

Maine Update

May 10, 2010

Taking "Steps to Safety" Across Maine



Daniel Oppenheim, MD presenting to Portland Rotary. Photo by Bruce Coffin

Recently, PSR Maine members have been delivering a nuclear nonproliferation talk called "Steps to Safety" to Rotary Clubs across the state. With the New START Treaty signed and submitted to the Senate, their talks have become all the more timely and relevant. Doug Dransfield, MD spoke at the Westbrook and Lewiston clubs, Daniel Oppenheim, MD spoke to the Casco Bay Sunrise gathering, Dave Clark, MD addressed the Lewiston-Auburn Breakfast Club, and Lani Graham, MD spoke to the Augusta and Brunswick clubs.

Audiences have been open and engaged, asking excellent questions about nuclear terrorism, treaty verification and the role that Senators Collins and Snowe will play in both New START and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty ratification.

Please help us reach new audiences by recommending a civic or church group to host a Steps to Safety talk. You may email Roger Fenn or call him at (207) 841-5291 with your recommendations.

Hearings for New START are scheduled to begin in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee May 18th. Senators Collins and Snowe pay close attention to public opinion, so now is the time to make your public statement in favor of ratification. To submit a letter to the editor of your local paper [use our simple online tool](#).

One final note. From May 17th to 21st, we are joining in a national week of advocacy for New START. It's our time to [write letters to Senators Snowe and Collins](#) letting them



At Senator Snowe's office in April: Dr. Ira Helfand, Paul Santomenna, Snowe Staffer Jim Catella, Dr. Peter Wilk

know that you enthusiastically support the swift ratification of New START. During a recent visit to Senator Snowe's DC office, her staff confirmed that the Senator is influenced by both the content and volume of constituent letters.

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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.

President's Cancer Panel Urges Stronger Chemical

Free

Regulations



"The President's Cancer Panel is the Mount Everest of the medical mainstream, so it is astonishing to learn that it is poised to join ranks with the organic food movement and declare: chemicals threaten our bodies." So writes Nicholas Kristoff in last Wednesday's *New York*

Times, referencing the Panel's newly released 2008-2009 Annual Report.

Notably, the report is highly critical of the federal government's current chemical regulatory system:

The prevailing regulatory approach in the United States is reactionary rather than precautionary. That is, instead of taking preventive action when uncertainty exists about the potential harm a chemical or other environmental contaminant may cause, a hazard must be incontrovertibly demonstrated before action to ameliorate it is initiated. Moreover, instead of requiring industry or other proponents of specific chemicals, devices, or activities to prove their safety, the public bears the burden of proving that a given environmental exposure is harmful. Only a few hundred of the more than 80,000 chemicals in use in the United States have been tested for safety.

U.S. regulation of environmental contaminants is rendered ineffective by five major problems: (1) inadequate funding and insufficient staffing, (2) fragmented and overlapping authorities coupled with uneven and decentralized enforcement, (3) excessive regulatory complexity, (4) weak laws and regulations, and (5) undue industry influence. Too often, these factors, either singly or in combination, result in agency dysfunction and a lack of will to identify and remove hazards.

PSR Maine is deeply involved in efforts to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), the federal law that controls chemical regulation. We support the Safe Chemicals Act of 2010, legislation that would amend the TSCA and overhaul the way the federal government protects the public from toxic chemicals.

The bill would require that chemical companies produce basic health and safety information for all chemicals, would require chemicals to meet a safety standard that protects children and pregnant women, and would move forward restrictions on chemicals such as formaldehyde, vinyl chloride and flame retardants.

But [the new law needs strengthening](#) before it is enacted to further protect the public. Americans are exposed to chemicals at home, at school, at work and in products we all use every day. The current draft of the bill would still allow new chemicals to be used without requiring that they have been shown to be safe and would not give the EPA clear authority to restrict the most dangerous chemicals.

The Safe Chemicals Act of 2010 is key to improving the health of all Americans by reducing everyone's exposure to chemicals. Click [here](#) to send a letter to members of Maine's Congressional delegation. Tell them

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

to strengthen the bill to make it harder for new harmful chemicals to enter the marketplace, and to get dangerous chemicals we already know about off the market.

Health Implications of Climate Change: Forum for Health Care Providers May 20th, Portland

Limited seating for 50 clinicians. Register before May 14th!

May 20th, 2010

8:30am-11:30am

Holiday Inn by the Bay

Portland, Maine

Free, CMEs and CEUs available

To Register: Email [Kellie Miller](mailto:kellie.miller@maine-medical.org) at the Maine Medical Association and indicate in the subject line that you would like to register for the Climate Change Forum.

Expert Faculty:

**Paul R. Epstein, MD, MPH, Associate Director,
Harvard Center for Global Health and the Environment**



Dr. Epstein has worked in medical, teaching and research capacities in Africa, Asia and Latin America and in 1993, coordinated an eight part series on Health and Climate Change for the British Medical Journal, Lancet. He has worked with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to assess the health impacts of climate change and develop health applications of climate forecasting and remote sensing. Dr. Epstein received recognition for his contributions on the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

**Paul A. Mayewski, PhD, Explorer and Scientist Director &
Professor, The Climate Change Institute, University of Maine**



Dr. Mayewski has developed integrated understanding of multiple controls on climate and unique role of human impact, demonstrated associations between climate and disruptions to civilization. He has led more than 50 expeditions to remote regions such as the Antarctica, the Arctic, Himalayas, Tibetan Plateau and more. He is the co-author of the popular climate change book: "The Ice Chronicles."

The earth's climate is in the midst of significant change and with it comes the impact upon human health. Increased respiratory allergies, asthma attacks, days lost from work due to respiratory disease, emergency room visits, hospitalization rates, and mortality are all symptoms of climate changes. Physicians, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners and Nurses are being called upon to increase their involvement in educational efforts on the impending health problems due to climate change and the adaptive and

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](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov).

Quick Links

psrmaine.org

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mitigating actions that can be taken in the public health policy arena. A limited number of seats (50) are available for clinicians to attend this forum that will address the scientific underpinnings of climate change and identify human health effects and implications for public health.

The program will conclude with a reactor panel of experts to facilitate an in-depth discussion with attendees.

CME Activity Objectives

As a result of participating in this activity attendees will be able to:

1. Identify human health effects and implications for public health.
2. Describe the scientific underpinnings of climate change.

CME Credit/Accreditation

The American Medical Association designates this educational activity for a maximum of 2.0 AMA PRA Category 1 credits. CEU's have been applied for.

Co-sponsored by:

The Harvard Center for Global Health and the Environment, The American Medical Association and the Maine Medical Association

Dr. Vincent Felitti speaks at MMC on June 22

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 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:

Maine Medical Center, Department of Pediatrics
Maine Medical Center, Division of Community and Preventive Medicine
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Charles Dana Center
for Health Education,
Maine Medical Center,
Portland, Maine

ACCESS:

Maine Medical Center has the means available to assist persons with disabilities who have needs relative to participation in this conference. If you need special parking assistance due to a disability, please call MMC's Parking Office (662-2123) to make arrangements. Individuals who need auxiliary aids for effective communication in programs and services of the Dana Center should make their needs and preferences known in advance to the MMC employee sponsoring the program.

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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