

CHE-Penn E-Newsletter #5, October, 2005

----- Coordinator's Report -----

Continuing Crisis in the Gulf

The death toll from Hurricane Katrina death toll is now estimated to be closer to 1,000 than 10,000 as originally feared, but the environmental and subsequent health impacts are still being tallied. The national Collaborative on Health and the Environment will hold a briefing call on the health effects of the hurricane and cleanup on Wednesday, October 12, 2005. (Go to <http://www.cheforhealth.org> to sign up.) CHE-Penn partner organization, Mold Across America, has been in touch with disaster response teams, giving people a better understanding of the hazards of toxic mold. Other groups are mobilizing to provide information and technology to aid with the clean up process.

Announce-only email list for CHE-Penn:

As you can see, I am still sending you this from my che-penn@comcast.net account, but am working on setting up an email list.

October events

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, and several of the events planned by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Pittsburgh Affiliate examine the environmental links to breast cancer. All events and updates are listed below, and are also posted to the CHE-Penn website at <http://www.che-penn.org/events.html>. If you have any health/environment related events coming up, please notify me and I will list them on the web page.

Dinner meeting for CHE-Penn partners, Thursday, November 17, 2005, 5-7 PM

I hope you are looking forward to our upcoming meeting. Each organizational partner of CHE-Penn will be asked to give a short update on their work. Please let me know if you are planning to attend this event. After the dinner, Andrew Wakefield, Ph.D., will present his research on the possible connections between the MMR vaccine and autism. Space is limited; please RSVP no later than November 1, 2005 to che-penn@comcast.net. Go to: <http://www.che-penn.org/publications/Wakefield-poster.pdf> to download the poster.

Speakers' List and Science Advisory Committee

Conrad Volz, PhD, MPH, Robbie Ali, MD, MPH, and I are developing an environmental health speakers' list and plan to convene a meeting of the CHE-Penn Science Advisory Committee in early December. Stay tuned for more on this next month.

Steffi Domike, CHE-Penn Coordinator

----- CHE-Penn partner profile: Health Education and Resources, Inc. (HEAR) -----

Rev. Nancy Dawson Firestone, President and Lead Consultant, HEAR, Inc. met Don Brown, Director of the Pennsylvania Consortium for Interdisciplinary Environmental Policy at the CHE-Penn Founding Conference. The Consortium is mounting a study of environmentally induced diseases and Firestone's home is under consideration as a study site.

Firestone, a United Methodist pastor, founded HEAR, Inc. (Health Education and Resources, Inc.) in May 2004, after she began building Pennsylvania's first American Lung Association® Health House® in Newport, PA. The American Lung Association of Pennsylvania and Firestone are partnering on education about health and indoor air quality.

Their partnership goals are:

- to create informed consumers and generate demands for healthier housing;
- to train and support contractors; and
- to educate policy makers.

Together they hosted the nation's first mid-construction open house to educate the public about healthy building practices. The building was featured in "Home Rx", *Central Pennsylvania Magazine* in the September, 2005 issue.

This house was built for:

- 1) Safe space for Firestone to heal from her environmental illness;
- 2) Safe work space for the HEAR, Inc. offices;
- 3) Safe guest apartment for furthering research for improvement of health; and
- 4) Research of disease/health in relation to indoor air quality.

HEAR, Inc. is currently writing curriculum *Environmentally Safe Churches* for publication through Discipleship Resources. Educational workshops are available to religious communities, healthcare organizations, disability advocacy groups, and businesses.

----- **EVENT: Saturday, October 8, 2005 – Breakfast Wellness Group** -----

The Breakfast Wellness group at the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rankin invited the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Pittsburgh Affiliate and Tiffany Miles for a program on environmental links to breast cancer and the special concerns for African American women.

--- **EVENT: Saturday, October 8, 2005 – Environmental Legacy of Steel Industry** ---

On Saturday, October 8 at 1:30 PM, Conrad D. Volz, Dr. P.H, M.P.H., will speak on "Exposure Assessment of Pennsylvania Communities Contaminated by Legacy Iron and Steel Industry (ISI) Waste" at the historic Pump House on Waterfront Drive in Homestead. The Pump House is located east of Homestead's Waterfront development, just past the railroad bridge on the river side of Waterfront Drive. Parking is available in front of the historic brick structure. This event is co-sponsored by CHE-Penn and the Battle of Homestead Foundation.

---- **EVENT: Tuesday, October 11, 2005 - Nurses' Role in Environmental Health** ----

On Tuesday, October 11, 2005, the Women's Health & Environmental Network (WHEN), Thomas Jefferson University, and Physicians for Social Responsibility are sponsoring a seminar for nurses and others interested in learning how environment and health are interrelated. The seminar will take place from 5:00 - 7:00 PM at Thomas Jefferson University, Bluemle Life Sciences Building, Room 105, 233 South 10th Street, Philadelphia.

In the past decade, science has demonstrated the link between contaminants in our environment and their impact on our health. Nurses are in a prime position to lead the charge for making changes in health care, advocating on behalf of patients and communities, and protecting front-line workers.

The speakers include:

- Julie A. Becker, PhD, MPH, Research Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia;
- Michael McCally, MD, PHD, Professor of Community Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City;
- Ramona Salotti, RN, BS, Occupational & Environmental Health Consultant from Glenside, Pennsylvania; and
- Barbara Sattler, RN, DrPH, FAAN, Director, Environmental Health Education Center; Associate Professor, University of Maryland School of Nursing in Baltimore.

To register, call WHEN at 215-763-0298 or email mercuryfreephilly@earthlink.net. Suggested donation is \$10.

----- **EVENT: Monday, October 17, 2005 – Rally for Single Payer Healthcare** -----

Pennsylvanians United for Single-payer Healthcare (PUSH) is co-sponsoring a rally on October 17, 2005 from 11 AM - 1 PM in the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg as part of the Pennsylvania HealthCare Solutions Coalition. This action is in support of the Pennsylvania Balanced & Comprehensive Health Care Reform Act Of 2005.

Endorsements and reservations for bus seats from Pittsburgh to the rally can be sent to Dr. Scott Tyson at TysMar@aol.com with copy to Sandy Orr sandyatpush@yahoo.com. Or send a note to: Just Health Care, 33 Terminal Way, Suite 407, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. (See: <http://ulwar.pair.com/phsc/site/index.html>)

----- **EVENT: Thursday, October 20, 2005 – Environment and Breast Cancer** -----

UPMC Northwest, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Pittsburgh Affiliate and CHE-Penn are sponsoring an environmental conference from 5:00 – 9:00 PM. at UPMC Northwest in Seneca, Venango County, PA. Contact Pam Neideritter for details at 814-677-1460.

CALL: Thursday, October 20, 2005 – Toxic Exposures & Developmental Disabilities

The American Association for Mental Retardation (AAMR) invites you to participate in a teleconference on “How Exposure to Common Pesticides Can Damage the Developing Brain: Lessons Learned from Chlorpyrifos and the Organophosphates” with Theodore A. Slotkin, PhD, Department of Pharmacology and Cancer Biology, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Department of Neurobiology, Duke University Medical Center.

To download a brochure, click on http://www.che-penn.org/Slotkin_AAMR.pdf

----- **EVENT: Saturday, November 5, 2005, “Air Pollution and Your Health”** -----

Residents for A Clean & Healthy Mon Valley and Clean Water Action/Clean Water Fund are hosting a workshop and health fair from 9 AM – 1 PM at the Jefferson Hills

Elementary School, 875 Old Clairton Road in Jefferson Hills.

The speakers include:

- Rachel Blair, MPH, American Lung Association of Pennsylvania;
- Conrad Volz, PhD, University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health;
- James Thompson from the Allegheny County Health Department;
- Mike Wright from the United Steelworkers of America ; and
- Colleen Willison from the Neville Island Good Neighbor Committee.

Register online at: <http://www.PABucketBrigade.org/registration.html> or call Suzie Brindle at 412-765-3053, ext. 210.

----- EVENT: Saturday, November 5, 2005, Environmental Health Fair -----

Paulette Schreiber, CRNP, invites your group to participate in the environmental health fair from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM on Saturday, November 5, 2005 in St. Mary's in Elk County.

The speakers include:

- Terry Collins, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Green Chemistry Carnegie Mellon University;
- Devra Davis, Ph.D., M.P.H. Director of the Center for Environmental Oncology at the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute;
- Steffi Domike, M.F.A., Coordinator of CHE-Penn;
- Heather Sage, M.En., Director of Outreach for Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture); and
- Pennsylvania State Representative Dan Surra.

In the afternoon the organizers plan to have numerous exhibits on health and the environment. Lunch and transportation from Pittsburgh will be provided by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Pittsburgh Affiliate. For more information call 814-788-8174, or email np_pcs@elkregional.com.

-----Thursday, November 17, 2005,CHE-Penn partner dinner and MMR lecture-

Come and report on your work at a dinner meeting scheduled for Thursday, November 17, 2005, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Mellon Institute at the corner of Bellefield and Fifth Avenues, Pittsburgh. After the dinner Andrew Wakefield, Ph.D., will present his research on the possible connections between the MMR vaccine and autism. After the 7:00-8:00 PM lecture by Dr. Wakefield, there will be a panel discussion with several doctors and researchers. The dinner is free of charge, but space is limited; please RSVP by November 1, 2005 to che-penn@comcast.net.

----- TOXIC MOLD, submitted by CHE-Penn Partner "Mold Across America" -----

Toxic poisoning from molds can produce mysterious symptoms that often go misdiagnosed because many doctors are not trained to recognize the symptoms of mold exposure. Exposure to indoor molds can cause a myriad of acute health issues, including, but not limited to: headaches/migraines, bloody noses, sneezing fits, skin rashes or open sores, difficulty breathing, muscle pain, increased asthma attacks, and burning in mouth. Molds produce allergens called mycotoxins and aflatoxins that can trigger allergic reactions and asthma attacks in humans and animals.

In cases of flooding and long periods of standing water, the chance of mold growth increases significantly. Mold spores naturally occur everywhere and when building materials such as drywall, carpeting, wallpaper and particleboard become wet, mold amplification begins. Once porous materials, including furniture, clothing and books, are damaged by water and/or contain visible mold growth, it should be properly wrapped and promptly discarded.

Helpful hints: Do not touch mold or moldy items with bare hands, avoid getting mold in your eyes and avoid breathing mold or mold spores. Mold in buildings should be treated aggressively to prevent rapid spread, deterioration and illness. Bleach should NOT be used to eradicate mold – it will cause additional air quality issues including additional mold growth.

More detailed information can be found at: <http://www.moldacrossamerica.org>

----- Environmental and Occupational Causes of Cancer – A Literature Review -----

The Collaborative on Health and the Environment announces the release of a study initiated by CHE's Cancer Working Group to summarize scientific evidence documenting associations between environmental and occupational exposures and certain cancers in the United States. The study, "Environmental and Occupational Causes of Cancer: A Review of Recent Scientific Evidence," documents that dozens of preventable environmental and occupational exposures are linked to nearly 30 types of cancer.

This is the first summary of the massive body of material in one accessible document. The study shows that many cancer cases and deaths are caused or contributed to by involuntary exposures. These exposures include: bladder cancer from the primary solvent used in dry cleaning, breast cancer from endocrine disruptors like bisphenol-A and other plastics components, lung cancer from residential exposure to radon, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma from solvent and herbicide exposure, and childhood leukemia from pesticides. Researchers from the University of Massachusetts Lowell produced the report.

See <http://www.cheforhealth.org/resources/cancerpaper.html> for more information.