

**NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CHEMICAL EXPOSURES
SERVING COMMUNITIES**

**Meeting No. 3 Summary
In-person meeting
November 17, 2009**

Meeting Objectives:

- Finalize Work Group charge
- Discuss key problems to address in each of the areas covered by Work Group charge
- Develop and organize a plan for completing the Work Group's charge
- Decide on next steps and assignments

I. Action Items

Item	By Whom	By When
Review the annotated bibliography handed out in the meeting (and also sent along with this meeting summary). If there are any articles or reports you want to add, please email them to Kim at kdefeo@cdc.gov. She will continue to add to this bibliography to serve as a resource for the group.	All	Ongoing
Type up sub-group notes from the flip chart pages and email them to sub-group leaders	Kim	11/20/09
Send revisions to the sub-group charge language to Kim	Sub-group leaders	11/23/09
Revise work group charge	Peggy/Kim	11/25/09
Finalize sub-group membership	Peggy/Kathy	11/25/09
Send out "next steps" memo	Kathy	11/25/09
Send out work group member contact list	Kim/Kathy	11/30/09
Edit sub-group notes and send revisions to Kim	Sub-group leaders	11/30/09
Send any comments/edits on this meeting summary to Kathy	All work group members	12/21/09
Plan 2 sub-group calls, coordinate use of the conference line with Kim and alert all work group members as to call times	Sub-group leaders	12/31/09

Organize next full work group conference call	Kathy	12/14/09
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II. Meeting Summary

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

Peggy Shepard, the work group chair, welcomed the group and members introduced themselves to one another. Kathy Grant, work group facilitator, reviewed the meeting objectives and agenda.

National Conversation Update

Kim DeFeo, NCEH/ATSDR staff, mentioned that the National Conversation Operating Procedures document had been sent to all work group members before the meeting. This draft document outlines the draft operating procedures for the National Conversation, including decision making processes. These procedures will be considered, revised and adopted (as amended) by the Leadership Council on December 11. Kim encouraged anyone who had comments or questions regarding this document to contact Ben Gerhardstein by November 20, 2009 so that he could pass along the input to the Leadership Council. Kim also reviewed the National Conversation Milestones document, highlighting important upcoming dates. Kathy Grant briefly mentioned the community conversation toolkit and the web-based discussion forums that will be launched early next year.

In the discussion that followed, some work group members asked how to ensure that the recommendations that come out of this process actually get implemented. Kim DeFeo responded that the goal of this process is to develop actionable recommendations that can be implemented by a wide range of actors—all levels of government, industry, communities, academics, etc. This process will help build a constituency of people who will work to see these recommendations implemented. Since the plan for the implementation summit has not been finalized, work group members can send their ideas to Kim about how to design the summit to help jumpstart action on the recommendations.

In response to questions from work group members, Kim explained that radiation exposures do not fall under the purview of the National Conversation. The Leadership Council will further discuss how to define “chemical exposures” as they relate to the National Conversation and determine whether biological contaminants such as mold will be included. She also offered to find out how much money is funding the National Conversation project. (Update: the National Conversation is a \$2 million project. These funds were not taken out of the base budget – i.e. they were not taken away from other projects – and were a one-time appropriation). Carolyn Harper, Senior Liaison, explained that the Inter-Agency Working Group on Environmental Justice is aware of the National Conversation, and several members of the Inter-Agency Working Group are involved in the process.

Members noted several current opportunities to provide input on issues related to the group’s work, such as: integrating environmental health into the 1,400 new health care centers being built as part of the stimulus package; work on redesigning ATSDR’s community engagement process; and TSCA (Toxic Substances Control Act) reform.

There was a brief discussion on what kinds of recommendations the group should focus on (e.g. legislative versus non-legislative). Kathy reminded the group that the goal is to develop both short-term and long-term recommendations so there may be room for both.

Discussion: Serving Communities Work Group Charge

Peggy reviewed the draft charge, explaining that the four themes are meant to be umbrella topics that would cover all the important issues the group may decide to discuss. This approach ensures flexibility moving forward.

The group discussed whether to keep these four categories or combine them into two. The group decided to proceed with four themes. During this discussion and in the small group discussions that followed (see below), the four themes were revised as follows:

1. Community Advocacy, Leadership and Research
2. Government Operations (Internal and External)
3. Addressing Past and Current, and Preventing Future, Environmental and Chemical Exposures
4. Restoring Health and Developing Community Resiliency

Small Group Discussions: Key Problems to Address

Work group members then divided into four sub-groups, based on the four themes in the charge. Each sub-group was tasked with identifying 3-5 key problem areas that their sub-group should address. These were then reported back to the larger group.

Community Advocacy, Leadership and Research

Leader: Mark Mitchell

Key themes identified by this sub-group were:

1. Need for community members to know how to be effective advocates for themselves
2. Need for resources for community groups (including assistance on how to apply for grants)
3. Access to independent research and experts
4. Knowledge on how to navigate the political system
5. The need for an information clearinghouse

Other work group members suggested the need for the sub-group to consider how decisions are made in the absence of full information and use of the precautionary principle.

Government Operations (Internal & External)

Leader: Liam O'Fallon

This sub-group identified the following themes:

1. Training (cultural competency, workforce development, communication)
2. Funding (grantmaking, research, capacity building, marketing, development of data)
3. Government operations (racism in cultural institutions, holistic thinking, customer service)
4. Communication (risk communication, customer service)
5. Partnerships and coordination (inter-agency, intra-agency, public/private, external, community/federal)
6. Regulation (enforcement, rule-making, precautionary principle, legislation)
7. Evaluation and data (numerical targets, data collection, accessibility, quantifying costs, risk analysis, cost/benefit approach)

It was discussed by the larger group that providing funding to communities is not always the best approach. Community groups need assistance on what to do if they cannot get a grant and where to go after funding has ended so that their work is sustainable.

Addressing Past and Current, and Preventing Future, Environmental and Chemical Exposures

Leader: Buzzy Guillette

The themes identified by this sub-group are:

1. Permitting, regulations and enforcement
2. Health profiles
3. Defining remediation standards for sites
4. Transitioning from toxic substances to safer alternatives

In the discussion that followed, members noted the need to re-think the risk assessment paradigm which basically says that it is ok for some people to be exposed to certain levels of chemicals. It was suggested that cumulative risk impacts be considered in place of risk assessments. Members also stressed the importance of government and industry notifying communities when exposures have occurred. One member suggested that placards be placed on the company entrance notifying the public of any violations, similar to the scorecards that restaurants have to post after they get inspected. Another member suggested considering zoning reform as a tool to prevent industry from locating near residential homes.

Restoring Health and Developing Community Resiliency

Leader: Mildred McClain

The themes identified by this sub-group are:

1. Prevention-focused (build environmental health into new community health centers, training for health professionals)
2. Funding
3. Define resiliency
4. Rituals/science
5. Multiple agency assessment of communities
6. Popular media—use to show solutions
7. K-12 education

The larger group also noted the need for national cancer and birth defects registries, community biomonitoring, and the need to educate people on “voluntary” exposures.

Public Comment

There were no members of the public present at this meeting.

Small Group Reports and Discussion

After lunch, each small group reconvened to develop an initial work plan for their sub-group. Leaders for each sub-group were identified and each agreed to send Kim their final charge language for their sub-group.

Wrap-up and Adjourn

Kim agreed to type up the sub-group notes for each group from the flip chart pages by November 20 and to send out the contact list for the work group. Each sub-group agreed to hold 2 sub-group calls before the end of the year in preparation for our full work group call in January 2010. The National Conversation will provide a conference call line for the work group to use

and each sub-group leader will need to coordinate use of this line with Kim to ensure that there are no overlaps in usage. Each sub-group will let the entire group know when their calls are in case others from the group want to join. Kim told the work group that the Leadership Team would be back in touch about a template for the work group to use to develop their work group report and recommendations.

III. Participation

Members Present

Barbara Sattler, University of Maryland School of Nursing
Lisa Conti, Florida Department of Health
Steve Crawford, Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point
Jeannie Economos, Farmworkers Association of Florida
Jerry Ensminger, The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten (Camp Lejeune)
Karla Fortunato, Health and Environmental Funders Network
Derek Guest, formerly of Eastman Kodak, currently of Environmental & Sustainability Solutions
Elizabeth “Buzzy” Guillette, formerly of University of Florida
Mercedes Hernández-Pelletier, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health
Michael Kent, Contra Costa Health Services
Scott Levy, The Permanente Medical Group
Egide Louis, US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
Mildred McClain, Harambee House Inc./Citizens for Environmental Justice
Mark Mitchell, Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice
Sarah Norman, Baltimore City Health Department
Liam O’Fallon, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
Suzi Ruhl, US Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Environmental Justice
Hilda Sheppard, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Arturo Uribe, Mesquite Community Action Committee
Susan West Marmagas, Virginia Tech

Facilitation & Staff Team

Peggy Shepard, Chair, WEACTION for Environmental Justice
Carolyn Harper, NCEH/ATSDR senior liaison
Kathy Grant, RESOLVE facilitator
Kim DeFeo, NCEH/ATSDR staff
Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR staff

Members Not Present

Nancy Bock, The Soap and Detergent Association
Robert Bullard, Environmental Justice Resource Center/ Clark Atlanta University
Melinda Downing, US Department of Energy
Lori Geckle, US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine
Rita Harris, Sierra Club Environmental Justice Program
Pam Miller, Alaska Community Action on Toxics
Ken Smith, National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
Beverly Wright, Deep South Center for Environmental Justice