

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

**Meeting No. 1 Summary
Teleconference
September 29, 2009**

Meeting Objectives:

- Welcome and introduce members of the Work Group
- Reach shared understanding of vision and goals for the National Conversation and Work Group
- Review and discuss Work Group membership and charge
- Decide on next steps and assignments

I. Action Items

Background Materials	By Whom	By When
Please email one or two short articles that you want to share with the group to help inform the group's work or that may fill a knowledge gap to Kim DeFeo at kdefeo@cdc.gov . Kim will compile an annotated bibliography of these articles to serve as a resource for the group.	All	Ongoing

II. Call 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 call agenda and noted that the primary goal for the call was a discussion of the work group charge.

Overview of National Conversation and Work Group's Role

Ben Gerhardtstein reviewed the vision and the goal of the project. Kim DeFeo reviewed the opportunities for stakeholder input: work groups, web-based forums, the community conversation toolkit and community meetings. Ben then explained the structure of the National Conversation, including the Leadership Council (guiding body for this process made up of approximately 40 national leaders who will produce a final action agenda), Work Groups (the engine of this process, responsible for putting forth recommendations for action to the Leadership Council), the Work Group Coordinating Committee (WGCC) (a group comprised of all the groups' chairs, senior liaisons, NCEH/ATSDR staff, RESOLVE staff, and the Leadership Council co-chairs), the Work Group Chair (provides overall leadership to the work group), the NCEH/ATSDR Senior Liaison (provides support to the chair and issue area expertise),

NCEH/ATSDR staff (provides support to the work group), and the RESOLVE facilitator (facilitates and sets up meetings and calls and helps to guide this process).

A work group member asked if work groups will have the ability to review the Action Agenda the Leadership Council produces to ensure that the spirit of the work group recommendations remain intact. Ben Gerhardstein responded that he will raise the issue of having work groups review the draft Action Agenda with the Leadership Council. Another member asked how overlap between the groups will be handled. Ben Gerhardstein explained that the staff team and WGCC examine overlaps on a case-by-case basis and work together to sort them out as the charges are developed. The charges that work groups develop will be reviewed and approved by the Leadership Council.

Discussion of the Work Group Charge

Carolyn Harper reviewed the draft charge for the work group. Members suggested several additions and modifications to the draft charge including:

- consider implementing alternatives to toxic chemicals
- involve the public in decision making
- address voluntary as well as involuntary exposures
- include rural areas and areas with people of different ethnicities
- look at the health impacts of new products that are introduced
- engage residents and community groups by helping them navigate the system and become better advocates for themselves
- consider the precautionary principle
- survey all levels of government, not just the local level
- emphasize (in the italicized heading and elsewhere) that the role of the government is to protect the public from dangerous chemicals not just inform the public about them

The workgroup made several comments related to communicating with communities, including: provide information in a timely manner; provide information proactively before communities are aware of problems or potential problems; solicit input from communities about their information needs; solicit input on community perspectives to inform research efforts. Kim DeFeo noted that the Education and Communication work group would like to coordinate with Serving Communities on how best to address communication needs.

Other comments included the need to approach decision-making from the lens of the community; the need for funding for community organizing, local health departments and ATSDR; and the need to define terms such as “environmental justice” and “toxic chemicals”.

November Meeting Discussion

The first face-to-face meeting of the Serving Communities work group will likely be on November 17 and probably be in Washington, DC.

Members discussed ideas for discussion at the meeting. These ideas include: examining the responsibilities of ATSDR and the agency’s statutory authority, examining the regulation of pesticides, strategies for outreach, the precautionary principle, legislative vehicles that agencies use to do their work, how the Serving Communities work group efforts fit with that of other work groups, the role of the work group and the scope, funding for local health departments, cumulative impacts of chemicals, alignment of standards, and coordination of efforts between agencies (EPA/CDC), how communities drive change (best practices), and how to access to information. It was also suggested we examine the questions listed at the beginning of the charge document.

Next Steps and Assignments

Members discussed whether a regular time for conference calls should be set. It was proposed that a Doodle be sent out to ask about people's availability for a regular call in a few specific time slots. It was suggested that using a doodle might be the easiest way to schedule future calls and help ensure that people who missed today's call did not miss future calls.

III. Participation

Members Present

Loretta Asbury, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (on call for Hilda Sheppard)

Nancy Bock, The Soap and Detergent Association

Lisa Conti, Florida Department of Health

Jeannie Economos, Farmworkers Association of Florida

Jerry Ensminger, The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten (Camp Lejeune)

Karla Fortunato, Health and Environmental Funders Network

Lori Geckle, US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

Derek Guest, formerly of Eastman Kodak, currently of Derek Guest Environmental & Sustainability Solutions

Elizabeth "Buzzy" Guillette, formerly of University of Florida

Mercedes Hernandez-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

Mark Mitchell, Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice

Sarah Norman, Baltimore City Health Department

Suzi Ruhl, US Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Environmental Justice

Hilda Sheppard, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Ken Smith, National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)

Susan West Marmagas, Virginia Tech

Facilitation and Staff Team Members Present

Peggy Shepard, Chair, WEACTION for Environmental Justice

Carolyn Harper, NCEH/ATSDR senior liaison

Kathy Grant, RESOLVE facilitator

Kim DeFeo, NCEH/ATSDR staff

Ben Gerhardstein, NCEH/ATSDR staff