

**NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CHEMICAL EXPOSURES  
LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

**Meeting #3 Summary  
Teleconference  
April 14, 2010**

**Call Objectives:**

- Discuss proposed Federal Coordination Team and next steps in naming a co-chair for the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures Leadership Council* (Leadership Council).
- Learn about April and May work group meetings and plans for discussing emerging themes and initial ideas at June 1 Leadership Council meeting.
- Discuss approach, lessons learned, and key themes that emerged from the Web Dialogue.
- Plan next steps.

Upcoming Meeting	When & Where	Suggested Agenda Items
Leadership Council Meeting	June 1, 2010, Washington, D.C.	TBD

**I. Action Items**

Updates on Proposed Federal Coordination Team and Co-Chair Search	Who	Completed by
1. Implement Federal Coordination Team	Henry Falk	Completed
2. Send list of U. S. Department of Agriculture work group members to Elise Miller	Ben Gerhardstein	Completed

**II. Call Summary**

Leadership Council co-chair Nsedu Witherspoon welcomed members and thanked them for dedicating their time and efforts to further the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures (National Conversation)*.

**Updates on Proposed Federal Coordination Team and Co-Chair Search**

Ms. Witherspoon noted that the January Leadership Council call included a good discussion about selecting a co-chair, and that several members have since proposed criteria and nominated several people. Ms. Witherspoon reiterated her support for sharing leadership roles for this project with a co-chair. In the interest of finding a suitable co-chair and because Ms. Witherspoon has been on maternity leave, she and Gail Bingham (project facilitator) have slowed the process for filling the position. Ms. Witherspoon noted that they could afford to do so

because the Leadership Council's work will not ramp up significantly until Summer 2010. Ms. Bingham invited members to share additional ideas for a co-chair with her or Ms. Witherspoon.

Henry Falk, National Center for Environmental Health/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (NCEH/ATSDR), U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, informed the group that in response to the members' desire to ensure that federal agencies are engaged actively in this project, he had coordinated with Ms. Bingham; Kevin Teichman, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; and John Balbus, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, to establish a Federal Coordination Team, composed of the federal agency members on the Leadership Council. This team will provide a mechanism for federal agency members to exchange ideas, provide input and feedback to the Leadership Council, identify ways to contribute to the process, and discuss recommendations and steps for considering federal actions. Dr. Falk noted that several members had voiced support for this idea, and he planned to proceed with it. A member added support for engaging federal agencies in this way and noted the importance of ensuring that those involved are in positions of influence. Dr. Falk noted that Leadership Council members from federal agencies are senior-ranking personnel. Ms. Bingham read through the list of federal agency Leadership Council members. Two members asked about federal agencies that are not represented on the Leadership Council: the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Ms. Bingham responded that she did not recall discussing MSHA's participation when the Leadership Council was formed, and Ben Gerhardstein, NCEH/ATSDR staff member, noted that USDA was represented on *National Conversation* work groups.

### **Work Group Activity Overview**

Ben Gerhardstein presented an overview of recent work group activity. He noted that all work groups had met 4 or 5 times and were meeting in person over the next month. Work groups have created subgroups to develop initial work products (e.g., inventories of databases and programs, literature reviews, and case studies) that will inform the full work group reports. As themes and ideas for recommendations emerge, staff will share more substantive updates and provide opportunities for Leadership Council feedback, including at the June 1, 2010 meeting.

Abby Dilley, RESOLVE facilitator for the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* Policies and Practices work group, noted that in its April 8–9, 2010 meeting, the group made substantial progress in developing a set of principles that will guide the development of recommendations. Chairs, RESOLVE facilitators, and NCEH/ATSDR staff members provided quick updates on the other work groups, noting that subgroups were on track to deliver work products in advance of their in-person meetings and that recommendations would be discussed at or immediately following the meetings.

Mr. Gerhardstein also informed the group of progress on other *National Conversation* activities. The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) held two forums in Oakland, CA, and Columbus, OH, to gather ideas from local health officials. The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) conducted a needs assessment and subsequently held a forum with state environmental and public health employees to collect input on state needs and ideas that are related to public health and chemical exposures. The results of the NACCHO forums, along with the ASTHO needs assessment and forum will be summarized in separate reports and provided to the Leadership Council in advance of its June 1 meeting. NCEH/ATSDR staff are working with the American Public Health Association to finalize the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures Community Conversation Toolkit (Community Conversation Toolkit)* and expect to have it posted to the Web site in early May. The *Community Conversation Toolkit* was piloted in 3 locations (Oakland, CA;

Jacksonville, FL; and Savannah, GA), and the results have generally been very positive. NCEH/ATSDR is working with the National Environmental Health Association to provide mini-grants to local organizations to encourage use of the *Community Conversation Toolkit*. More information is available at [http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/nationalconversation/community\\_conversations.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/nationalconversation/community_conversations.html).

The *National Conversation* is now using social media to encourage the public to participate. A *National Conversation* Facebook fan page<sup>1</sup> and a Twitter account<sup>2</sup> now exist. The members are encouraged to join, follow, and share information about the *National Conversation* with others.

### **Web Dialogue Process and Key Themes**

NCEH/ATSDR staff member Jenny Van Skiver gave a presentation on the first *National Conversation* Web dialogue, which was held April 5–7, 2010. The first of 3 planned Web dialogues, it focused on information about the *National Conversation's* vision, process, and major issues for consideration. Three hundred and twenty-eight people representing 40 states and territories registered for the Web dialogue, and about one-third posted a message, which, Ms. Bingham noted was a higher proportion than normal for Web dialogues. State government was the largest participant category. Ms. Van Skiver thanked the many panelists and participants who contributed to the success of the Web dialogue. She also noted that work groups and the Leadership Council are being asked to use the input from Web dialogues to prioritize issues that are under consideration and to identify issues that have not been considered but warrant attention.

Ms. Van Skiver provided an overview of the 3-day Web dialogue agenda, noting key discussion topics and themes that emerged. The first day focused on the *National Conversation* project's vision and process, and a few of the areas of interest included defining key terms used in the *National Conversation* and taking a lifecycle approach to chemical management. The second day focused on community involvement, risk communication, data collection, and research. A few areas of interest included product labeling and the idea of a "clearinghouse" for information on chemicals and health. The third day involved discussing policies and practices that are related to preventing chemical exposures and responding to chemical exposures. The examples of topics of interest included the role and appropriate use of risk assessment and educating health providers. Several issues were addressed under multiple agenda topics: coordination and information sharing across agencies, the use of community-based participatory research methods, chemical sensitivity, and specific exposures (including outdoor wood smoke and fluoridated water). Leadership Council members are encouraged to review the Web dialogue summary, which was provided in advance of the call.<sup>3</sup>

Ms. Van Skiver noted that the *National Conversation* team had learned a great deal from the first Web dialogue that will be applied to make future Web dialogues even more successful. The process provided a flexible, efficient means to collect input. Discussion topics could be more narrowly framed to encourage more focus. Targeted outreach based on the discussion topics could help increase participation and information exchange.

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<sup>1</sup> Facebook fan page: <http://www.facebook.com/NationalConversation>

<sup>2</sup> Twitter account: <http://twitter.com/NatIConvo>

<sup>3</sup> The draft Web dialogue summary is available at <http://www.nationalconversation-projectsite.org/all/node/1938> (on the member-only project management site), and will soon be posted to the Web dialogue Web site. Summary highlights from each discussion topic are also available at: <http://www.webdialogues.net/cs/nationalconversation-vision-discussions/view/di/212?x-t=discussions.view>

Several Leadership Council members made positive comments about the Web dialogue process, format, and results. A member appreciated the daily summaries. Another member was pleased to see that several issues being considered by the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* Scientific Understanding work group were raised during the Web dialogue. Ms. Bingham suggested that the panelists played a critical role by asking questions that spurred discussion and by offering substantive, informed responses. One member suggested that non-regulatory public health issues, such as monitoring and surveillance did not receive enough attention. Another member was happy with the process but would have preferred more participation. Ms. Witherspoon noted that the timing for the Web dialogue was not ideal but that outreach efforts were robust.

### III. Participation

- George Alexeeff, California Environmental Protection Agency
- Henry "Andy" Anderson, Wisconsin Division of Public Health
- Tina Bahadori, American Chemistry Council
- Lisa Conti, Florida Department of Health
- Henry Falk, National Center for Environmental Health/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Daniel Goldstein, Monsanto
- Rick Hackman, Procter & Gamble
- Elise Miller, Collaborative on Health and the Environment
- Franklin Mirer, Hunter College, City University of New York
- Susan Polan, American Public Health Association
- Kathleen Rest, Union of Concerned Scientists
- Robert Rickard, DuPont
- Alan Roberson, American Water Works Association
- Jennifer Sass, Natural Resources Defense Council
- Martha Stanbury, Michigan Department of Community Health
- David Wegman, University of Massachusetts Lowell
- Nsedu Witherspoon, Children's Environmental Health Network (Co-chair)

#### Regrets:

- Caroline "Cal" Baier-Anderson, Environmental Defense Fund
- John Balbus, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
- Scott Becker, Association of Public Health Laboratories
- Linda Birnbaum, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and National Toxicology Program
- Stacy Bohlen, National Indian Health Board
- John S. Bresland, U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board
- Ken Cook, Environmental Working Group
- Lois Gibbs, Center for Health, Environment and Justice
- Jesse Goodman, U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- Richard Jackson, University of California Los Angeles School of Public Health
- Paul Jarris, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- Jim Jones, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- John Peterson Myers, Environmental Health Sciences

- Robert Peoples, American Chemical Society, Green Chemistry Institute
- Robert “Bobby” Pestronk, National Association of County and City Health Officials
- Roger Rivera, National Hispanic Environmental Council
- Peggy Shepard, WE ACT for Environmental Justice
- Rosemary Sokas, U.S. Occupational Safety and Health and Administration
- Andrea Kidd Taylor, School of Community Health and Policy, Morgan State University
- Kevin Teichman, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Marilyn Wind, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
- Beverly Wright, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice , Dillard University

**Facilitation & Staff Team Present:**

- Gail Bingham, RESOLVE
- Ann Burkhardt, NCEH/ATSDR
- Adam Brush, NCEH/ATSDR
- Abby Dilley, RESOLVE
- Ben Gerhardstein, NCEH/ATSDR
- Dana Goodson, RESOLVE
- Kathy Grant, RESOLVE
- Carolyn Harper, NCEH/ATSDR
- Jennifer Peysor, RESOLVE
- Montrece Ranson, NCEH/ATSDR
- Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR

**Others Present (observers):**

- Christine Chaisson, The Lifeline Group
- Sascha Chaney, NCEH/ATSDR
- Joe Henderson, NCEH/ATSDR
- Larry Pearl, Informa

**National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures**  
**LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**  
April 14, 2010  
2:30 – 4:30 Eastern

**AGENDA**

**Meeting Objectives/Desired Outcomes:**

- Discuss proposed Federal Coordination Team and next steps in naming a co-chair for the Leadership Council;
- Learn about April/May work group meetings and plans for discussing emerging themes and initial ideas at June 1 Leadership Council meeting;
- Discuss approach, lessons learned, and key themes that emerged from the Web Dialogue; and
- Plan next steps.

2:15-2:30 Call lines open; members are requested to dial in by 2:25

2:30-2:40 Welcome, Roll Call, Meeting Objectives and Agenda

Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, Executive Director, Children's Environmental Health Network, *co-chair, Leadership Council on Public Health and Chemical Exposures*

Gail Bingham, President Emeritus, RESOLVE, *independent facilitator*

*Advance materials: Proposed agenda.*

2:40-3:00 Updates on Proposed Federal Coordination Team and Co-Chair Search  
*Objective: Provide an opportunity to discuss response to Leadership Council input on January 29 call, formation of a Federal Coordination Team, and actions to date on co-chair search, including next steps.*

Nse Witherspoon, Gail Bingham, Henry Falk, Director (Acting),  
NCEH/ATSDR

*Advance materials: Federal Coordination Team Charge.*

*Questions and Discussion*

3:00-3:30 Work Group Activity Overview

*Objective: Learn about April/May work group meetings and plans for discussing emerging themes and initial ideas at June 1 Leadership Council meeting.*

*Advance materials: process map*

*Overview Presentation*

Benjamin Gerhardstein, *Public Health Analyst, NCEH/ATSDR*

*Questions and Discussion*

- Observations from Work Group Chairs
- Clarification questions
- Priorities for June 1 Leadership Council agenda

## Appendix A

- 3:30-4:15 Web Dialogue Process and Key Themes  
*Objective: Discuss approach, lessons learned, and key themes that emerged from the Web Dialogue.*
- Advance materials: Web Dialogue Highlights.*
- Overview Presentation*  
Jennifer Van Skiver, *Management and Program Analyst, NCEH/ATSDR*
- Questions and Discussion*
- Observations from Leadership Council participants
  - Other lessons learned?
  - Observations on themes heard
- 4:15-4:25 General Discussion  
*Objective: Provide an opportunity for members to ask questions or make comments on other aspects of the National Conversation.*
- 4:25-4:30 Wrap Up and Next Steps

DRAFT