



**For Immediate Release  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Group launches Healthy Children's Initiative to protect children's health**

Today in Anchorage, Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT), with support from citizens, deliver the children's health initiative to the Lieutenant Governor's office with the required 100 initial signatures and 3 prime sponsors. The Alaska Children's Health Protection Act will protect children from the harmful effects of pesticides. In the next months, the organization will gather signatures from voters throughout Alaska to support placement of the initiative on the November 2006 ballot. Voters will then be able to require schools, both public and private, and licensed child care facilities to use the healthiest, least dangerous alternatives to pesticides first, with pesticides used only as a last resort.

Such policies are already in place in Anchorage schools. In 2000, the Anchorage School District adopted a policy of using least toxic pest control measures. The policy works and has protected the district's students and employees from the dangerous and health-compromising effects of pesticides, not to mention saved the school district money. It's time to carry these protections to school children statewide and to children in child care.

Exposure to pesticides endangers human health. Children are especially at risk since their bodies and brains are still developing. "I see a lot of children in my practice—children with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, autism and other developmental disorders. In each case, environmental toxicity is never far from my mind because children are so much more susceptible to toxins like pesticides," stated Dr. Adam Grove. The list of illnesses associated with pesticide exposures is long. Pesticides are linked with birth defects, asthma, endocrine disruption, genetic mutations, acute poisoning, decreased sperm counts, impaired neurological development in developing children, lymphoma, leukemia, as well as other cancers.

Gathering of the first 100 signatures began on Wednesday, June 22, 2005 at an event to honor Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA). These youth, most who are too young to vote or even to collect petition signatures, recognize the harmful effects of pesticides. AYEA was instrumental in encouraging the Anchorage School District to adopt its policy and it is appropriate that this event launch the initiative. Mayor Mark Begich and Anchorage Assembly member Pamela Jennings were among those who first signed the initiative.

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