

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

**Meeting No. 8 Summary
Teleconference
Thursday, June 3, 2010
2:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m. EDT**

Meeting Objectives:

- Hear updates from the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* Leadership Council (Leadership Council) meeting relevant to the *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* Education and Communication work group (Education and Communication work group).
- Review subgroup progress and draft documents, focusing on discussion of actionable recommendations and specific next steps
- Discuss overall tasks, timelines, and approach for continuing to develop and finalize Education and Communication work group report for discussion at August 5 in-person meeting
- Decide next steps

Upcoming Call	When and Where	Suggested Agenda Items
Full Education and Communication Work Group Meeting	August 5, 2010, time and location TBD	Finalize report

I. Action Items

Member Tasks	Who	By When
1. Review and revise draft recommendation regarding health department accreditation	Matt Stefanak	June 8, 2010
2. Review Public subgroup draft to determine whether any additional references to international approaches, including REACH, are necessary	Phil Wexler and Alison Cohen	June 8, 2010
3. Follow up with Peggy Shepard about suggestions for improving diversity in the environmental health field	Kathleen Rest	June 18, 2010
4. Make any edits to the Public subgroup or Health Professionals subgroup documents on the project management site	All members	June 8, 2010
5. Combine subgroup documents into one draft report, identifying key gaps.	Jenny Van Skiver	June 11, 2010
6. Follow up with work group regarding a work plan for summer 2010	Leadership team	June 18, 2010

II. Call Summary

Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Juliana Birkhoff, RESOLVE, led introductions and reviewed the agenda. Work group chair Dr. Kathleen Rest, Union of Concerned Scientists, welcomed members to the call and provided a briefing of the June 1, 2010 Leadership Council meeting.

Leadership Council Meeting Update

The Leadership Council heard from every work group chair and reviewed the recommendations emerging from each of the work groups. Rest gave the Leadership Council an overview of the work group charge and its thinking to date. The Leadership Council was supportive of the work group's direction.

The Leadership Council provided feedback about the Education and Communication work group:

- Are supportive of the multidirectional communication model and its focus on sources, targets, and amplifiers.
- Do not exclude tribal or local governments from recommendations.
- Consider relevant educational programs in tribal colleges and universities. Examples include [Indians into Medicine](#) and [Pathways into Health](#). Rest may follow up with the Leadership Council member who made this recommendation for additional information, if necessary.
- Are pleased that the work group is addressing the education and training needs of health professionals beyond health providers and are appreciative of the group's efforts to address the various paths that can lead to careers in environmental public health.
- Do not wish to rely solely on the federal government to ensure that health professionals are well equipped to deal with these issues, and suggest the need to get existing specialists on board to help promote education and training in the field.
- Are considering how the work group might recommend standardized curricula in K-12. Because teachers need to teach to the test, how might questions about environmental health be incorporated into standardized tests? Members also note that both teachers and students need to be educated about public health and chemical exposure issues.
- Note that Boy and Girl Scouts and other youth organizations could help get children interested in environmental and public health.
- Support a recommendation to accredit public health departments, but reminded the work group that this process is for entire health departments and does not address credentials for individuals within a department.
- Rest confirmed that while its work in public health and chemical exposures is important, the industry's education or communication efforts will not be the focus of the work group's recommendations.
- Want recommendations to be more actionable -- propose an actor and discuss a plan for implementation. As a reminder, each work group can make up to 12 recommendations.
- Suggest that Federally Qualified Health Centers be the focus for recommendations related to the practice setting. Work group members agreed that this could be an effective leverage point but also noted the high demands already placed on Federally Qualified Health Centers.
- Consider ways to incorporate environmental health information into electronic medical records. Determine the best way to standardize this procedure so that it is implemented consistently across locations.

Rest shared several additional points from the Leadership Council meeting that do not require action by the Education and Communication work group:

- In response to a work group member's question, Rest and Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR, noted that the number of recommendations to be included in the Leadership Council's action agenda is yet to be determined.
- The *National Conversation* Policies and Practices work group has organized its subgroups and recommendations around a framework of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. This work group is not using the terms "precaution" or "precautionary principle" but the concepts of prevention and safety are guiding its work.

Health Professionals Subgroup—Draft Recommendations

Bob Washam, Martin County Health Department, Health Professionals subgroup chair, reported that the subgroup had met once by telephone since the in-person meeting. Members updated the draft content for the report and developed an initial recommendation to address the broader target group of health professionals.

Washam asked for suggestions to help make the subgroup's recommendations more actionable. Rest advised that they should begin by identifying target actors. Recommendations that "Congress should pass a law on 'x'" or "we should promote 'principle y'" are not actionable.

Regarding the recommendation to accredit public health departments, Washam noted that ASTHO and NACCHO have policy papers on the program. A member offered that he works for a health department that is currently participating in the beta testing process for the [national public health accreditation](#) initiative. He stated that the standards for accreditation are not specific to health and chemical exposure issues. He and Rest opined that because the initiative is scheduled to launch in 2011, the *National Conversation* is taking place during an opportune time to offer a recommendation to the process.

Rest noted that while the full work group has been asked to limit itself to 12 priority recommendations, the Health Professionals subgroup currently has 10. She reminded members that both subgroups will need to work together to eliminate, combine, narrow, and prioritize their recommendations for the final work group report.

Public Subgroup—Draft Recommendations

Diana Degen, The Cadmus Group, Inc., Public subgroup chair, stated that the Public subgroup has been working hard and very collaboratively. She was pleased to hear that the Leadership Council thinks that they are on the right track with the multidirectional communication approach.

Rest noted that she does not disagree with draft work group recommendation No. 12, but is not sure whether it is about education or communication. It is more about the issues of trust and credibility, but not so much about issues the work group has been charged with addressing.

A member suggested addressing in an early section of the report government's role in communicating about health risks related to chemical exposures during emergencies.

Rest advised the Public subgroup to think about which of its recommendations are in fact expectations of government.

A member noted that data transparency and public understanding of the scientific basis of government statements are critical, and that a recommendation may be formed around the issue of data transparency.

Rest reminded members to stick to the topics of their work group. For example, many work groups have discussed the need for centralized data and information, linking Web sites, and a single access point. The Leadership Council has no problem with different work groups thinking about similar issues, but each of their recommendations need to be made in the context of their own issue areas.

A member noted that recommendation No. 12 is very much about communicating uncertainty. The Education and Communication work group's role is to say how the data are communicated to the public, not how the data are obtained. This member suggested that the recommendation could be formed around the idea that CDC should develop standard operating procedures about communicated uncertainty within a specified time period.

A member noted that in addition to transparency, the issues of missed or excluded sources of and access to data are important.

Juliana Birkhoff, RESOLVE, noted that the Public subgroup has some work to do to restate these issues as education and communication issues, possibly combining some. If members have trouble discussing the issues within the context of the work group's scope, they might draft text for one of the earlier sections of the report and/or they might decide to send their suggestions to another work group.

A member asked whether they might integrate international approaches. Rest replied that she did not hear much regarding international approaches from the other work groups, and that this would entail additional work. She said that the Education and Communication work group should not try to do too much; they do not need to outline best practices from international initiatives. A couple of members agreed to look at the current draft and to make a couple of notes on international models, including REACH.

Education Pipeline Draft Recommendations

Members reviewed the two cross-cutting recommendations from the ad hoc environmental health literacy subgroup at the April in-person meeting. Member Alison Cohen, Brown University, requested member feedback.

Rest noted that she spoke with Peggy Shepard, WE ACT for Environmental Justice director and Serving Communities work group chair, about steps that can be taken to improve diversity in the environmental health field. Rest will follow up with Shepard for more specific suggestions.

Next Steps and Approaches for Work Group Report

Van Skiver outlined the following approach for completing the Education and Communication work group report:

When	Status
Now	Subgroup drafts are posted to project management site Public draft: http://www.nationalconversation-projectsite.org/education_communication/node/1784 Health Professionals draft: http://www.nationalconversation-projectsite.org/education_communication/node/1922
6/8/10	Members should make any updates to subgroup materials on the project management site.

When	Status
6/9/10– 6/11/10	Van Skiver will compile all existing content into a single draft report following the work group report template. This draft will identify key gaps and issues that need to be addressed prior to the August 5 in-person meeting.
6/11/10– 7/29/10	Fill in missing information and format and polish draft; approach will be outlined in future email.
7/29/10	Penultimate draft posted to the project management site.
8/5/10	In-person work group meeting to finalize the report.
8/31/10	Deadline to submit work group report to Leadership Council.

A member asked how the work group will prioritize its recommendations and determine the 12 best. Rest responded that each subgroup needs to review its recommendations, ensure that they are appropriate and begin to prioritize.

Rest proposed having the leadership team drive the process of getting the report to final during the summer. She asked for suggestions from members. The leadership team will meet and propose a process for completing the final draft report by July 29.

III. Participation

Members Present:

Sophie Balk, Children's Hospital at Montefiore, Albert Einstein College of Medicine
 Alan Bookman, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
 Alison Cohen, Brown University
 Diana Degen, The Cadmus Group, Inc.
 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
 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 Sullivan, University of Texas Medical Branch/NIEHS Center in Environmental Toxicology
 Robert Washam, Martin County Health Department
 Philip Wexler, National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine

Regrets

Rosemary Ahtuanguaruk, Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope
 Julia Brody, Silent Spring Institute
 Stephanie Chalupka, Worcester State College
 Peter Dooley, Laborsafe
 Jeffrey Jenkins, Oregon State University
 Lena Jones, Jackson Roadmap to Health Equity Project
 Jerome Paulson, Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment
 Anne Rolfes, Louisiana Bucket Brigade
 John Stine, Minnesota Department of Health
 Lina Younes, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Facilitation and Staff Team Members Present:

Juliana Birkhoff, RESOLVE *facilitator*
Kathleen Rest, Union of Concerned Scientists *chair*
Jana Telfer, NCEH/ATSDR *senior liaison*
Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR *staff*