National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures

Launching the Conversation
Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center
Washington, DC

June 26, 2009

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Our Vision

Chemicals are used and managed in ways that are safe and healthy for all people
This vision requires…

- Accurate information on chemical use, exposure pathways, and exposure levels;
- Scientific understanding of how chemicals affect health;
- Policies and practices that prevent or reduce harmful exposures;
- Effective prevention of, preparedness for, and response to chemical emergencies;
- Elimination of inequities in exposure;
- A well-informed and engaged public and health care provider network; and
- Close collaboration and coordination among partner organizations and agencies.
Flint-area households kicking the chemicals; medical experts mixed on effectiveness

by Elizabeth Shaw | The Flint Journal

Saturday November 22, 2008, 4:00 PM

Most industries remain dependent on hazardous substances

Some good news: Fewer kids have high lead levels

SPECIAL REPORT

Toxic Air and America’s Schools

Health risks stack up for students near industrial plants

Accidental child poisonings still a major problem

Detoxing to get rid of chemicals in the body increasingly popular and much debated

Rule OK’s chemical tankers through cities

Industry group calls for 'modernization' of toxic chemical law

California unveils six-step strategy to promote green chemistry

Ailing FDA May Need a Major Overhaul, Officials and Groups Say

MELAMINE-TAINTED INFANT FORMULA LINKED TO KIDNEY STONES
40+ years of effort

Not to mention...
- Scientific advances
- Organizations
- Degree programs
- Etc.
### A complex “system”

- ATSDR
- CDC
  - NCEH
  - NIOSH
- CSB
- CPSC
- EPA
- DOD
- DOE
- DHS
- FDA
- NIEHS/NTP
- OSHA
- USGS
- USDA
- State and local agencies
- Professional associations
- Industry
- Commerce
- Environmental groups
- Community groups
- Academia
- Tribal groups
Important advances
Room for improvement

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Changed landscape

- Recognition of many exposure pathways
- Recognition of broad range of health outcomes
- Biomonitoring
- Large numbers of chemicals
- New approaches to toxicity testing
- Environmental justice
- Green chemistry
Our Goal

• Develop an action agenda for strengthening the public health approach to chemical exposures
  – Identify: gaps, redundancies, priorities and solutions
  – NCEH/ATSDR focus: Improving our work
  – Close collaboration with other federal agencies
  – Engagement with non-Federal partners (state and local agencies, communities, NGOs, academia, private sector)
Shared values

• Safe, healthy, wholesome environments
• Care for vulnerable populations
• Responsible stewardship for future generations
• Value of prevention
• Reliance on good science
• Efficient use of resources
• Good government
Key aspects of the Conversation

• Respect for ongoing initiatives
  – No wrenches in the works
  – Enhance and support with good ideas
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• **No mandates**
Key aspects of the Conversation

- Respect for ongoing initiatives
  - No wrenches in the works
  - Enhance and support with good ideas
- No mandates
- Transparent, open, inclusive, participatory
Today: Help us launch the conversation
Breakout session topics

- Monitoring
- Scientific Understanding
- Policies and Practices
- Chemical Emergencies
- Serving Communities
- Education and Communication
Work group membership nomination process

• Call for nominations starting today
• Taking nominations through July 20, 2009
• www.2009nationalconversation.com
Public participation

- Interactive on-line discussion platform
- Citizen conversation toolkit
- Sector-based meetings
- Public meetings
Outcomes

- Early wins
- Actionable set of recommendations that we can move to achieve quickly
Stay informed & participate

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