



# **Children's Environmental Health Network**

**A Voice in Washington  
for Children's  
Environmental Health**

**2007 Annual Report**

## From the Executive Director

Eventful, enlightening, valuable, and exciting are all words I would use to describe the Children's Environmental Health Network's (CEHN) accomplishments this year! I continue to enjoy the increased breadth of our partnerships as well as the incredible ongoing efforts in this field as we continue to advocate for the protection of children's environmental health.



Last September marked our First Annual Children's Environmental Health Advocate Award Reception. Guests included distinguished health professionals, public health advocates, researchers, and children's environmental health community leaders. The event highlighted CEHN's history and work as well as children's unique vulnerabilities and susceptibilities to environmental toxicants. The Honorable Carol Browner, former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator, was our first award recipient.

In October, CEHN launched our "Healthy Environments in Child Care and Preschool Settings" (HECCP) Program in Atlanta, Georgia, modeled after our 2005 and 2006 HECCP Program in California. We are extremely proud of this training and education program to raise awareness and encourage preventive behaviors and protective decision-making among child care providers, center directors, and children's families.

This year, we also launched a three-year project called "Augmenting Diverse Health Professional Participation in Children's Environmental Health." We will work to educate leaders in three key areas - pediatric and other health professionals, environmental justice, and public health communities - about how exposure to environmental toxicants affect the health and welfare of children, and to encourage these leaders to promote awareness of children's environmental health.

In March 2007, CEHN, in cooperation with the Center for International Environmental Law and the National Environmental Trust, organized and led a meeting of key medical and public health organization representatives. High-level presenters educated meeting participants on the need for health and medical community engagement in the emerging debate on federal chemical policy. CEHN provided a white paper on chemicals policy and worked with partner groups in identifying their needs for participating in this vital issue.

The "Collaborating with Partners" section of this report highlights a variety of the Network's partnership efforts and related activities over the year. I invite you to read about these efforts and more in the following pages. Thank you for your continued support of our mission and the field of children's environmental health as a whole!

Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, MPH  
July 1, 2007

## From the Board Chair

2006 marked a time of change for CEHN. Lynn R. Goldman, MD, MPH was honored by the CEHN Board for her four years of very dedicated service to the organization as Board Chair and as a leader in the field of children's environmental health. Dr. Goldman stepped down as Chair, passing on the legacy of this honored position to me. Drs. John McLachlan and Joan Cranmer, who each served on the CEHN Board for over 10 years, asked to become the first members of CEHN's newly created Advisory Board. We thank them for their service as Board Members and look forward to their continued work in this new capacity.



CEHN has continued as a leader within the field of children's environmental health. This past year we increased collaborations with and among key stakeholder communities. In particular, CEHN strengthened relationships with the childcare provider community, health professional leaders, and housing entities. CEHN will continue to broaden and support a "network" of those who want to protect and promote the health of children.

Board development is a priority for my tenure as Board Chair. We have begun an outreach effort to identify and find new Board members who bring a diversity of perspective that will allow us to grow as an organization and expand into new communities interested in promoting the health and well-being of children. We welcome two new Board members to CEHN: Brenda Afzal, RN, MS, Director of Health Programs at the Environmental Health Education Center for the University of Maryland School of Nursing and Dr. Joel Hunter, Senior Pastor of Northland Church in Longwood, FL. Brenda is a champion for children's environmental health protection and works tirelessly at the local, state, and federal levels to develop nurses' capacity to effectively engage in environmental health issues and outcomes. In connection with the partnerships and collaborations that are the hallmarks of Joel's work, he looks forward to working with us to protect children's health.

Financially, CEHN is on solid footing. We continue to increase capacity to support current program priorities and now begin the much-needed task of sustainability for our vital work.

Over the past 15 years, the Children's Environmental Health Network has led the country and the international community toward a better understanding of pediatric environmental health. Laws have been passed, regulations promulgated, policies created, programs implemented, and research conducted that address the role that environmental exposures play in the health of our children. CEHN can be proud of its role as visionary, leader, participant, and nudge in all of these endeavors. There is still much to do and we are beginning a strategic planning process that will take CEHN into its third decade as a leader in children's environmental health.

I would like to thank the CEHN Board and staff for their tireless commitment to this challenging work. I invite you to take a moment to look over the work presented within this report and know that CEHN remains energized and committed to the protection of children and their health.

E. Ramona Trovato  
July 1, 2007

# Healthy Environments for Child Care and Preschool Settings (HECCP)

We live in an environment surrounded by chemicals that have not been adequately tested for their safety in relation to human health. Children can be more vulnerable to environmental exposures than adults. To advance the knowledge of children's environmental health, CEHN identified the environments of preschools and child care settings as a high priority for action. The training program we developed educates child care providers and administrators on creating healthier and safer environments. The program includes fact sheets on key topics, such as safe cleaning alternatives, integrated pest management, lead poisoning, and indoor mold.

After a successful program in Alameda and Contra Costa counties in California, collaboration began in 2006 to expand the program to Atlanta, GA. The goals of this project are to train Early Childhood professionals to: (1) identify environmental health hazards in and around their facilities, (2) determine recommended methods to alleviate identified hazards, (3) implement the chosen method(s) to ensure a safer environment for children and employees, (4) communicate effectively with parents about measures families can take to reduce toxic risks at home, and (5) develop an educated base of support for needed protective policies in child care facilities by training child care providers, administrators, and related families affected at the local level. Trainings will begin in the fall of 2007. A total of 14 topical modules were drafted this year and will become the core of the training curriculum.

This program is made possible by the collaborative efforts of CEHN, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Radon Program, EPA's Region III Indoor Air Quality Office, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), the Association of Environmental Health Clinics (AOEC), the Southeast Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit, the Georgia Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and Bright from the Start: GA Department of Early Care and Learning.



# Augmenting Diverse Health Professional Participation in Children's Environmental Health

In August 2006, CEHN began a three-year project to educate leaders in three key communities - pediatric and other health professionals, environmental justice, and public health communities - about how exposures to environmental hazards affect the health and welfare of children and to encourage leaders to promote awareness of the issues of children's environmental health. This project will continue until August 2009.

During the spring and summer of 2007, CEHN continued researching and prioritizing the health professional, environmental justice, and public health organizations that were targeted for outreach related to this effort. Abstracts for presentation were submitted to various health professional conferences in the fall of 2006.

CEHN partnered with the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) and presented at various health professional conferences around the country: the 11th National Hispanic Medical Association Conference in March 2007, the Environmental Justice in America Conference in March 2007, and the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual National Association of School Nurses Conference in June 2007. In addition, Ms. Witherspoon presented at the May 2007 Eastern Queens Alliance symposium that allowed for increased networking capacity and opportunities to identify further potential program Advisory Task Force members.

CEHN has begun scheduling meetings with key leaders of the National Hispanic Medical Association, the National Association of School Nurses, the National Association of Hispanic Nurses, and the National Black Nurses Association. The goal in the second stage of this project is to follow up on the opportunities for engaging these health professional organizations and their members in the arena of children's environmental health and incorporating these issues into their current work.

CEHN gratefully acknowledges the partnership of NEEF and, especially, the ENVIRON Foundation for their three year support of this project.



# Advocating for Child Protective Policies

## Chemicals Policy Project

The primary U.S. law regulating the thousands of industrial chemicals in our environments, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), is outdated. Adopted by Congress in 1976, TSCA's core statute has never been reauthorized or amended, and little has been accomplished under this ineffective law.

In 2006 and 2007, CEHN continued to educate key stakeholders about the need to reform this statute. In March 2007, CEHN, in cooperation with the Center for International Environmental Law and the National Environmental Trust, organized and led a meeting of key medical and public health organization representatives. High-level presenters educated meeting participants on the need for health and medical community engagement in the emerging debate on federal chemical policy. CEHN provided a white paper on chemicals policy and worked with partner groups in identifying their needs for participating in this vital issue.

## Global Climate Change

CEHN is investigating the existing state of knowledge regarding the impact of global climate change on children's health. CEHN hopes to identify partners and secure resources to advance the knowledge and level of awareness of the impact of global climate change on children's environmental health.

## Other Activities

CEHN frequently spoke out in support of policies protecting children, such as:

- Supporting full funding for the National Children's Study;
- Supporting significantly increased funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program and to enhance the Environmental Health Laboratory's biomonitoring capacity;
- Opposing a recent EPA rule change to the Federal Toxic Release Inventory that restricted the public's right-to-know about harmful chemicals released from thousands of facilities in states and communities across the country;
- Urging the update of Federal radiation protection standards, which are currently based on average lifetime exposure of an adult Caucasian male;
- Urging the EPA to restrict and control the use of highly toxic rodenticides; and
- Opposing a U.S. House bill to preempt state laws that control persistent organic pollutants which are stricter than Federal standards, and to place barriers to adding future persistent organic pollutants to a treaty that limits the use of these known toxicants.

Alongside activities to increase awareness and action to protect children from environmental toxicants and promote a healthy environment, our staff researched and answered questions from reporters, partner groups, federal and state legislators, and even pediatricians staffing children's agencies in other nations.

# Collaborating with Partners

## **Mobilizing Housing and Health Communities to Prevent Radon Exposure**

In October 2006, CEHN entered into a partnership with the Alliance for Healthy Homes on an outreach education project to equip key leaders and institutions with relevant tools and information in order to reduce exposure to radon in residential properties. This project, supported by the EPA Office of Air and Radiation, will continue until September 2009 and aims to (1) increase engagement of public health and health care professional communities to raise public awareness of the health effects of radon exposure and promote preventative actions by owner-occupants, renters, and public agencies; and (2) encourage housing-related professions and industries to adopt Radon-Resistant New Construction (RRNC) and incorporate radon mitigation into retrofits.

CEHN and the Alliance will use innovative approaches to engage and guide public health and affordable housing industry entities in providing significant leadership in building awareness, responsiveness, and accountability for adopting practices and policies supporting radon exposure prevention. The innovation lies in the systematic targeting of these particular constituencies in order to turn their attention to radon and influence public health messages, housing industry practices, consumer choices and behavior, and public policy. The project will focus attention on housing and policies in states at high risk for radon hazards. After exploratory communication with state radon programs followed by consultation with the EPA project officer, the Alliance will identify two states in which statewide activity will occur.

All project activities at the national level will be oriented to ensure benefit to low-income renter and owner-occupant populations in high-risk communities. The project has four target audiences: health professionals, affordable housing and housing finance institutions, networks of relevant public health and housing partners, and broader systems with a stake in radon exposure reduction.

CEHN has begun outreach to public health-related national organizations, encouraging them to embrace radon exposure prevention by methods such as adding the topic of radon to the content of their websites, publications, conferences, and other information resources and by systematically communicating key information to their constituents. The roll-out of this outreach effort began in January 2007 as part of Radon Action Month.

Looking forward, CEHN will further engage the health professional and public health communities by assisting them in implementation of radon exposure prevention methods. CEHN will also target outreach to schools of public health and schools offering degrees and certifications in environmental health in order to encourage the addition of radon to the academic curriculum.

# Collaborating with Partners

## “Making Connections” and Healthy Child Care

*Making Connections* is the flagship initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s strategy to help children succeed in 10 major U.S. cities. The Children’s Environmental Health Network in partnership with the Alliance for Healthy Homes undertook a project to determine workable means for *Making Connections* families, care providers and community-based organizations to address children’s environmental health. Specifically, one of the core results sought through *Making Connections* is to increase the number of families in the initiative neighborhoods who have and can ensure their young children are healthy and prepared to succeed in school.

The Network’s efforts on this project included researching the availability of children’s environmental health indicators data, compiling this data, and investigating the status of children’s environmental health awareness in child care facilities within *Making Connections* communities. By conducting interviews with more than two dozen key child care professionals in 11 cities, analyzing the interviews, and conducting additional research, the Network generated information that will lead to a better understanding of what child care professionals consider a healthy environment for the children in their care, how they are assuring such an environment exists, and what they would find useful to assist them in this effort. Key contacts within Head Start, child care resource and referral, and child care licensing agencies were interviewed. Topics included:

- Environmental Assessments
- Regulatory Requirements
- Facility Operations And Policies
- Pesticide Policies And Practices

## National Children’s Study

The National Children’s Study (NCS), the nation’s first large-scale, long-term study of children, will follow a cohort of 100,000 U.S. children from before birth for at least 18 years. This vital study is designed to help pinpoint the root causes of many major diseases and disorders by investigating the effects of environmental factors on children. In 2006, CEHN led a project to assist with outreach to communities that have been selected for inclusion in the NCS. This project reflects our long term support for the Study as well as for the promotion of community involvement in environmental health research.

Through this collaboration, CEHN developed a community outreach document highlighting best practices for the NCS’ “Vanguard Centers” to consider and follow and compiled groupings of organizations working in children’s environmental health in each target community. As the study was launched in numerous sites around the U.S., CEHN provided assistance in community engagement and outreach with the goal of facilitating communications among NCS staff and key partners in the public health, pediatric and environmental communities, especially in the communities served by the Study’s Vanguard Centers.

# Collaborating with Partners

## Environmental Justice

The Network continues to focus efforts on advocating for all children, especially those at high-risk and who face a disproportionate burden from environmental exposures. CEHN wrote an essay as part of a new Report, “Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty” describing the unfortunate realities children of color continue to face all over America. The report is an update of a study the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries first conducted in 1987. CEHN also presented at the Environmental Justice in America Conference in March 2007 and participated on a community panel organized by the Eastern Queens Alliance in May 2007.

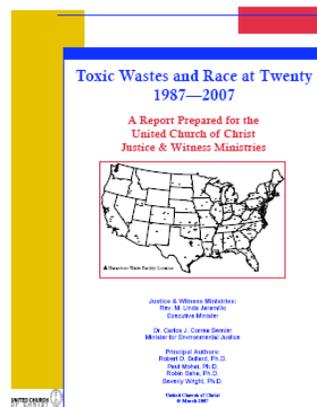
## Kids Count

The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT initiative is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. KIDS COUNT posts more than 30 education, youth risk factor, and population and family indicators in its State Level Data Online System. These benchmarks of child well-being enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children.

However, KIDS COUNT does not currently include any environmental health indicators. Few indicators exist that provide data on a state or national level regarding children’s exposures and health effects related to the environment, such as learning disabilities or asthma.

To assist in addressing this gap, CEHN developed a background paper researching potential key indicators of immediate use to parents, community-based organizations, and others concerned about children’s health. The Network identified four potential indicators: (1) prevalence rate of pediatric asthma; (2) percentage of children exposed to secondhand smoke; (3) percentage of children with elevated blood lead levels; and (4) the proportion of children on Medicaid screened for lead as required by federal guidelines.

CEHN Executive Director Nsedu Obot Witherspoon and Health Policy Specialist Carol Stroebel presented the paper at the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s “Making Voices Count for Kids: 2006 Joint Conference” in September 2006. The presentation was well received by Kids Count grantees, further supporting the need to connect with these state leaders.



# 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Children's Environmental Health Advocate Award Reception

To raise awareness of the impact of environmental toxicants on children's health, to acknowledge effective children's environmental health advocates, and to raise support for our important programs, CEHN held its First Annual Children's Environmental Health Advocate Award Reception in September 2006. Guests included distinguished health professionals, public health advocates, researchers, and community-based leaders within the field of children's environmental health. The event highlighted not only the history and work of CEHN but also children's unique vulnerabilities and susceptibilities when they are exposed to environmental toxicants. The 10th Anniversary of the *Food Quality Protection Act* (FQPA) was also highlighted. The first award was presented to the Honorable Carol Browner, former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator. Ms. Browner was honored for her years of valuable contributions to the health, well-being, and safety of children within all environments. The event was hosted at the Nortel Corporation offices in Washington, D.C. CEHN is very thankful for the great support provided by the host, friends, and partners. The Second Annual Children's Environmental Health Advocate Reception will occur in October 2007.

## Promoting Ethics in Children's Environmental Research

To bring diverse expertise together to construct the strongest foundation for clear, practical, and generally accepted ethical research guidelines, the Network convened a groundbreaking two-day workshop on "Ethical Issues in Children's Environmental Health: A Symposium on Key Research and Clinical Questions" on March 5th - 6th 2004, funded by the National Center for Environmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These efforts continued through 2005 and 2006. The Network worked with its extensive network of researchers, clinicians, professional associations, and public interest organizations to promote the use and continued refinement of these guidelines. Since the meeting, the lectures and reports that came out of the original workshop were collected and edited into scientific papers. These papers were accepted as a mini-monograph and submitted for publication in *Environmental Health Perspectives* in September 2006.

Five leaders in the field were asked to submit papers outlining the issues of:

- Research in pediatric environmental health (Dr. Bruce Lanphear);
- Ethical issues unique to children in environmental health research (Dr. Maura Ryan);
- Community involvement (Ms. Peggy Shepard);
- Relationship with industry and other funders (Dr. Richard Sharp); and
- Privacy (Ms. Celia Fisher).

These articles are now available on the *Environmental Health Perspectives* Web page at <http://www.ehponline.org/realfiles/members/2004/7166/7166.html>

# Thank You to Our Individual Donors

## 2007 Honor Roll List

Melissa Aggelis  
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*Executive Director*

**Kathryn Graczyk, M.P.H.**  
*Program Assistant*

**Consultant**  
**Carol Stroebe**  
*Health Policy Specialist*

## Linking Science and Advocacy

CEHN maintains two professional listserves: the CEHN Science List holds discussions around the current research and science within the field of children's environmental health, while the CEHN Community List provides discussion for general advocacy within the field of children's environmental health.

To subscribe, send a blank message to:  
[Cehnsience-on@cehn.org](mailto:Cehnsience-on@cehn.org)

[Cehncommunity-on@cehn.org](mailto:Cehncommunity-on@cehn.org)

## About the Children's Environmental Health Network

The Children's Environmental Health Network is a 501(c)3 national organization with a multidisciplinary mission that involves protecting the fetus and children from environmental health hazards and promoting a healthy environment. To achieve this mission, CEHN's goals are to:

- Promote the development of a sound public health and child-focused national policy with an emphasis on children most at risk;
- Elevate public awareness of environmental toxicants to children;
- Educate health professionals, policy makers, and community members in preventive strategies; and
- Stimulate prevention-oriented research.



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