same ethical values and practices.

The members who are assigned to work on this recommendation are Lambrinidou, Kusnitz, Sullivan, and Dooley.

9. Develop a 21st century environmental health education for grades K–16+

Rest said this recommendation is not yet actionable. It (and all recommendations) does not need to be overly prescriptive but needs to be specific enough so that the identified actor can implement it.

The members who are assigned to work on this recommendation are Alison Cohen and Karen Miller.

10. Maintain an extensive, diverse pipeline of environmental health professionals by establishing a broad and diverse foundation through student and scientist opportunities

The work group might want to consider additional examples to build on current or past work in this area.

The members who are assigned to work on this recommendation are Cohen and Miller.

Sections I–III

The work group members discussed the earlier sections of the report.

Section II. Current Status of the Issues

The members said the following issues should be added to Section II:

- A discussion of health literacy, and additional context to explain why environmental literacy is directly relevant to environmental health knowledge
- Mention of the uneven playing field for environmental health professionals in various local, state, and tribal health departments around the nation
- Additional references to the workforce

Section III. Vision of a Successful System

Rest called for a brief vision statement to be added at the beginning of the “Vision” section. The members agreed to submit concepts and language for this new couple of paragraphs. She also said that in addition to educating persons throughout their years of formal education and training, the report should highlight the importance of motivating them about understanding and

addressing public health and chemical exposure issues. The members again reiterated the need to focus on prevention.

A member noted that environmental justice and community-based participatory research should both be referenced in the document. Van Skiver agreed to make the change.

Appendices

The Education and Communication work group discussed which of its documents should be included as appendices to the report.

- Bibliographies: They are ready to be included as appendices.
- Inventories: The work group will explain the process for developing initial inventories in the “Data Sources” section of the report, and will link to them from there. The work group’s Health Professionals Subgroup inventories should reference additional medical and nursing school initiatives. The members also discussed the potential opportunity for other organizations (e.g., University of Massachusetts—Lowell’s Toxics Use Reduction Institute) to host these inventories online.
- Case studies: The members will develop introductory text, lessons learned, and keywords. They will refine language and provide additional citations as necessary.

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Peyser asked the members to complete any assignments and send them to Van Skiver (jvanskiver@cdc.gov) and herself (jpeyser@resolv.org) by the close of business Monday, August 9, 2010. The work group leadership team will compile member contributions and edit the draft. They will then share the report with the members for final comment. Peyser will send a scheduling poll for an October meeting (by teleconference) to discuss comments from the public and the Leadership Council. Rest thanked the members for their participation and concluded the meeting.

III. Participation

Members Present

Rosemary Ahtuanguak, Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (*by teleconference*)
Sophie Balk, Children’s Hospital at Montefiore, Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Alan Bookman, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Stephanie Chalupka, Worcester State College
Alison Cohen, Brown University
Diana Degen, The Cadmus Group, Inc.
Peter Dooley, Laborsafe
Elizabeth Grossman, freelance journalist
Marc Kusnitz, U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Yanna Lambrinidou, Parents for Nontoxic Alternatives
Mary Lamielle, National Center for Environmental Health Strategies (*by teleconference*)
Amy Liebman, Migrant Clinicians Network
Leyla McCurdy, National Environmental Education Foundation
Karen Miller, Huntington Breast Cancer Coalition / Prevention Is The Cure, Inc.
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
Robert Washam, Martin County Health Department

Regrets

Julia Brody, Silent Spring Institute

Lena Jones, Jackson Roadmap to Health Equity Project

Philip Wexler, National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine

Facilitation and Staff Team Members Present

Kathleen Rest, Union of Concerned Scientists, chair

Jana Telfer, NCEH/ATSDR senior liaison

Jen Peyser, RESOLVE facilitator

Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR staff