

UNABRIDGED NOTES TO THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CONVERSATIONS ADVISORY
Convened by Oregon Toxics Alliance
June 7, 2010, Eugene Oregon

Topic 1: When it comes to the impact of chemical exposures on our health, people vary in their level of concern. We invite you to share any concerns you may have.

- Oil spill and other contaminant disasters causing illness in cleanup crews (esp. BP Gulf spill, 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, etc.); we need to be tracking this to prevent future repeats
- Biomass burning as an energy source
 - o Concern about impacts of emissions from this source on human health and forestry impacts
- Aerial spraying of pesticides, esp. in forestry, timber companies
- Roadside spraying, esp. by Dept. of Transportation
 - o Citizens spraying public medians on their own
 - o Drift
 - o Accidental exposure
- Air quality due to pollutants and toxins
 - o Indoor air quality as well
- Toxics in consumer products (soda cans, other food containers, cleaning products, food itself, toiletries, personal care products, pharmaceuticals, etc.)
 - o With pharmaceuticals: disposal education, marketing of the drugs themselves, and government regulation of prescriptions are all problematic
 - o Contaminants in vaccines
 - o Plastics, lack of good consumer protection and information on what they're made of and why they should be avoided, concern over their toxicity; PCV
 - o Adhesives
- Chemicals in buildings materials, additives in wood products
- Cancer causing and endocrine disruptors chemicals
- Water quality, monitoring for toxics in the waterways
- Transportation systems and infrastructure problems (built for greed and economics, rather than human and environmental health)
- GMO, lack of labeling laws; GMO crops used in biomass energy production
- Other food contaminants (esp. pesticides)
 - o Extreme concern regarding pesticide "ready" crops, crops that have to registered as pesticides themselves
- Agricultural chemicals in general
- Chemicals crossing the umbilical cord
- Breast health and exposure to toxic chemicals
- Nanotechnology concerns
- Chemical herbicides and pesticides (individual and agency use)
 - o Concern about the need for better testing and sampling (not monitoring in areas known to not be hot spots, where no toxics will be detected, etc.)
- Pesticide use in the household, household products (Raid, pet treatments, etc.)
- The effects from the military industrial complex
 - o Hanford, other nuclear waste sites
 - o Depleted uranium
 - o Nuclear cycle
 - o Military bases have significant contaminant levels
 - o Military population illnesses, looking at military and war sources of poisoning
- Aggregate, cumulative exposures

Topic 2: Think about and discuss a few values you believe should guide our nation's approach to protecting us from harmful chemical exposures.

- SAFETY: Widespread safety testing of all consumer products for contaminants and potential harms before sale and continued monitoring after sale
- ELIMINATE CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Separation of duties between government regulators and industry/companies
 - o Government appointments in Dept. of Ag./EPA/FDA/etc. should be neutral scientists
 - o Government should hold corporations accountable
 - o Penalties should go beyond just fines for offending companies
 - o Stricter/more stringent conflict of interest laws
- HEALTH AND SAFETY IS HIGHEST PRIORITY: Making public and environmental health safety and concern a higher/the highest priority in all areas (esp. over profits)
 - o Health standards should be more important, toxics should be banned from consumer products
 - o All citizens have a right to clean air, water and land; the natural world has these intrinsic rights as well
- TRANSPARENCY: Increased transparency in government, business and media
 - o Media must be publicly-minded, honest, transparent
- PUBLIC TOXICS RIGHT-TO-KNOW
 - o Easy access to information on toxics/pesticides/etc. should be available to the public
- PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE: corporations must prove their products are safe
 - o Err on the side of overprotection
- ORGANIC AND NON-GMO: Promoting natural and local foods; increase regulation on manufactured, processed foods
- COMMUNITY: Develop a sense of community
- WE ARE ONE WITH OUR ENVIRONMENT: Value the idea of interconnection:
 - o human, children, wildlife, environmental health are all one, highly related

Topic 3: We can learn from specific stories of success or failure related to protecting people from harmful chemical exposures. Have you experienced any successes or failures regarding protection from chemical exposures? What contributed to such successes or failures? [All those listed are successes]

- EU labeling policies
- EU "REACH" program
- Local agencies reducing sprays
- Safe alternatives to pesticides and herbicides through Integrated Pest Management
- Pesticide Free Parks, citizen empowerment

Topic 4: Many groups, from government to businesses to nonprofit organizations, have a part in protecting the public from harmful chemical exposures. Share your thoughts on steps one or more of these groups might take to prevent harmful exposures (national, state and local governments, agencies or businesses).

- Stringent, MANDATORY toxics reduction (not just monitoring)
 - o Implementation of Toxics Right to Know laws nationwide
- Testing for all 80,000 chemicals

- Increase buffer zones for aerial spraying, esp. in forestry
 - o Ideally, eliminate spray altogether
- Increased implementation of the precautionary principle, using children's health as a standard
- FIFRA overhaul to ensure that local governments can enact laws to protect the public from pesticides, ability to create county level buffer zones
- More public input and increased government consideration of and response to this input
- Media reform to ensure that the public has access to accurate, complete information and to ensure that exposures and incidents are reported
- Be more aggressive in response to marketing efforts: **FUND RESPONSES**
- Educate the public on chemicals through the school systems and student projects; incorporate successes into curriculum
 - o Increased access (and funding) to and for non-profits to the community, esp. schools and school programs
- Improve sampling and analysis in water monitoring; use of freshwater mussels as an indicator, not fish tissue, as mussels have fewer variables and uncertainty
- Ban toxics from consumer products
 - o List side effects in advertising and other media if they are used (similar to drug side effect warnings and the warnings on tobacco products)
 - o Remove double standards for products; same regulations for American markets as European and worldwide markets
- Subsidies for local organics, not mega-corporation monocrops; national government as local and organic agriculture promoter though other policies and actions as well
- Campaign finance reform
- Environmental economics and environmental justice should be better and more widely incorporated
- Laws guaranteeing access to healthy food and other basic life needs must be enacted such that these basic needs are available to everyone
- Clean up of military bases
- Obama should know more about nuclear waste
- Explicitly prioritize ecosystem and human health in every agency mission statement
- Reduce military industrial reliance on chemicals, esp. at bases; this is the biggest source of pollution
- Provide research on products that are natural alternatives (to consumer products and pesticides, etc.
- Educate agency personnel about consequences of chemical use with regard to the basics of biology
 - o Reeducate in some cases, esp. the Dept. of Forestry, etc.
 - o Perhaps using Barry Commoner ideas
 - o Natural Step movement
 - o Cradle to Cradle ideas, etc.
- Need national leadership from federal government; government needs to get serious about chemical and toxic issues
 - o Implement programs in schools, community-wide; perhaps start with small-scale trial programs which could be replicated on a wider-scale if successful
- Government needs to demonstrate commitment to values (those stated in Topic 2)
- New forestry plan