

Minutes: May 3, 2004
Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council
Maryland Department of Environment, 1800 Washington Blvd., Baltimore, MD

Members Present: Barbara Bice, Cecilia Davoli, Maureen Edwards, Peyton Eggleston, Richard Eskin, Judy LaKind, Lorne Garrettson, Christopher Loffredo, Mary Ellen Setting. **Staff:** Phil Heard, Mary Johnson, Sherri Shubin. **Guest:** Betty Dabney, Audrey Regan, Ruth Quinn, Hopkins University, Stewart H. Mostofsky, Kennedy Kreiger Institute, Marjorie Shulbank, Maryland State Department of Education.

Review & Approval of Minutes: March 1, 2004:

The minutes were reviewed. The Council was advised to send any changes to Mary before 5/7/04. (One correction was made and the final minutes were sent to the Council.)

OLD BUSINESS

Regulation and Legislative Updates:

Dr. Edwards reported that the Council was notified of 2 sets of regulations that did not affect children's environmental health as defined by the Council—one involving requirements for employees in the Department of Public Safety and one regarding fees at MDE. She exercised the prerogative of reviewing these regulations but not forwarding them to the Council for full review. The Council concurred.

The Council also briefly discussed the outcome of bills of interest from the 2004 legislative session.

Indicator Report Status:

Dr. Edwards reported to the Council that the Indicators group members had been meeting on a regular basis. A list of indicators that have been agreed upon has been sent to the EPA. The group is waiting to hear from the EPA with responses and comments. There are several areas in which indicators and data sources still need to be determined. Dr. Edwards made a presentation to the Pesticide Council concerning CEHPAC's activities and interests. The Chair of the Pesticide Council offered to provide recommendations for an appropriate indicator for children's exposure to pesticides in the State. Dr. Edwards assured the Council that she would keep them abreast of the outcomes and updates.

Infrastructure Study Update:

Dr. Edwards shared with the Council the infrastructure study progress. The report is now in final draft. The Council will get copies of the report for comments before distribution.

Hospitals for Healthy Environment:

MDE and the Maryland Hospital Association are working with this national group to encourage local hospitals to minimize their use of products that can affect the environment, such as mercury. DHMH has joined as a collaborator of the local effort.

NEW BUSINESS

Neurodevelopmental Children's Environmental Health Indicators:

Autism Review- Presentations:

Stewart Mostofsky, MD, Kennedy Kreiger Institute:

Dr. Mostofsky gave an overview presentation on the medical and environmental factors in autism, as related to recent concern regarding increasing incidence. His main focus of discussion involved the Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD); he used the PDD Umbrella model to describe children with autism disorders: First, Dr. Mostofsky gave a brief description of the core deficits as they affect the child's communication, social interaction, and stereotypical behaviors. He also included the physician's role in managing an autistic child and reviewed the neurological assessment and evaluations. He closed his presentation with prevalence measures, risk factors and therapeutic and treatment approaches. (See attached handout for more details).

Marjorie Shulbank, MSDE, Division of Special Education/Early Education:

Ms. Shulbank gave an overview of how children in Maryland are affected by autism. She stated that over 4,000 in Maryland are diagnosed with autism. Ms. Shulbank shared with the Council a chart showing the number of children by jurisdiction in Maryland public schools diagnosed with autism (see attached). She further explained how genetics plays a role in autism. Ms. Shulbank's included in her presentation various approach techniques, that may improve a child's communication skills and behavioral abilities. In conclusion of her presentation, Ms. Shulbank's talked about a monitoring program, a collaboration between MSDE and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, funded by Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Ms. Shulbank also mentioned several initiatives taking place to help address the autism issues. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has acquired a Medicaid Wavier for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Autism Task Force, under MSDE, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, is focusing on best practices for service delivery for young children with autism (see attached for more details).

Questions and discussion by the Council followed. The Council agreed that autism is a very important childhood issue that may be increasing in frequency. However, an environmental component is less clear. Therefore using autism data as a neurodevelopmental indicator of children's environmental exposures would not be appropriate at this time.

Guests Comments: None

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for July 12, 2004, at MDE.