In April I attended a briefing on Capitol Hill organized by an education coalition I worked with before coming to PSR (I continue to serve on their board). The briefing consisted of a panel of educators from across the education continuum: preschool, K12, higher education, and adult continuing education. The presentations were often moving (stories of lives transformed), but also, too often, frustrating—even infuriating. One of the presenters, a teacher from Oklahoma City, described being forced to spend $3,000 of her own money on supplies every year, yet still going without basic needs in her classroom. By way of example, she held up a history textbook—25 years out of date, coverless, with tattered pages taped to what was left of the binding. “Teachers,” she noted, “will continue to work miracles with the few resources we have, but imagine what we could accomplish if we had what is needed.”

Listening to these educators, I couldn't help but think about the massive amounts of money our government is willing to spend on unnecessary and dangerous new nuclear weapons (like the new “low-yield” warhead proposed in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review) while neglecting essential investments in human needs, like education. I also thought about how crazy it is that we’re not increasing our investment in education right now, when we know how important it’s going to be to develop a skilled workforce for the new industries that will allow us to transition away from fossil fuels, and to develop new strategies to combat climate change. How can we afford to waste a single mind? What does this say about our priorities?

In President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s oft-cited “Chance for Peace” speech in 1953, he famously lamented the social cost of defense spending, noting that, for example, the cost of just a single heavy bomber was the equivalent to building a new school in more than 30 cities. Sadly, we failed to heed Eisenhower’s words all those years ago. I hope that our work at PSR encourages our fellow citizens to think more critically about our nation’s priorities, and to call on our leaders to make different choices.

Jeff Carter, JD
Executive Director
In 2016 the solar industry employed approximately 374,000 people. Since 2011 the average price of a solar panel has dropped almost 60 percent.
FROM THE PRESIDENT

I recently watched *Prince of Smoke*, a documentary by filmmaker Matthew Gelb about a family in Cuba whose livelihood centers on preserving a 171-year-old family legacy of tobacco farming. You might wonder how I came to watch a film on the making of premium Cohiba cigars? This short was part of an environmental film festival, and without the intention of glorifying smoking, highlighted how the unpredictability of weather as a product of climate disruption threatens the very essence of a culturally significant Cuban export. It reminded me of a slogan I once saw outside of a store: “Save the earth; it’s the only planet with chocolate.”

While cigars and chocolate may be among the little things that bring pleasure to many, it is currently things of beauty and grandeur in this world—and the importance of a clean, healthy and safe environment—that are at risk of being lost forever. That’s where we at PSR make our mark. I am very proud of our work at the national and chapter level to fight fervently against drivers of climate change. We have been shining a light on the destructive impact of fossil fuel transportation, the release of fugitive methane, and the overwhelming weight of public health evidence against unconventional oil and gas development.

The fight against nuclear arms is another great public health threat of our time. I truly appreciate the Don’t Bank on the Bomb campaign, particularly following tax season. The myriad alternatives that money currently spent on nuclear weapons can be allocated to, in the realm of quality civil services, is staggering. The campaign’s calculator shows how much funding in every community is diverted to be spent on this destructive industry. The campaign is a very effective way to show how every individual is unknowingly contributing to nuclear armament, through something as common and simple as investment in a retirement plan.

On other topics of acute public health significance, we capitalize on the excellent work that our chapters do on violence prevention and education. I speak for all of PSR when I say how much it pains us to witness the loss of innocent lives in so many parts of the country. We take a stand against gun violence. We hold our representatives accountable for evidence-based policy-making on this issue, as well as other ways individuals and communities must be protected.

Serving as president of PSR is a big responsibility, but it is fulfilling to be part of the hard-working collective of an organization whose mission is literally lifesaving. I have learned so much from working with many committed, well-informed, scientist activists. I cannot thank enough people like immediate past president Dr. John Rachow, president-elect Dr. Lynn Ringenberg, executive director Jeff Carter, director of operations Dr. W. Taylor Johnson, and many other PSR board members and staff for supporting me and providing guidance. Likewise, I cannot stress enough the importance of the contributions of each and every donor. PSR would not be producing the first-rate work that it does without their financial gifts. I close by acknowledging the chapters, which are like the arteries of PSR. Their nonstop energy and contributions never cease to galvanize my own efforts. The network gives me hope for our beautiful earth, and delivering it from the clutches of climate disruption and nuclear weapons. And privately, I’m glad for preservation of chocolate, too!

Pouné Saberi, MD, MPH
President, PSR Board of Directors
"KEEP US AWAY FROM NUCLEAR WAR."

"Scientists based answers to key questions of our times."

"Public awareness and support for the nuclear weapons ban treaty."

"Keep our world informed regarding the harmful effects of too many unregulated chemicals, climate change (aggravated by fracking, drilling for oil, etc.), the dangers of stockpiling nuclear weapons and the potential for using them."

"INTELLIGENTLY INFORMED INFORMATION."

"Our legislature will pay attention to our scientific results and act to support those conclusions."

"Delivering opinions of large numbers of physicians and allied health professionals to decision makers; organizing the medical profession on critical issues of social justice, including the most important environmental issues...and nuclear disarmament."

"A positive concern for the importance of science in political and social decision-making."

"A compassionate and positive input on political and social issues."

"EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC TO PUSH THEM TO GENERATE POLICY CHANGES."
In the face of the Trump administration’s intransigence on climate change and regressive energy policies, PSR has shifted much of our climate-protection efforts to the states, where positive initiatives are gaining traction.

We’re focused this year on two specific issues where we think the national office can support the work of our state and local chapters: fighting fracked gas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promoting clean renewable energy to assure a healthy energy supply.

Collaboration is the name of the game. As chapters work energetically on these issues, the national staff is linking them together, promoting greater interchange of resources and experience, and meeting needs with reports, webinars, fact sheets, social media, and expert contacts. Chapters are increasingly sharing their wealth of knowledge and resources.
The fight against fracked-gas pipelines has galvanized new audiences. After Chesapeake PSR played a major role in winning a fracking ban in Maryland, it created a webinar detailing how they influenced the debate. They shared this powerful analysis with the PSR network, showing how the health voice helped secure the win.

PSR played a leading role in educational events on pipelines at two universities:

- Greater Boston PSR helped organize a day-long forum at Boston University, “Public Health and Pipelines/Natural Gas Infrastructure.” PSR national staff gave the keynote address.

- In rural southwest Virginia, a local PSR doctor initiated and presented at a forum on pipelines and health at the medical school of Virginia Tech University.

PSR also collaborates with partner organizations to develop new resources. We partnered again this year with Concerned Health Professionals of New York to produce the latest edition of the fracking Compendium, which compiles, summarizes and links to peer-reviewed scientific and medical evidence on fracking’s harms. It is yet another tool for chapters in states where fracking is rampant. The report can be downloaded by visiting: http://www.psr.org/resources/fracking-compendium.html.

- PSR Philadelphia presented testimony about fracking’s public health consequences, from the Delaware River watershed to a small rural township in western PA. They are also preparing educational materials on fracking for use in medical schools.

- PSR’s working group in Colorado is educating the governor and electoral candidates about the health threats of fracking and the need to reduce fugitive leaks of methane, which severely accelerate climate change.

In the fight against another fossil fuel, the Oregon and Washington PSR chapters celebrated a major victory when they helped defeat the largest proposed oil-by-rail terminal in the country. Health professionals joined community activists, longshoremen, firefighters and tribal nations during a five-year battle against this dirty and dangerous project, which would have moved over 15 million gallons of crude oil every day through the beautiful Columbia River Gorge.

The most authoritative study of its kind reveals how fracking is contaminating the air and water – and imperiling the health of millions of Americans

Justin Nobel
Rolling Stone

Commenting on the fracking Compendium report

Read the article at

Photo: Sarah Craig, Faces of Fracking
CLEAN ENERGY

PSR chapters across the country are working to get local governments to commit to 100 percent renewable energy, to assure that energy is clean, and to include energy efficiency as part of the clean-energy transition. The national office networks these chapters to increase resource-sharing and collaboration.

- When they discovered that some renewable energy advocates proposed to count nuclear power as renewable, PSR Oregon called their bluff. The chapter prepared a webinar that the national office shared with all PSR members, detailing why nuclear power is neither renewable nor clean nor safe.

- PSR Maine is working to overturn state policy that phases out solar energy net metering.

- Arizona PSR has joined a coalition to increase the state’s renewable energy standard by 50 percent.

- Besides supporting pro-solar legislation, Florida PSR is teaching doctors to reduce energy waste in their offices, using their “My Green Doctor” program. They also distribute nationally produced “Climate Change Makes Me Sick” postcards and “21 Steps to Lesson Your Carbon Footprint” fact-sheets as patient handouts.

In a national collaboration, PSR assisted the American Council on Energy-Efficient Resources on a report ranking the U.S. cities best positioned to leverage energy efficiency measures to improve health.

All of us, by joining our efforts and expertise, strengthen the work for a clean, cool, livable world. PSR
Diplomatic progress in North and South Korea makes it all the more urgent for the U.S. to step up and commit to a non-military solution. Tell your members of Congress today to support legislation to prevent military action in North Korea.

Mystery solved by NASA! The global methane spike that coincides with U.S. fracking boom is due to the fracking boom after all.

One of my greatest idols, @BeaFihn gets right to the heart of the matter in the need to reduce armed conflict: protecting the people. #nuclearban

Liquified #FrackedGas presents a catastrophic risk to those surrounding its infrastructure. We are glad the workers at Sabine Pass are OK, and know that we must #StopJordanCove. #NoLNG

Time for action on climate #PutAPriceOnIt #CarbonFee #Washington @JobsCleanEnergy Are YOU with me?

No @realDonaldTrump: not a magical day in the future. We have a treaty to ban nuclear weapons in place *right now.* 100s of nations have approved it. You could sign it tomorrow. #nuclearban

Acting to combat climate change = acting to prevent public health catastrophes.

#Healthcare professionals reject #TrumpNuclearDoctrine. Building "more usable" nukes gravely increases the risks of a nuclear attack that causes mass casualties.
HEALTH LEADER

NUCLEAR WEAPONS ABOLITION

PSR's community outreach mobilizes state medical organizations for disarmament.

PSR MAINE RECRUITS MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS

BACK FROM THE BRINK: COMMUNITY RESOLUTIONS TO PREVENT NUCLEAR WAR

When PSR Maine began working with the Back from the Brink: The Call to Prevent Nuclear War statement, chapter leaders realized that it would be essential to recruit other health organization partners to build a movement with the power to change nuclear weapons policy.

“Some medical associations don’t initially view nuclear weapons as a health issue,” said Dr. Syd Sewall, board president of PSR Maine. “Fortunately, the Back from the Brink statement is so clearly framed with such a compelling message during these challenging times that our colleagues at least have to give our request serious consideration.”

PSR Maine recruited two of Maine’s health organizations to endorse the Back from the Brink resolution: the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Maine Nurse Practitioners Association. “Making use of existing professional relationships and cultivating new ones with key decision makers in other health organizations is crucial. It’s helpful that four or five of our board members are also board or committee members with other health organizations,” said Dr. Peter Wilk, co-chair of PSR Maine’s Nuclear Weapons Abolition Committee.

PSR Maine has been actively involved in several coalitions which keeps the chapter engaged with a wide variety of partners. It’s not unusual for PSR Maine to have a sign-on letter that includes five or more statewide health organizations. Karen D’Andrea, PSR Maine’s executive director, believes that the key to the chapter’s success with these partnerships is ongoing collaborative work and keeping communication open. “Building relationships is all about trust,” she added.

“Making use of existing professional relationships and cultivating new ones with key decision makers in other health organizations is crucial.”
PSR's collaboration with partners yields valuable new health resources.

THE EVIDENCE IS IN: AIR POLLUTION FOLLOWS FRACKING WHEREVER IT GOES.

FRACKING SCIENCE COMPRENDIUM
Compendium of scientific, medical, and media findings demonstrating risks and harms of fracking, 5th Edition
Called “the most authoritative study of its kind” by Rolling Stone, PSR and Concerned Health Professionals of New York’s new report compiles and summarizes the mounting evidence that fracking and related infrastructure harm health.

“Communities across the country must heed the science and say no to fracking,” said Dr. Lynn Ringenberg, president-elect of PSR.

Read the full report: http://www.psr.org/resources/fracking-compendium.html

SAVING ENERGY, SAVING LIVES
THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF AVOIDING POWER PLANT POLLUTION WITH ENERGY EFFICIENCY
We often hear that energy efficiency saves money and creates jobs, but what do we know about its public health benefits?

PSR and the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) released a report that examines the public health benefits and medical cost savings of increased energy efficiency.

Read the full report: http://www.psr.org/resources/saving-energy-saving-lives.html
NUCLEAR WEAPONS ABOLITION

STOP A WAR WITH NORTH KOREA BEFORE IT STARTS

By Martin Fleck

The eyes of the world are on the Korean Peninsula right now. PSR’s “prescription for survival” is the total elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide—the only path to protect public health. As we strive for that lofty goal, we must also avert a nuclear war in the meantime. It’s a challenge.

After a yearlong roller-coaster ride of threats, saber-rattling, and missile tests, a welcome thaw between North and South Korea took hold during the PyeongChang Winter Olympics. This led to an agreement between North Korea’s Chairman Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump for an unprecedented summit meeting. Is the stage set for a breakthrough agreement?
Possibly. As of this writing, North Korea has pledged to shut down its nuclear weapons test site and refrain from testing ballistic missiles while talks are underway. South Korea and the United States proceeded with joint military exercises in April, but the U.S. chose to keep aircraft carriers and heavy bombers out of the drills this year. Before his potential appointment as Secretary of State—while still serving as CIA Director—Mike Pompeo made a secret trip to Pyongyang to pave the way for the U.S. – North Korea summit.

PSR welcomes this thaw and the planned direct negotiations of the U.S. – North Korea summit. PSR’s health professionals and peace advocates also fully support “denuclearization” of the Korean peninsula—indeed, we favor denuclearization of the entire planet. But we see this first-ever U.S. – North Korea summit meeting as the beginning, not the end, of a “long game” that will require persistent, concentrated diplomatic effort by the Trump administration. President Trump’s recent appointment of ultra-hawk John Bolton to National Security Advisor hardly bolsters confidence that diplomacy will win the day.

Should diplomacy fail—as it has before—the consequences of military action would be dire. The outbreak of armed conflict on the Korean peninsula would be a humanitarian catastrophe with long-term consequences for public health. In a November 2017 report, the Congressional Research Service estimated that any U.S. military action against North Korea could cause mass civilian casualties, and North Korean retaliation could kill an estimated 300,000 people within the initial days of fighting. From a public health perspective, military action—either conventional or nuclear—must be taken off the table. Diplomacy is the only viable solution to avert catastrophe.

In the face of these risks, Congress has remained largely silent. PSR’s role is to bring the authoritative voice of the medical profession to the conversation. PSR’s health professionals and advocates are urging members of Congress to weigh in and serve as a “firewall” to block the road to war. PSR endorsed legislation introduced last year by Representative Ted Lieu and Senator Ed Markey to revise current policy that confers “sole authority” over a nuclear first-strike to the president, and restore the constitutional authority of Congress to declare war. PSR has also endorsed legislation introduced by Representative Ro Khanna and Senator Markey requiring authorization from Congress before launching an attack on North Korea. PSR chapters around the country are drawing attention to the humanitarian risk of war on the Korean Peninsula, calling for diplomacy, and urging their members of Congress to cosponsor these bills.

Washington PSR leaders phoned members to generate calls to Washington’s members of Congress, and directly met with many of them. Besides Washington state, members in California, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Wisconsin have met with Congress people or their staff. The presidents of the Chesapeake and San Francisco Bay area PSR chapters testified at hearings for legislation supporting “sole authority” legislation. Fifty citizens participated in a PSR Los Angeles March 6 public discussion—North Korea, Nuclear Weapons, and Prospects for Peace—co-sponsored by 16 organizations and featuring Christine Ahn of Women Cross DMZ. PSR Iowa organized letter-writing events for college students (including medical students) and health professionals. Other PSR members have published letters to the editor and op-eds advocating for negotiations and against military action. And PSR organized an open letter to Congress signed by prominent health professional leaders.

PSR welcomes the plan to produce a permanent peace treaty officially ending the Korean War. We continue to advocate for diplomatic efforts to normalize relations between the United States and North Korea, stop the threats and posturing, and minimize the risk of war. PSR
There are 50 million civilians living on the Korean peninsula whose lives are at stake. A report from the U.S. Congressional Research Service warns that military conflict could kill 30,000 to 300,000 civilians within the initial days of fighting.

NATO officials warned that military strikes can't destroy North Korea's nuclear program. Only a deadly ground invasion that risks mass casualties stands a chance.

Diplomacy has worked before. The 1994 U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework curbed North Korea's plutonium production, preventing the development of an estimated 100 nuclear warheads.

Living with nuclear weapons is unrealistic. Nuclear-armed countries will face growing international pressure to disarm. Nearly two-thirds of U.N. nations voted for the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty.
FROM STUDENT TO STUDENT LEADER

THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTING IN STUDENTS

By Natasha Bagwe, MD, MPH
Volunteer at PSR Philadelphia since 2015

My loving, humble and generous parents helped me develop my passion for animals, nature and wildlife. I saw the interconnections between nature and humanity, and our need to treat the environment with respect and reverence. I am myself privileged to have the opportunity to grow up in a family with a traditional history of serving society as physicians. I am continuing our family tradition by becoming a doctor and now working as a public health practitioner.

I became familiar with PSR in 2014 when I was a master's student pursuing my MPH at Thomas Jefferson University. My professor for environmental health class was Dr. Pouné Saberi, the board president of PSR Philadelphia and an occupational physician. She is now my mentor. The hallmark of our relationship was learning that we all are a part of our existing system and “WE” collectively have the power to develop a better world now and for the next generation. This is how I got involved with PSR Philadelphia.

I am interested in the nexus between mental health and the environment. PSR Philadelphia provides the opportunity to explore this connection more deeply. I have marched with my colleagues and friends from PSR Philadelphia on climate change, raised awareness about how climate change will impact mental health, demonstrated on behalf of Philadelphians who are affected by poor air quality and urban flooding, and protested the expansion of the energy hub. PSR has introduced me to many talented experts who share my interests and further my education. Through these connections, I have been able to complete my final MPH project, “Climate change and recurring floods: Using social capital to strengthen community resilience among Eastwick, Philadelphia” and have presented these efforts at several environmental conferences. The support offered by PSR Philadelphia helped me to find the resilience I needed and to enhance my abilities to serve others in Philadelphia.

It is crucial for me to involve more health professional students in PSR Philadelphia. Through our collective efforts, we can make a positive impact in our local communities through education and direct action. Thank you to Dr. Saberi and PSR Philadelphia for cultivating my interests and values, and directing my efforts towards assisting my community.
PSR at the 2017 Nobel for the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

The Norwegian Nobel Institute in Oslo, Norway.

The U.S. Ambassador refused to attend the Nobel Peace Prize Awards Ceremony. Michael and Autumn tactfully distributed “missing persons” posters for the Ambassador across Oslo.

Autumn is still looking for the missing ambassador as the students find their seats in the screening room to watch the Awards Ceremony.

Setsuko Thurlow, Hiroshima survivor, and Beatrice Fihn, executive director of ICAN, accept the Nobel Peace Prize.

ICAN campaigners march from Oslo Central Station to the Norwegian Parliament in support of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

ICAN received the Nobel Peace Prize for their work drawing attention to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and achieving the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
Autumn Vogel and Michael Mushbarash, Student PSR members and medical students at Pennsylvania State University and Northwestern University, represented PSR at ICAN’s Nobel Ceremony.

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ICAN campaigners celebrate at the concert, featuring performances by Sigrid, Zara Larsson and John Legend.

Beatrice Fihn, executive director of ICAN, delivers Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech.

Cranes from Hiroshima

PSR’s Ira Helfand helps deliver paper cranes created by students from Hiroshima Jogakuin as a gift. The cranes are displayed at Oslo’s Parliament building as a symbol of peace and action.

Acknowledging a great honour

Torchlight procession

ICAN campaigners march from Oslo Central Station to the Norwegian Parliament in support of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Peace Prize Ceremony

Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)
IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING ONE OF PSR’S FOUNDING MEMBERS: DR. VICTOR W. SIDEL

Dr. Victor W. Sidel, a co-founder and former president of PSR, and a former co-president of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), passed away on January 30, 2018. PSR extends our sincere condolences to Dr. Sidel’s family and loving friends as we remember his remarkable life.

Dr. Sidel's career in medicine and activism planted the seeds of the peace and health equity movement. Dr. Sidel co-founded PSR in 1961. In 1962, he contributed to a series of influential articles published in The New England Journal of Medicine titled “Medical Consequences of Thermonuclear War,” which detailed the catastrophic medical consequences of nuclear weapons. The publication of these articles spurred the formation of PSR chapters across the United States.

Vic Sidel later served as president of the American Public Health Association (APHA) in 1985 at the height of the nuclear freeze movement. Following Dr. Sidel’s tenure as president, the APHA adopted its first official policy statement opposing the nuclear arms race.

Dr. Sidel authored and co-authored numerous books and articles about the human consequences of war, international health, and the impact of poverty on health. He was co-editor with his longtime colleague and friend, Dr. Barry Levy, of two editions each of the books War and Public Health, Terrorism and Public Health, and Social Injustice and Public Health, all published by Oxford University Press. He co-authored books on health policy and on China with his beloved spouse, Ruth Sidel, who was a professor of sociology at Hunter College in New York, and who passed away in 2016.

Dr. Sidel was chair of the Department of Social Medicine at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, New York, from 1969 to 1985. He then became Distinguished University Professor of Social Medicine at Montefiore and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He served as president of the Public Health Association of New York City (PHANYC) and on the board of directors of Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) and other organizations.

The family requests that memorial gifts be made to Physicians for Social Responsibility (http://www.psr.org/vicsidel) or International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (http://www.ippnw.org/donate-gifts-to-honor.html).
Promoting peace through diplomacy is an urgent public health priority.

You can include PSR in your will or living trust. A gift of stock will also support PSR’s work for public health.

Many companies provide charitable matching gifts for employee charitable contributions.

SAVE THE DATE!
PSR’s Visionary Leaders Awards Reception in Washington, DC
November 8, 2018.

To learn more, contact our Development & Membership Department at (202) 667-4260 or psrnatl@psr.org.
Would you like to be more involved in PSR’s advocacy efforts?
A great place to start is PSR’s Activist Updates. Each of PSR’s program areas reaches out to members through Action Alerts and e-mail. Sign up to receive updates at psr.org.

Coming to Washington, DC, and have an hour to spare?
How about visiting one of your elected officials to talk about issues of most concern to you? Contact PSR and we’ll help schedule a meeting and provide you with background materials.
In April I attended a briefing on Capitol Hill organized by an education coalition I worked with before coming to PSR (I continue to serve on their board). The briefing consisted of a panel of educators from across the education continuum: preschool, K-12, higher education, and adult continuing education. The presentations were often moving (stories of lives transformed), but also, too often, frustrating—even infuriating. One of the presenters, a teacher from Oklahoma City, described being forced to spend $3,000 of her own money on supplies every year, yet still going without basic needs in her classroom. By way of example, she held up a history textbook—25 years out of date, coverless, with tattered pages taped to what was left of the binding. “Teachers,” she noted, “will continue to work miracles with the few resources we have, but imagine what we could accomplish if we had what is needed.”

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