



# Collaborative on Health and the Environment

## eNewsletter - February 2011



[Not yet a CHE Partner? Join CHE now](#)

[Invite a colleague to join CHE](#)

[Send us feedback](#)

### Contents

[CHE Partnership Calls](#)

[Working and Regional Group Updates](#)

[Announcements and News Highlights](#)

[Reports, Resources and Other Updates](#)

### Promoting Health from Camp Lejeune to Cancun

Camp Lejeune sounds like a lovely place to spend a summer vacation, right? Fishing, swimming, enjoying the great outdoors. Unfortunately, for a number of US Marines and their families based at Camp Lejeune, NC, their experience has been anything but serene. The reason is not due to harsh training conditions, but to exposures to contaminants in the water. In fact, the camp was the site of what is believed to be the largest drinking water chemical contamination event in US. history. For decades, from the 1950s to the mid to late 1980s, the drinking water contained trichloroethylene, tetrachloroethylene, benzene and other chlorinated chemicals from base activities and leaks from a civilian dry cleaning establishment adjacent to the base. Camp Lejeune was officially listed as a Superfund site in 1989. Now more than 65 cases of male breast cancer have been diagnosed of those who served and lived at Camp Lejeune--a very rare cancer that has been associated with exposures to these chemicals. In addition, a significant number of other cancers, neurological disorders, birth defects and related health conditions have been reported by the Marines and their families who lived there during those decades. We know chemical contamination and environmental injustice, as highlighted on other CHE partner calls, often go hand-in-hand. But even people who are supposed to be highly valued by our country--namely, our military veterans--are also discounted or ignored if they suggest their health problems might be linked to chemical exposures on bases in the US or in combat zones abroad. [Marines with male breast cancer?](#) Impossible? Think again.

So what does it take to convince those in industry and government that our fossil fuel-based economic system is no longer viable? And that the short-term gains are not worth the long-term health costs to ourselves, our children and our planet?

One way is to bring together those representing a wide range of health-affected sectors to learn about environmental health science and policy. Last month in Washington, DC, one of CHE's key leaders in the Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative, Maureen Swanson, organized such a meeting with a number of other colleagues. The realization among participants from organizations as diverse as the March of Dimes and the American Bladder Cancer Society was essentially this: Chemical contaminants serve as a common denominator--one that not only aligns our respective organizations towards a common goal (reducing exposures associated with escalating rates of chronic disease and disability), but also begs the question--what if all of our groups, with our hundreds of thousands of members, joined together to reform chemical policy, promote green chemistry, press for safer consumer products and greater investment in renewable energy sources? It was like a light bulb suddenly flooding a room. For those involved in CHE's

inception in 2002, this gathering was also a vision made manifest. The follow-up from the meeting to build and sustain these relationships is now energetically underway.

Another way is to build on the successes of those committed to putting health at the center of the discussions on climate change. Along those lines, please join us tomorrow, February 10th, for our CHE partner call: *Report from the Cancun Climate Change Talks: NGOs Promote Health and Partner for Future Action* at 10:00 AM Pacific / 1:00 PM Eastern to hear about the experience of representatives from NGOs based in the US, Europe and Africa who attended the recent Cancun climate change talks.

Most important, we invite you to add your energy and creative thinking to these efforts and many others to create the groundswell we need to put us on a clear trajectory towards a healthier future.

Elise Miller, MEd  
Director, Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE)

\*\*\*\*\*

This essay is available on [CHE's blog](#) for comment and further discussion.

## CHE Partnership Calls and Special Events

### **CHE Partnership call:**

**Report from the Cancun Climate Change Talks: NGOs Promote Health and Partner for Future Action**

**Thursday February 10, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. PST / 1:00 p.m. EST**

[RSVP for this call](#)

Despite scant and discouraging media coverage of the United Nation's Climate Change talks in Cancun last December, a number of NGOs and health and medical groups can attest that COP16 was in fact good for human health. Movement towards greater inclusion of health in global climate change decisions at the meetings in Cancun was in large part catalyzed by energetic new projects and partnerships among NGOs based in Europe, Africa and the U.S, and the increasing evidence of both the health impacts from climate change and the increasingly quantified health benefits of ambitious climate action.

CHE is pleased to host on **February 10, 2011 at 10 a.m. Pacific / 1 p.m. Eastern** three active leaders in that process, Dr. Pendo Maro (Health and Environment Alliance/Health Care Without Harm, Europe), Dr. Lynn Wilson (SeaTrust Institute) and Pastor Peters Omoragbon (Nurses Across the Borders) in this teleconference call to share how the momentum from Copenhagen to Cancun is being carried forward into 2011 towards collaborative activities promoting health in the run up to COP17 in Durban, South Africa and beyond. In particular, the speakers will focus on ways CHE partners and anyone concerned with these issues can become involved in projects that support putting health at the heart of climate negotiations and decisions.

### **Featured speakers:**

**Dr. Pendo Marco**, Senior Climate and Energy Advisor, Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) and [Health and Environment Alliance \(HEAL\)](#)

**Dr. Lynn Wilson**, Executive Director, [SeaTrust Institute](#)

**Pastor Peters Omoragbon**, Chairman, Board of Trustees (USA), [Nurses Across Borders](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Special Events:**

#### **CHE Environmental Health Training:**

CHE recently launched a new initiative designed to train people in environmental health science. These trainings will focus on teaching evidence-based science in lay language to be used in a range of settings, including advocacy, determining research priorities and public education. The goal is to provide basic scientific knowledge so trainees can become more effective as champions for a healthier world.

The next training will take place March 2-4, 2011 and is offered in partnership with MOMS (Making Our Milk Safe). This training is full.

Additional environmental health trainings in 2011 will take place on May 2-4, September 27-29 and November 7-9. Each training will be on the subject of environmental health science and breast cancer. All trainings will be held at Commonweal in Bolinas, CA. Training topics include:

- Overview of healthy breast development.
- Origins of breast cancer.
- Exposures to toxic chemicals throughout the human life cycle, and how they can increase risk for disease.
- The use of biomonitoring (measuring environmental chemicals in the body) as an education and advocacy tool.
- The "web of causality" that makes breast cancer etiology so complex to fully understand.
- How to respond effectively when there is not scientific certainty - also referred to as the precautionary principle.
- Practical exercises using your scientific understanding to strengthen your advocacy efforts.
- Suggestions for steps in your daily life that can reduce risk.

For more information, please contact Davis Baltz of Commonweal at [dbaltz@igc.org](mailto:dbaltz@igc.org) or phone 510-848-2714. An application form will be available shortly on the CHE website. Please visit: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/ehtraining>

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Resources from recent CHE calls:**

If you missed any of the following CHE calls, you may listen to MP3 recordings and find supporting materials at the following links:

- January 18, 2011 - [Cumulative Impacts and Environmental Justice: a conversation with Manuel Pastor and Sharyle Patton](#)
- December 8, 2010 - [2010: Environmental Health Highlights of the Year](#)
- November 15, 2010 - [Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposure in the US](#)
- November 9, 2010 - [Fracking: Implications for Human and Environmental Health](#)

And of course, you can always explore our [archived resources](#)

## **CHE Working and Regional Group Updates**

Stay in touch with CHE via Facebook and the CHE blog:

Visit CHE's blog at <http://ourhealthandenvironment.wordpress.com/>

CHE's [Facebook page](#)

### **CHE Cancer**

~ coordinated by Michael Lerner and Jeanne Rizzo. For more information contact

[info@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:info@healthandenvironment.org)

**~ On February 3, 2011 the CHE Cancer Working Group hosted a call titled: *Do Chemicals Cause Breast Cancer? Tell it to the Marines!*** Over sixty Marines and their dependents have developed male breast cancer after being exposed to contaminated drinking water at the Marine base at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The camp was the site of what is believed to be the largest drinking water chemical contamination event in US history. For decades, from the 1950s to the mid to late 1980s, drinking water was contaminated with trichloroethylene, tetrachloroethylene, benzene and other chlorinated chemicals from base activities and leaks from a civilian dry cleaning establishment adjacent to the base. Now the health consequences of this contamination on Marines, their dependents, and civilians who worked on the base are becoming clear. In addition to national media coverage, these events were the subject of Congressional hearings on September 16, 2010. Mike Partain and Jim Fontella, both breast cancer survivors, talked on this call about their experiences in bringing their situation to public attention and their attempts to get compensation for affected Marines and families. CHE Partner Dick Clapp has been a member of the Camp Lejeune Community Assistance Panel for the past five years and discussed on-

going health studies.

[Listen to the MP3 recording and read additional background resources associated with the call](#)

## CHE Fertility

~ coordinated by Karin Russ, CHE Fertility National Coordinator, [karin@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:karin@healthandenvironment.org)

~ **The CHE-Fertility Working Group members' survey is now open.** This is an opportunity to share your opinions about environmental influences on reproductive health. Input from working group members is essential to the vitality of the group. Information from the survey will be used to guide future topics for educational offerings, and to explore additional ways of interacting. The survey is only 10 questions long and should take about 5 minutes to complete. Please visit the survey website and voice your opinion today: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9J5LNC8>

~ **BP oil spill's health effects will be felt for generations.** Months after diving in Gulf waters fouled by BP crude oil and the oil dispersant Corexit, a man in his 40s has more than five times the normal amount of ethylbenzene in his blood. New Orleans Times-Picayune, Louisiana.

[http://www.nola.com/news/gulf-oil-spill/index.ssf/2011/02/bp\\_oil\\_spills\\_health\\_effects\\_w.html](http://www.nola.com/news/gulf-oil-spill/index.ssf/2011/02/bp_oil_spills_health_effects_w.html)

~ **New Research: A better understanding of BPA metabolism.** Much of the hesitation to regulate bisphenol A up to now has stemmed from uncertainty about whether health effects reported in laboratory animals are relevant to people because of possible differences in metabolism. Recent findings now suggest that humans metabolize BPA at rates similar to rodents, raising the possibility that the animal effects may be relevant. *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

<http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/fetchArticle.action?articleURI=info:doi/10.1289/ehp.trp020411>

~ **New Research: Ovarian dysgenesis syndrome.** Researchers evaluated the existing scientific literature on environmental exposures, particularly endocrine disrupting chemicals, in relation to developmental origins of gynecological disease. Findings support the theory of in utero origin of gynecologic outcomes. <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=7961572&fulltextType=RA&fileId=S2040174410000693>

## CHE Healthy Aging Initiative

~ coordinated by Maria Valenti, [mvalenti@igc.org](mailto:mvalenti@igc.org)

~ **Massachusetts as a Model for Healthy Aging:** CHE Healthy Aging Initiative Coordinator Maria Valenti and CHE Coordinating Committee member Polly Hoppin, ScD, Program Director, University of Massachusetts, Lowell, are participating in the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and Massachusetts Health Policy Forum's ongoing efforts to build a statewide [Healthy Aging Initiative in Massachusetts](#). In 2009 and 2010 two conferences were held in Boston with more than 300 attendees including policy experts, government officials, academic leaders, advocates and representatives of community based organizations that work with older adults. A plan has now been undertaken spearheaded by three subcommittees in the areas of Healthy Aging Communities, Healthy Aging Programs and Public Awareness. The subcommittees are formulating action plans, which the Steering Committee will then incorporate into an overall plan to make Massachusetts a national model for healthy aging. The most recent Policy Brief is available here. The Massachusetts Health Policy Forum is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving the health care system in the Commonwealth located at the Brandeis University Heller School.

~ **Ted Schettler MD MPH was a panelist on the January 18, 2011 webinar *Vision to Reality: Special Challenges & Opportunities in Environmental and Policy Change*** as the final module of the series of the CDC Healthy Aging Research Network (HAN) and Creating Aging-Friendly Communities. Questions and a discussion with many of the 30+ attendees followed, and attendees were asked to commit to taking at least one action step from the information they learned. Presentations are archived online at <http://agingfriendly.org/>. **The CDC Healthy Aging Research Network (HAN) works nationally to understand the determinants of healthy aging, identify interventions that promote healthy aging, and translate those interventions into sustainable community-based programs.**

~ February 18-20, 2011, Ted Schettler MD MPH will present a plenary session and workshop on ***Environmental Chemicals, Exposures and Effects: A Lifetime Perspective*** and the ***Eco-Social Model of Health*** at the University of Wisconsin-Madison conference [Making the Connection 2011:](#)

[Translating Environmental Health Research into Clinical Practice and Prevention](#) co-sponsored by PSR Wisconsin and many others.

## CHE-LDDI

~ coordinated by Erika Hagensen, [ehagensen@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:ehagensen@healthandenvironment.org)

~ On January 24th, the Learning Disabilities Association of America, with support from the John Merck Fund, Kaiser Family Foundation and the Ceres Foundation, **convened a forum to present the state-of-the-science on toxic chemicals and health** as well as related policy updates and training. Nearly 60 people representing 38 different groups attended including those concerned with: learning and developmental disabilities, various cancers, infertility and reproductive health, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, birth defects and respiratory illness. In addition, several leaders from health professional organizations, including the American Nurses Association, the American Medical Association and the National Medical Association, participated.

The meeting featured presentations by Dr. Ted Schettler ([view Dr. Schettler's presentation](#)), Science Director for the Science & Environmental Health Network ([SEHN](#)) and the Collaborative on Health and the Environment, describing environmental contributors to disease and disability; Dr. Sandra Steingraber, an ecologist and author of *Living Downstream, Having Faith* and the newly released *Raising Elijah*, discussed the human rights aspects of toxic chemical contamination; and Andy Igrejas ([view Mr. Igrejas' presentation](#)), Director of the [Safer Chemicals Healthy Families](#) campaign offered opportunities and strategies for reforming chemical policies to better protect public health.

LDDI members were instrumental in attracting key participants and coordinating this event including: Maureen Swanson of the Learning Disabilities Association of America ([LDA](#)); Joyce Martin with American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities ([AAIDD](#)); Donna Ferullo with the [Autism Society of America](#); and Elise Miller and Erika Hagensen with Collaborative on Health and Environment ([CHE](#)).

## CHE Regional Working Groups Updates

### CHE Alaska

~ coordinated by Pam Miller, Alaska Community Action, [pkmiller@akaction.net](mailto:pkmiller@akaction.net)

~ **New CHE-AK call: Mercury Pollution in Alaska: Sources of Contamination, Health Effects and Global Actions** Wednesday, February 23, 9:00 a.m. Alaska Time/ 10 a.m. Pacific/ 1 p.m. Eastern

To join this free call and receive the dial-up instructions, please RSVP to Alaska Community Action on Toxics at [diana@akaction.org](mailto:diana@akaction.org) or (907) 222-7714. For full author bios please visit the [call page on the CHE website](#).

Mercury is a highly toxic heavy metal that has been linked to a range of adverse health effects including learning and developmental disorders, cardiovascular disease, and immune suppression. The largest single source of mercury emissions in the U.S. comes from coal-fired power plants. The primary sources of mercury pollution in Alaska are emissions from coal-fired power plants in Asia that travel to Alaska via air and ocean currents. When coal is burned, trace amounts of mercury present in coal are released. Mercury accumulates in fish, wildlife and people. Humans are primarily exposed to mercury through consumption of mercury-contaminated fish and other seafood. The development of proposed coal mines in Alaska will lead to increased export of Alaskan coal to Asia, which will in turn increase mercury pollution in Alaska. The global implications of mercury pollution call for action on an international level with negotiations currently underway for a global mercury treaty to minimize and eliminate mercury exposure from anthropogenic sources.

#### PRESENTERS:

- **Kendra Zamzow, PhD**, Center for Science in Public Participation.
- **Dr. Alan Lockwood, MD, NAAF**, Professor of Neurology at the University at Buffalo.
- **Sarah Petras, MPH**, Environmental Health Coordinator, Alaska Community Action on Toxics

## CHE-HEAL

~ coordinated by Lisette van Vliet, [lissette@env-health.org](mailto:lissette@env-health.org)

~ **Shale gas in Europe: the environmental health impacts:** As Europe plans its energy roadmap, discussions over the introduction of the shale fracturing for natural gas are increasing. This controversial method of extracting gas from shale has been met with concern by environment and health groups in Europe due to the potential dangers it poses to the environment and people's health. To address the issues, HEAL has created an e-working group for organisations involved in health and energy/climate change, chemicals, water quality and natural habitat dimensions of shale fracturing. The working group will serve as a platform to exchange information between countries and EU-level responses. For example, the French region of Picardy has frozen shale gas and oil extraction in the region until impact assessment studies have been completed, and a public consultation has been held. On a national scale, French Environment Minister, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, has announced that they will assess environment issues ahead of gas and oil shale extraction. The work by CHE and its partners on the potential public health and environmental impacts of shale gas fracturing is a useful resource for this group. For more information, please contact [Lisette@env-health.org](mailto:Lisette@env-health.org).

~ **WHO Conference Cancer and Environmental Links:** In March 2011, the World Health Organisation (WHO) will hold a conference on environmental and occupational causation of cancer. HEAL's Toxics Policy Officer, Lisette van Vliet and Helen Lynn, from the UK Alliance for Cancer Prevention will attend the important conference that will be held in Spain. For more information about the conference: 'Environmental and Occupational Determinants of Cancer: Interventions for Primary Prevention', please visit [HEAL's Chemicals Health Monitor](#).

~ **European Union starts deliberations on Healthy Ageing:** The European Commission's department of Health & Consumer Affairs (DG SANCO) has held a consultation with the public on active and healthy ageing, as a first step to give this issue more prominence. HEAL, has submitted a response calling for initiatives on healthy ageing to consider environmental factors as determinants of health. It is imperative that 'prevention actions' to promote healthy ageing include reduction and elimination of environmental contaminants, as well as the current measures of screening and early detection. Our response included links to the CHE Environmental Threats to Healthy Ageing report. For more information on HEAL's response, please contact [Lisette@env-health.org](mailto:Lisette@env-health.org) and for more information on the consultation, please see [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/einclusion/deployment/ahaip/consultation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/deployment/ahaip/consultation/index_en.htm).

~ **Health and environmental groups ask Commission to revise air quality laws on health grounds:** HEAL and other environmental groups have called on the European Commission to immediately revise the National Emission Ceilings (NEC) Directive, a cornerstone of European air quality law. HEAL, alongside the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and Transport and Environment (T&E) wrote a letter to EU President Barroso and the EU Commissioners explaining that an immediate revision of the NEC directive should not be seen as a burden on Europe's economy but rather as an opportunity to put Europe on a recovery path that will improve the health of its citizens and their environment as quickly and as cheaply as possible.

[Read more](#)

## CHE Oregon

~ coordinated by Renee Hackenmiller-Paradis, [reneep@oeconline.org](mailto:reneep@oeconline.org)

~ **Registration is now open for the 3rd Annual NW Environmental Health Conference:** Bridging Research, Practice and Policy. The conference will take place on **Friday, February 11, 2011 from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM** at Portland State University in the Smith Memorial Student Union. This conference will host leading scientists, researchers and healthcare professionals in the field of environmental health with emphasis on the impact the environment has on health and healthcare practices. Register today! <http://www.oeconline.org/nwehc>. For more information, please contact Sara Gerlt Schroeder (971) 409-3381 or [nwehc@oeconline.org](mailto:nwehc@oeconline.org).

## CHE Washington

~ coordinated by Steve Gilbert, [sgilbert@innd.org](mailto:sgilbert@innd.org)

~ **On February 1, 2011 CHE-WA hosted an in-person meeting at which Sian Wu of Resource Media presented: *Environmental Health in the Media: Developing Effective Messages and Getting Better Coverage of Your Issues*.** If you were unable to attend you can view Wu's presentation plus

additional resources on the [CHE-WA webpage](#).

~ **New book released:** *Particles on the Wall* (POTW), published by Healthy World Press, will be released on February 13, 2011. POTW is an interdisciplinary book connecting science and art in exploring major themes of today's nuclear age. POTW illuminates key events regarding Washington State's nuclear history, current concerns with radioactive contamination, and the quest for peace. POTW brings together science factoids, poems, visual art, and historical memorabilia to reach out to hearts and minds in the exploration of one of the most significant and challenging developments in human history. POTW seeks to engage scientists and artists in an exploration of the deeper meaning of the nuclear age. More details and additional contributions can be found at [www.particlesonthewall.org](http://www.particlesonthewall.org). Copies of POTW can be requested by contacting Steven Gilbert at [sgilbert@innd.org](mailto:sgilbert@innd.org).

## Announcements and News Highlights

### US EPA 2011 National Environmental Leadership Award in Asthma Management

Are you a leader in asthma management? The US Environmental Protection Agency is currently accepting applications for the 2011 National Environmental Leadership Award in Asthma Management. If you are a health plan, health care provider or community in action that has demonstrated leadership in managing environmental asthma triggers as part of your comprehensive asthma management program, apply to receive recognition for your important work. Applications are due by March 1, 2011. For more information, visit [www.AsthmaAwards.info](http://www.AsthmaAwards.info).

### February 2011 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives available online

[Read more](#)

### February 2011 issue of Environmental Factor available online

[Read more](#)

- CHE maintains a [news feed](#) of environmental health related news announcements and events collected from a multitude of sources on CHE's website.

## Reports, Resources and Other Updates

### TEDX releases a new spreadsheet and summary of the potential health effects of chemicals identified in nearly 1,000 products used in natural gas operations.

For nearly half of the products, less than 1% of the ingredients were disclosed. Demands for full disclosure must require product manufacturers to reveal 100% of the ingredients in their products. This is necessary for effective air and water quality monitoring to protect public health and the environment.

[Download the spreadsheet and summary](#)

### New report: Mercury Pollution from Power Plants a Major Threat to Americans' Health, Environment

Power plants in America emitted 134,365 pounds of mercury pollution in 2009, according to the new Environment America report, *Dirty Energy's Assault on our Health: Mercury*. The report found that power plants in just four states-Texas, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia-are responsible for over 35 percent of all mercury pollution from power plants in the United States. The report comes as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is set to propose a standard by March to limit mercury and other toxic air pollution from power plants.

[Read the full report](#)

CHE lists hundred of reports, books, videos, databases and other resources in a searchable [Portal to Science](#) on CHE's website.

Thank you for taking the time to read the latest about CHE. As always, we welcome your questions and suggestions. Please direct comments to Elise Miller, Director of CHE, at [elise@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:elise@healthandenvironment.org).

Best wishes,

Elise Miller, MEd, Director

Steve Heilig, Director of Public Health and Education at San Francisco Medical Society and CHE

Erika Sanders, Administrative Coordinator

---

You are receiving this message because you are subscribed to the CHE National listserv. This message comes to you from the Collaborative on Health and the Environment, online at:

<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/>.

We encourage sharing of resources and welcome recipients of this email to forward it to others. However we do ask that you forward this message in its entirety, complete with its attribution and footer.