



National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures



Let's Talk...

In keeping with our mission to protect public health, CDC and ATSDR are sponsoring an 18-month project titled *The National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures*.

The United States has a complex system for protecting the public from exposure to harmful chemicals. This system is built on environmental laws and the work of many individuals and organizations, including government, industry, research, and non-profit groups. Although our nation's system has had some major successes, the time has come for us to look at it again.

Vision

Chemicals are used and managed in ways that are safe and healthy for all people

Goal

Develop an action agenda for strengthening the nation's approach to protecting the public from harmful chemical exposures

An Open, Collaborative Process

CDC and ATSDR are working with several partner organizations to convene and manage the National Conversation project. Together we are seeking broad participation from the public through various mechanisms and are committed to a transparent process.

What We Hope To Accomplish

Through the National Conversation, we will work with members of the public to create an action agenda. Many organizations and individuals play important roles in protecting the public's health from harmful chemical exposures. Consequently, the action agenda will be directed toward the full range of actors who might take steps to strengthen our nation's approach in this area. The agenda likely will address the following aims:

- Collect information about chemical use, who is exposed, and the level at which people are exposed
- Gain more knowledge of how chemicals affect people's health
- Use policies and practices that tell us about risks, reduce harmful exposures, and create and use safe chemicals
- Increase efforts to prevent, prepare, and respond to chemical emergencies
- Protect all communities from harmful chemical exposures
- Create a well-informed public and healthcare provider network so people understand chemical exposure risks
- Involve the public in government decision-making
- Encourage teamwork among partner groups and agencies

Having a Productive Conversation

Leadership Council

We are uniting a group of key environmental and public health leaders called the Leadership Council to help guide the project, which we expect to last 18 months. We are inviting a broad range of stakeholders to share their ideas and feedback.



Work Groups

Six work groups have been convened to research and make recommendations on cross-cutting public health and chemical exposure issues.

- Chemical Emergencies
- Education and Communication
- Monitoring
- Policies and Practices
- Scientific Understanding
- Serving Communities

Web-based Forums

We invite the public to participate in the National Conversation on the Internet. We plan to use web-based forums to keep you informed and to get your input.

Public Meetings

National Conversation partners will organize meetings in the early part of this project to gain input from stakeholders. We will also hold sessions later in the process to gain critical feedback on the draft action agenda. In addition, community meetings will be convened using the community conversation toolkit.

Community Conversation Toolkit

During this project, we will invite interested members of the public to host their own conversations about public health and chemical exposures. The toolkit will provide a set of discussion questions and a method for sending ideas back to the National Conversation project team and work groups.

Get Involved!

- Participate in our online web forums and public meetings.
- Host a community conversation with your group or in your neighborhood.
- Spread the word to your family, friends and colleagues and invite their participation.
- Visit us at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/nationalconversation>.

National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures

