



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Confronting Toxics in Everyday Products and People

Alaska Lecture Tour Shares Public Health Message

The United States chemical industry is the largest in the world, accounting for 25% of all chemical production. Tens of billions of pounds of chemical substances are produced in the U.S. or imported every day. While many of these substances are important in industrial processes and commercial product development, some are also known to be hazardous to human biology and ecological systems. With more than 80,000 chemicals in use today, less than 2 percent have been evaluated by the Environmental Protection Agency for health impacts.

On any given day, Americans are unknowingly exposed to a wide array of chemicals in the consumer products we routinely use, the food we eat, in our workplaces and in our homes. Chemical manufacture, use, and exposures have enormous implications for human health. Environmental factors contribute to more than 25 percent of all diseases worldwide.

As a physician-based advocacy organization, Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles (PSR-LA) connects health professionals to environmental, environmental justice and public health organizations to ensure that people are not harmed by toxic exposures. PSR-LA has created a movement that will improve public health and prevent future harm to human health and the environment.

Martha Arguello joined PSR-LA in 1998 to launch the environmental health programs, and became Executive Director in November 2007. PSR-LA was the first PSR office to branch out by deciding to address environmental health threats and is now the largest chapter in the nation and has played a leading role in national, state, and local education and policy efforts.

Martha is bringing this important information to Alaska as part of a Environmental Reproductive Health Speaker Series sponsored by Alaska Community Action on Toxics. **Martha will be speaking at a public lecture at the Anchorage Museum on Thursday, January 12 (7pm lecture, 6:30 pm reception). Additional sponsors of these events include: Alaska Run for Women and Cook Inletkeeper.**

About the Speaker

Martha is the first Latina to lead a California nonprofit addressing environmental health. She has 32 years experience serving the non-profit sector as an advocate, community organizer, and coalition builder. While working as a health educator in the 1990s, Martha realized that although early detection can prevent death from breast cancer, it does not prevent breast cancer, which has been increasingly linked to the exposure of environmental toxicants. <http://www.psr-la.org/about/staff/>