

**NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CHEMICAL EXPOSURES
MONITORING WORK GROUP**

**Meeting No. 9 Summary
Teleconference
August 16, 2010**

Call Objective:

- Review report in preparation for finalizing by August 31, 2010

Upcoming Meeting	When and Where	Suggested Agenda Items
Full <i>National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures</i> Monitoring Work Group meeting	October 2010 By teleconference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review comments from <i>National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures</i> Leadership Council (Leadership Council) and the public ○ Determine steps to finalize report by October 31, 2010

I. Action Items

Task	Who	Completed by
1. Submit any final language changes	Any members	Monday, August 23, 2010
2. Send language to tighten "Strength and Limitations of Environmental Monitoring"	Dan Goldstein	Monday, August 23, 2010
3. Find a citation for the statement that public access to data is greater in the United States than in other countries	Goldstein	Monday, August 23, 2010
4. Send language to improve biomonitoring section under "Current Status"	Goldstein	Monday, August 23, 2010
5. Write a paragraph in Section III "Vision of a Successful System" on the importance of closing the loop once potential hot spots have been identified (page 17).	Goldstein	Monday, August 23, 2010
Task	Who	Completed by
6. Follow up with NIOSH contact regarding NEWS; propose relevant language for the report	David Marker	Monday, August 23, 2010
7. Add language about the intrusiveness of biomonitoring in	Marker or John Balbus	Monday, August 23,

the biomonitoring limitations and opportunities section		2010
8. Edit Recommendation 6 to emphasize the importance of publicizing opportunities for public comment.	Balbus	Monday, August 23, 2010
9. Ensure Recommendation 1 includes a mechanism for obtaining better information on actual uses; confirm REACH is characterized accurately.	John Balbus	Monday, August 23, 2010

II. Call Summary

Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review

Kathy Grant, RESOLVE facilitator, welcomed members to the call. John Balbus, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, thanked the Monitoring work group members for their contributions and said that this is the final work group call before the draft report is submitted to the Leadership Council on August 31. Balbus said we will look at the report from a high level and then discuss some specific sections of the report.

Discussion of the Work Group Report

Balbus described the sections of the report. The first section is an introduction to the project and process and the work group's terms and definitions. The second section addresses the current status of monitoring and surveillance. He said that this section is divided by subgroup, and he thinks this format works. Right now the description of the major components is largely a cut and paste from agency Web sites. Further development of these descriptions could be done but is not a priority. Balbus said the strengths and limitations sections are very important and will have controversies attached to them. He strongly urged work group members to review this information and noted the importance of providing concrete examples and citations from the literature. The vision section was formerly fragmented by work group, but Balbus said it makes sense for it to be integrated, and he has worked on that. A member expressed support for this reorganization.

A member suggested including an expanded explanation of the report's structure, both at the beginning of the document and briefly at the start of each section.

Balbus identified comprehensiveness, integration, prioritization, and action as key recurring themes. He said the recommendation on research and development was dropped, as it did not fall within the work group's scope, and the report also lost some discussion on food additives. He noted that uncertainty exists regarding whether this is a consensus document, but that the group would be asked to confirm their approval of the document.

Section II: Current Status of Issues under Consideration

Balbus said the "major components" section contains some language that the public will not understand (e.g., registration, etc.). Suggestions for improvement would be helpful. The "strength and limitations" section contains a statement that characterizes public access to data in the United States as greater than public access to data in other nations. This claim needs a citation. Balbus said Richard Denison's work comparing the United States to Canada may include some supportive information but additional sources would be useful.

Members agreed on the following word changes:

- “~~First, there is no single system that tracks all potentially harmful chemical substances; instead, Information~~ **about chemical substances** is split among a number of different systems created by different statutes, i.e., for pesticides, food additives, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and industrial chemicals.” (page 6).
- “**Criteria pollutant ambient air monitors** are generally placed away from important sources of pollution, such as major roadways, and so may not capture actual exposures of significant populations” (page 7).

Section II: Environmental Monitoring

Balbus said that the report needs a description of the USDA Residue Program and water toxics for public water systems. In addition, anyone who wants to be described any additional systems should submit text by 9 a.m. Monday, August 23.

The members discussed whether the report’s discussion of air monitoring limitations (e.g., monitor locations) was accurate. Noting the distinction between compliance monitors and ambient air monitoring, the members agreed that the report’s characterization was acceptable.

A member said that access to data for community-scale projects should be available through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Web site, and that while this is captured more broadly elsewhere in the report, it belongs in this part of the report as well.

A member noted that the NIOSH Web site has only one reference to NEWS. He agreed to follow up with a NIOSH contact to determine how to address this in the report.

Section II: Biomonitoring

Balbus expressed concern that some of the factual statements conflict in the section on strengths and weaknesses of biomonitoring. For example, some say that biomonitoring is relevant only for substances with a long half-life, and one statement says that biomonitoring is important only for acute problems. Balbus maintained that neither statement is true. Also in this section, a member had previously questioned whether phthalates were an appropriate example of effective use of biomonitoring to inform chemical management action. Balbus noted that he has added a reference to EPA’s action plan for phthalates. He urged members to review this section and make sure they are comfortable with it.

A member said the report states that biomonitoring is the best approach to understanding chemical levels in humans and that it is the direct measure of exposure. This member said neither statement is true. He said that with chemicals with multiple exposure routes, biomonitoring is a critical piece to understanding cumulative exposure, but that looking at only one medium or another could be misleading. He provided the example of formaldehyde, saying that absent industrial exposure, biomonitoring will never show signs of this chemical. This member said the report should position biomonitoring as one of many tools.

A member suggested adding the intrusiveness of biomonitoring as a limitation.

Section II: Health Outcomes

Balbus said he will work on some additional language for this suggestion. He asked for member comments and feedback, and received none.

Section III: Vision of a Successful System

Balbus said he tried to combine the aspirational goals and vision of a successful system so that the goals addressed all of the work group's issues together, rather than by the separate subgroups. He welcomed any edits to this section.

Members agreed to the following addition:

- “Similarly, populations with critical vulnerability, such as fetuses, infants, **and individuals with preexisting medical conditions** should be targeted for special investigations” (p.17).

Balbus said the report still faces challenges in capturing baseline conditions and “normal” levels. For example, it has not characterized indoor environments or health outcomes. The report also needs to incorporate the ideas of pursuing something if high levels are found and paying attention to vulnerable populations.

A member said that the report's overall vision continues our nation's long history of hypothesis-generating work in epidemiology. This member said the suggestion to put in systems to find communities with higher than normal concentrations of chemicals and identifying clusters will generate hypotheses but not answers. He also said that we will always find that 5% of the population will exhibit levels above the 95th percentile. Balbus agreed that we often have anecdote-driven systems of identifying hot spots, while our data systems aren't set up to address that at all. He further agreed that we do not want system of alarms and automatic investigations when we find levels above the 95th percentile. The members agreed to add content on the importance of making significant investments to close the loop after potential hot spots have been identified.

Section IV: Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Improve reporting of source, use and discharge information

A member questioned whether this recommendation characterizes REACH correctly. In particular, he asked whether REACH included requirements for reporting on the ultimate use and disposition of chemicals as described. Balbus said that this recommendation should provide a mechanism for obtaining better information on actual uses. Currently, manufacturers responsible for reporting legitimately are unable to say what's being done with their chemicals. REACH may provide a model for solving this problem. A member said that commercial users should keep records and make them available so that good information leads to good decision making

Recommendation 2: Make environmental monitoring more comprehensive and suitable for assessing total human chemical exposure

No discussion.

Recommendation 3: Expand biomonitoring capacity

Members proposed the need for further development of the sample banking discussion.

Recommendation 4: Expand health outcome surveillance

A member suggested adding something to allow local governments inexpensively to get local data comparable to national data.

Recommendation 5: Expand Environmental Public Health Tracking Network to include all 50 states and 10 largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas

No discussion.

Recommendation 6: Establish mechanisms for the public and state/local/tribal officials to provide input into decisions about national data collection efforts and local community study design

Balbus said that this recommendation contains some problematic text and could probably be trimmed. For example, blending local and federal efforts as suggested by the recommendation for all local community studies to have a national comment period on regulations.gov could be problematic. He also asked whether this recommendation would result in meaningful improvements. This recommendation also suggests that all community members should be given a stipend to participate in government decision making, which Balbus said might be a nonstarter. Balbus asked whether the recommendation might instead suggest funding a single representative of each community.

A member suggested an amendment to call for materials in all languages spoken in the U.S. He said that at the local level, materials need to be made available in the languages necessary for that community but that the recommendation should not call for local governments to do unnecessary work.

A member also said not creating barriers that will slow the process of public involvement is important. Balbus agreed that announcements need to be more than a Federal Register notice and said the report should also articulate that the public should be involved in formulating questions.

Recommendation 7: Standardization and Integration

No discussion.

Recommendation 8: Balancing public access to data with confidentiality

A member suggested not identifying an actor for 8c, or perhaps suggesting EPA and HHS convene to determine the best organization to house and manage such a clearinghouse.

A member asked whether the recommendation meets the needs of communities. Another member responded that data should be made available to local government agencies so local health departments have access to the data collected by federal government.

Next Steps

Balbus asked all members to submit any final assignments and/or proposed language by 9:00 a.m. Eastern on Monday, August 23, 2010. The work group leadership team will share the version of the draft sent to the *Leadership Council* with the full work group by COB August 31. At the final work group call in October, any final changes to the draft will be addressed before it is submitted the final report to the *Leadership Council* by October 31.

III. Participation

Members Present

Henry Anderson, Wisconsin Division of Public Health
Jay Feldman, Beyond Pesticides
Daniel Goldstein, Monsanto
Sam LeFevre, Utah Department of Health
Dean Lillquist, U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration
David Marker, Westat
Richard Van Frank, Improving Kids' Environment
Steve Whittaker, Public Health — Seattle & King County
Rosemary Zaleski, ExxonMobil Biomedical Sciences, Inc.

Regrets

Herb Buxton, U.S. Geological Survey
Alison Edwards, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
Jay Feldman, Beyond Pesticides
Roy Fortmann, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Nancy John, Cherokee Nation
Charlotte L. Keys, Jesus People Against Pollution
Megan Latshaw, Association of Public Health Laboratories
John Osterloh, U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health
Jennifer Parker, U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics
Sharyle Patton, Commonweal
Karen Pierce, Bayview Hunters Point Community Advocates
Ruthann Rudel, Silent Spring Institute
Martha Stanbury, Michigan Department of Community Health
Trey Thomas, Consumer Product Safety Commission
Alan Woolf, Children's Hospital, Boston

Facilitation and Staff Team Members Present:

John Balbus, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, chair
Kathy Grant, RESOLVE facilitator
Jenny Van Skiver, NCEH/ATSDR staff

Regrets

Michael McGeehin, NCEH/ATSDR senior liaison