

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

Maine Update

March 12, 2010

Maine Speaking Tour: Military & Medical Perspectives on the Current Nuclear Threat

*Col Richard Klass & Dr. Ira Helfand in Maine
April 5 & 6*

April 5:

12:30 pm Portland, USM,
Wishcamper Center Rm 133

3:30 pm Lewiston, Bates
College, Chase Hall Lounge
(co-sponsored by the Bates
Debating Club)



7:30 pm Brunswick, Curtis Memorial Library
(co-sponsored by the Maine League of Women
Voters)

April 6:

12:00 pm Waterville, The Center, 93 Main St.

3:00 pm Orono, University of Maine, Little Hall, Rm
120 (co-sponsored by the School of Public &
International Affairs)

A recent TV documentary featured Portland as the site of a nuclear "dirty bomb" detonation. Top intelligence officials are "certain" that terrorists will attempt an attack on the U.S. in the next six months. In an age when terrorists seek to obtain and use weapons of mass destruction, what role, if any, should nuclear weapons play in our national security strategy? Colonel Richard Klass (USAF, ret.) of the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation and Dr. Ira Helfand of Physicians

Click to View:
Nuclear Speaking Tour
Climate Change & Health
Conference
New BPA Study
Domestic Violence and
Unemployment
Online Resources
Continuing Ed Courses

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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

for Social Responsibility will be in Maine April 5 & 6 to provide medical and military perspectives on this question and other nuclear security issues.

Klass and Helfand's presentation, *A Fork in the Road on Nuclear Weapons: Which Path to Security?*, will discuss the potential impact of a nuclear weapons attack, what Cold War nuclear weapons policies mean in an age of terrorism, and the Obama administration's diplomatic efforts to curb nuclear weapons proliferation. Treaties, including the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, will be up for Senate ratification in the next year. Maine Senators Collins and Snowe will have deciding votes.



Colonel Richard Klass served in the U.S. Air Force for over 22 years, retiring in 1980. His decorations include the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion of Merit, and Purple Heart. Colonel Klass currently serves as Executive Director for the Veterans' Alliance for Security and Democracy (VETPAC). He lives in Arlington, VA.



Ira Helfand, M.D. is a Specialist in Emergency Medicine in Springfield MA and a co-founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR). Dr. Helfand has published widely on the medical implications of nuclear explosions and has provided congressional testimony on developing systems to better respond to medical disasters.

All events are free and open to the public.

**Tour sponsored by PSR, PSR Maine, and
The Council for a Livable World**

care professionals. Mainers Stephanie Lash, MD and Rep. Anne Perry, NP participated in the study.

Free 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 Krings](#).

How to Use the Environmental Pediatric Health Toolkit: An Online

Dr. Michael McGeehin Headlines Climate Change & Public Health Conference April 7 in Hallowell

*Climate Change and Public Health Conference:
Exploring the Role of Public Health and Health Care Practitioners*

Wed., April 7, 2010

7:30 am - 4:30 pm

Maple Hill Farm, Hallowell

[Register before March 24th](#)



Conference goals include:

- *To create a common understanding in the public health community about the causes of climate change and its impact on health*
- *To put climate change mitigation and adaptation in the context of a public health framework*
- *To identify co-health benefits and linkages with public health, environmental, healthcare and community organizations to address climate change from a public health perspective*
- *To identify and commit personal, organizational or policy actions to address the public health impact of climate change*



Conference Keynote Speaker Micheal McGeehin, PhD, MSPH, is the Director of the Division of Environmental Hazards & Health Effects, National Center for Environmental Health, U.S. CDC. (McGeehin is pictured here providing congressional testimony in 2008.)

Dr. McGeehin has been a scientist with the CDC for over 28 years and has spent most of that time working on environmental health issues including lead poisoning in children, asthma, drinking water contamination, air pollution, radiation exposures, environmental health tracking, cancer clusters, and morbidity and mortality related to heat waves, hypothermia and extreme weather events.

Dr. McGeehin also served as co-chair of the Human Health Sector for the U.S. National Assessment Team, responsible for assessing the possible human health effects on the U.S. population resulting from global climate change.

Other conference speakers include Dr. Dora Ann Mills, Dr. Andy Smith, David Littell, and Dr. George Jacobsen. [Full agenda.](#)

The conference is sponsored by UNE, Harvard School of Public Health, the Maine CDC, and the New England Alliance for Public Health Workforce Development and supported by the American Lung Association of New England, the Maine Center for Public Health, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the Maine Medical Association and PSR Maine.

More Bisphenol A Science: Permanent Uterus Abnormalities

from [Yale University Office of Public Affairs](#)

Course

Physicians, Nurses, Nurse Practitioners and other health professionals can earn 1.5 credit hours by taking this 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.](#)

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Researchers at Yale School of Medicine have discovered that exposure during pregnancy to Bisphenol A (BPA), a common component of plastics, causes permanent abnormalities in the uterus of offspring, including alteration in their DNA. The findings were reported in the March issue of Journal of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB J.).

Led by Hugh S. Taylor, M.D., professor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences at Yale, the study is the first to show that BPA exposure permanently affects sensitivity to estrogen.

Taylor and his team used two groups of mice, one exposed to BPA as a fetus during pregnancy and another exposed to a placebo. They examined gene expression and the amount of DNA modification in the uterus. They found that the mice exposed to BPA as a fetus had an exaggerated response to estrogens as adults, long after the exposure to BPA. The genes were permanently programmed to respond excessively to estrogen.

"The DNA in the uterus was modified by loss of methyl groups so that it responded abnormally in adulthood," said Taylor. "The gene expression was permanently epigenetically altered and the uterus became hyper-responsive to estrogens."

Taylor said that exposure to BPA as a fetus is carried throughout adulthood. "What our mothers were exposed to in pregnancy may influence the rest of our lives. We need to better identify the effect of environmental contaminants on not just crude measures such as birth defects, but also their effect in causing more subtle developmental errors."

Citation: The FASEB Journal (Journal of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology) Vol. 24, Issue 3 (March 2010)

Does Unemployment Increase Domestic Violence?

Senator Harry Reid has been criticized for commenting recently that out-of-work men are more abusive than employed men. "Men, when they're out of work, tend to be abusive" said Reid during a procedural vote in the Senate on February 22. Is he right?

From [The Washington Post](#):

While no study suggests that men "tend" to become abusive when unemployed, a 2004 National Institute of Justice study found that men who experience unemployment are more likely to engage in arguments with intimate partners that end in violence than men who are employed, and that the impact of unemployment is particularly acute in disadvantaged communities with thin social ties, where 15.6 percent of couples with men experiencing unstable employment have violent altercations.

From [The Washington Times](#):

Apparently, Mr. Reid is ether looking at some anecdotal evidence or just pulling thoughts out of thin air. Perhaps Leader Reid and his staff should check out California State University's Martin S. Fiebert, study examining "Assaults by Women On Their Spouses Or Male Partners."

According to the summary, the study blows away any claim Mr. Reid thinks he has on the issue of domestic violence:

"bibliography examines 271 scholarly investigations: 211 empirical studies and 60 reviews and/or analyses, which demonstrate that women are as physically aggressive, or more aggressive, than men in their relationships with their spouses or male partners. The aggregate sample size in the reviewed studies exceeds 365,000."

Maybe Majority Leader Reid ran into this woman. She falsely accused her husband of domestic violence. Domestic violence happens to both genders, and Mr. Reid should not be throwing out accusations, when he appears to know very little about the issue.

From the [National Network to End Domestic Violence](#):

NNEDV's president, Sue Else, said, "The economy does not cause domestic violence but can make it worse. Senator Reid is correct in discussing how pervasive domestic violence is and what job loss can do to exacerbate the problem. The poor economy can fuel the fire of domestic violence and limit options for victims to escape. The numbers back up what Senator Reid is seeing in Nevada."

Two indicators of economic distress also are related to the risk of intimate violence against women. First, the rate of violence increases as the number of periods of male unemployment increases. In couples in which the male is always employed, the rate of violence is 4.7 percent. The rate rises to 7.5 percent when the male experiences one period of unemployment and to 12.3 percent when he experiences two or more periods of unemployment between waves.

Second, a strong relationship is found between subjective feelings of financial strain and the likelihood of violence against a woman in an intimate relationship. The rate of violence among couples with high levels of subjective financial strain is roughly three and a half times as high as it is among couples with low subjective strain (9.5 versus 2.7 percent).

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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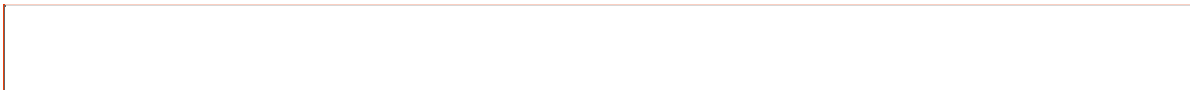
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