

PSR[®]
**Physicians for Social Responsibility
Maine Chapter**

Maine Update

June 21, 2010

PSR Maine Office Moves to Freeport on July 1



PSR Maine's New Home

Next week, PSR Maine will leave Portland for a new office in the Freeport Community Services building. It includes access to several conference rooms and a large event space with commercial kitchen. Come visit us at:

53 Depot St.
Freeport ME 04032

As of July 1, our phone number will be:

(207) 869-1014

The building that houses our current office is being taken over by one large tenant. The move to Freeport will put the office closer to the homes of several PSR Maine staff members and board members and will reduce our travel-related carbon emissions by at least 5 metric tons annually.

Maine Proposes Ban on BPA in Baby Bottles and Sippy Cups

Public Hearing on August 19th

Thanks in part to advocacy by PSR Maine and our partners in the Alliance for a Clean and Healthy Maine, Maine's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has recommended a ban on the use of the chemical Bisphenol-A (BPA) in baby bottles, sippy cups, water bottles, and other reusable food and beverage containers. To complete the next step in implementing Maine's groundbreaking Kid-Safe Products Act, the DEP is



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Proposed BPA Ban
Climate Change & Health
Adverse Childhood Events
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Online Resources & Publications

[Pediatric Environmental
Health Toolkit](#)

The Toolkit is a combination of easy-to-use reference guides for health providers and user friendly health education materials on preventing exposures to toxic chemicals and other substances that affect infant and child health. The materials are visually appealing, practical and easy to use. The Toolkit is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

[Learn more](#) about the Toolkit or [download it](#) to your Blackberry, iPhone, Palm or Windows Mobile device.

[Hazardous Chemicals
in Health Care](#)

This PSR report details the first investigation ever of chemicals found in the bodies of health care professionals. Mainers Stephanie Lash, MD and Rep. Anne Perry, NP participated in the study.

Free

also recommending BPA as Maine's first "Priority Chemical" under the new law.

The Board of Environmental Protection has voted to hold a public hearing on the proposal on August 19th. If you'd like to testify at the hearing, please contact PSR Maine's [Sue Kring](#).

Bisphenol-A was developed over a century ago and was considered for use as an estrogen replacement therapy in the 1930's. BPA is now a chemical building block for polycarbonate plastic and is also used in the epoxy resins that line food cans, including many infant formula cans. Exposure to BPA comes from eating food or drinking water stored in containers that have BPA. Small children may be exposed by hand-to-mouth and direct oral contact with materials containing BPA. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, 93% of Americans have detectable levels of BPA in their bodies.

BPA exposure has been linked to a significant number of health problems, especially reproductive and developmental problems. Sandra Cort, Board Member and Past President of the Learning Disabilities Association of Maine, explained, "The evidence against BPA is overwhelming. It has been connected to learning and behavioral disabilities such as ADHD, breast and prostate cancer, reproductive damage, diabetes, and obesity. Exposure to BPA in the womb, during infancy, or in childhood can set the stage for a lifetime of health problems. The cost of BPA for Maine families and Maine's economy is both staggering and preventable. We are pleased that the DEP has made BPA its first and top priority."

Maine Doctors Sound Alarm about Climate Change

Transcript of an MPBN radio story by Josie Huang that aired on May 20. Listen [here](#).



PSR Maine Exec. Director Paul Santomena addresses the recent Climate and Health Forum. Other panelists (L-R) Dr. Paul Mayewski, Lisa Pohlmann, Dr. Stephen Sears, Dr. Norma Dreyfus.

Environmentalists have spoken out on climate change for years, but another group is now also trying to raise awareness about the issue: doctors. Several dozen physicians met in Portland to discuss the impact of a warmer planet at an educational workshop organized by Harvard Medical School and the Maine Medical Association.

Some, such as state epidemiologist Stephen Sears, already sounded well-versed in the purported links between weather changes and public health.

"One of the things we know from climate change is that there appear to be more severe storms or heavier rainfalls. And when you have over two to three inches of rain -- which we've had several of those storms -- it pushes our sewage systems and our water disposal systems to the limit

Continuing Education Courses

How to Screen Patients for Domestic Violence Exposure

Earn CMEs by attending this one hour introduction to safe and effective domestic violence screening and referral. To book a training at your location or to learn more, contact [Janey Morse](#).

Pediatric Environmental Health Refresher Course

Taught by PSR Maine clinician members, this one hour course uses case studies to explore contemporary environmental health practice. To book a training or to learn more, contact [Sue Kring](#).

How to Use the Environmental Pediatric Health Toolkit: An Online Course

Physicians, Nurses, Nurse Practitioners and other health professionals can earn 1.5 credit hours by taking this

and sometimes they overflow," he says.

Sears says disruption to these systems creates a potential for water-borne diseases. He points to a recent water main break in the Boston area that required nearly two million residents to boil tap water to avoid parasitic infections. "It does not take very much if our system breaks down for diseases to come back that we think are sort of controlled."

Physicians also tie climate change to increasingly common heat waves in southern Maine, which they say leads to deaths in people with heart and lung disease.

And during the winter, "we're seeing more rain rather than snow, and that sets us up for ice storms that are treacherous and we call it 'orthopoedic weather,'" says Dr. Paul Epstein, assistant director of Harvard's Center for Health and Global Environment.

He says warmer weather also creates better survival conditions for pests that affect human health, such as ticks that carry Lyme disease. "You have seen in Maine here an incredible increase from about 100 cases of Lyme disease in 2000 to close to a 1,000 last year."

Epstein says Maine has seen its average temperature rise by 1.4 degrees in the last century compared to the national average of one degree.

Paul Mayewski, director of the Climate Change Institute at the University of Maine, says that's because of Maine's location. "The warming is thus far affecting the high latitudes of both hemispheres more. We're close to the ocean so, as a consequence, as the ocean releases heat, we're going to feel it."

Doctors have spoken out on the link between air pollution and respiratory problems such as asthma and allergies. But only more recently are they drawing global warming into their field of focus.

"We really need to pay attention to this and weigh in on it," says Dr. Norma Dreyfus, who chairs the public health committee for the Maine Medical Association. "We as physicians are in a unique position to act as educators, both in the office and in the community, on the mitigation of, and adaptation to, the impending public health threats that come as a result of climate change."

Dreyfus says that doctors should promote walking paths and alternative transportation such as bicycles. She adds that doctors' offices and hospitals should try to reduce their own carbon footprint by reducing energy use, for example.

Dr. Vincent Felitti speaks at MMC tomorrow

Attendees eligible for 1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™

Dr. Felitti is one of the principal investigators of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, a long-term, in-depth analysis of over 18,000 adults that matches their current health status against eight categories of adverse childhood experiences. Findings to date reveal a powerful

on-demand online offering from PSR and the CDC. Includes an introduction to environmental health, case studies, a lesson on how to take environmental health histories and specific guidance on using PSR's Environmental Health Toolkit. To take the course or to learn more, please visit the [ATSDR website](#).

Quick Links

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relationship between our emotional experiences as children and our physical and mental health as adults, as well as a strong link with the major causes of adult mortality in the United States.

Dr. Felitti's presentation is free. Space is limited. Please RSVP [here](#).



PROGRAM:

**The Implications of Adverse
Childhood Events:**

*Implications for Physicians
and Early Childhood Professionals*

SPEAKER:

Vincent J. Felitti, MD
Department of Preventive Medicine,
Kaiser Permanente Medical Care Program,
San Diego, CA

Tuesday,
June 22, 2010,
4 – 5:30 PM

■ **REGISTRATION:**

There's no charge for this event
Space is limited
RSVP suggested but not required; respond to tstevens@mekids.org

■ **SPONSORED BY:**

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Maine Medical Center, Division of Community and Preventive Medicine
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PSR/Maine uses the values and expertise of medicine and public health to protect human life from the greatest threats to health and survival.

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