

National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures

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Partners

The Conversation

Components of the Conversation

The Action Agenda

Calendar of Events



Historical Document

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Launching the Conversation

Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

June 26, 2009

Overview

The *National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* is a collaborative project convened by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH), the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and RESOLVE, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the effective use of consensus building in public decision making. The project is a multi-stakeholder process through which we will develop collaboratively an Action Agenda for strengthening the public health functions related to protecting the public from chemical hazards.

The *National Conversation* kick-off meeting took place Friday, June 26, 2009 at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, DC. Approximately 400 people attended the meeting in person, and another 100 people viewed the morning session by live webcast. The documents accessible from this webpage summarize the day-long meeting, including the morning plenary session, the breakout sessions, and the afternoon plenary session. The day's events have been summarized, and a full transcript is available for the morning sessions.

The views expressed in this summary are not necessarily those of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and these comments do not construe any agency determination or policy.

Click on the links below to learn what took place at the meeting.

Materials Distributed

- [Meeting Agenda](#) [PDF, 41 KB]
- [Breakout Session Descriptions](#) [PDF, 39 KB]
- [Comment Form](#) [PDF, 12 KB]
- [Call for Work Group Nominations](#) [PDF, 58 KB]
- [National Conversation Fact Sheet](#) [PDF, 389 KB]

Agenda

Meeting Objectives & Desired Outcomes:

- Highlight the need for strengthening the United States' public health approach to chemical exposures
- Explain the goals and process for the National Conversation project
- Identify key issues and opportunities in six domains related to public health and chemical exposures and refine charges for working groups
- Generate among attendees an interest in participating in future National Conversation activities

8:00-8:30 Registration & Breakfast

[Webcast – Plenary: introductory remarks and keynote presentations](#)

8:30-8:45 Welcome, Meeting Objectives and Agenda [\[summary\]](#) [PDF, 45 KB]

Gail Bingham, President Emeritus, RESOLVE, *facilitator* [\[transcript\]](#) [PDF, 269 KB]

Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, Executive Director, Children's Environmental Health Network, *co-chair, Leadership Council on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* [\[transcript\]](#) [PDF, 269 KB]

Howard Frumkin, Director, National Center for Environmental Health/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (NCEH/ATSDR), *co-chair, Leadership Council National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* [\[transcript\]](#) [PDF, 269 KB]

8:45-9:05 Presentation: Understanding the National Conversation Purpose and Process

Howard Frumkin, Director, NCEH/ATSDR
[\[summary\]](#) [PDF, 46 KB] | [transcript](#) [PDF, 263 KB] | [presentation](#) [PDF, 593 KB]

9:05-9:45 Keynote Speakers

"*Collaboration is Essential to Strengthening America's Approach to Public Health and Chemical Exposures*"

Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [\[summary\]](#)[PDF, 41 KB] | [transcript](#) [PDF, 269 KB]

Linda S. Birnbaum, Director, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Institutes of Health [\[summary\]](#) [PDF, 40 KB] | [transcript](#) [PDF, 269 KB] | [presentation](#) [PDF, 1.40 MB]

9:45-10:00 Break

Note: During the break, several meeting attendees shared their frustrations concerning previous experiences with government agencies including ATSDR, and their disappointment in the limited amount of time scheduled for questions and comments during the plenary session. In response to the strong desire for attendees to be heard, meeting organizers modified the agenda. Instead of holding the panel discussion and question and answer session with the work group chairs as planned, the floor was opened up for comment.

Ten meeting participants provided comments. Eight persons participating in the live Web cast also provided [comments and questions](#) [PDF, 82 KB]. As a result of time limitations, these comments were not addressed during the meeting.

10:00-11:15 Public Forum [\[summary\]](#) | [transcript](#) [PDF, 269 KB]

[Webcast – Plenary: question and comment period](#)

11:15-12:15 Breakout Sessions by Work Group Topic: Shaping the Agenda for the Conversation [\[overview\]](#) [PDF, 321 KB] | [\[breakout_sessions – html\]](#)

Objective: Exchange ideas about the scope and priority topics for each work group. (Participants are asked to choose a break out session for the purposes of this meeting, but work group membership will be determined through a nomination process following the meeting.)

Topic & Room	Description
Monitoring	Collecting information on chemical use, exposure pathways, exposure levels, and health outcomes [discussion_summary] [PDF, 321 KB]
Scientific Understanding	Filling knowledge gaps on the health effects of chemicals [discussion_summary] [PDF, 321 KB]
Policies and Practices	Reducing harmful chemical exposures and adverse health outcomes, eliminating inequities, and spurring the development and use of safer alternatives [discussion_summary] [PDF, 321 KB]
Chemical Emergencies	Preventing, preparing for, and responding to acute chemical incidents [discussion_summary] [PDF, 321 KB]
Serving Communities	Addressing local chemical exposure concerns to promote environmental justice and improve health [discussion_summary] [PDF, 321 KB]
Education and Communication	Ensuring a well-informed public and a competent network of health care providers [discussion_summary] [PDF, 321 KB]

Sample Discussion Questions:

- *What are the major components of the nation's approach in this area?*
- *What have been the major successes in this area over the last 40 years?*
- *What are the major unmet needs?*
- *What solutions do you propose to help improve the system?*
- *What can be done quickly (1-2 years)?*
- *What recent or ongoing initiatives might impact this area?*
- *What resources (reports, participants, etc) do we need to use to adequately assess these questions?*

12:15-1:30 Lunch [\[on your own\]](#)

1:30-2:45 Breakout Sessions by Work Group Topic: Shaping the Agenda for the Conversation [\(continued\)](#)

2:45-3:00 Break

3:00-3:20 Report back from Breakout Sessions [\[summary\]](#) [PDF, 82 KB]

Objective: Panelists share two major unmet needs and one proposed solution discussed during each breakout session that, among others, merit serious discussion during the National Conversation.

3:20-3:30 Closing Remarks

Gail Bingham, President Emeritus, RESOLVE, *facilitator* [\[summary\]](#) [PDF, 30 KB]

Howard Frumkin, Director, NCEH/ATSDR, *co-chair, Leadership Council National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* [\[summary\]](#) [PDF, 70 KB]

Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, Executive Director, Children's Environmental Health Network, *co-chair, Leadership Council on Public Health and Chemical Exposures* [\[summary\]](#) [PDF, 70 KB]

Additional Materials

- [Participants List](#) [PDF, 432 KB]
- [Submitted Comment Forms, Transcribed](#) [PDF, 145 KB]

Questions or Comments

Please send any questions or comments about this meeting summary to nationalconversation@cdc.gov



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