Nurses in the Halls of Power: The why, what, and how of nurse advocacy for safer chemicals
You can get involved today!

- Call Senator Murkowski
- Post on twitter and facebook – support the Safe Chemicals Act
- Meet with Sen. Murkowski’s staff in Anchorage
- Op-Ed or LTE in Anchorage Daily News
Role of the Nurse

- Education
- Information based on Evidence
- We are the most trusted profession!
- Excellent Communication Techniques
  - Five Rights of Political Advocacy
    - The right preparation
    - The right communicator
    - The right message
    - The right request
    - The right repetition
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

- Founded in 2008
- Join other nurses interested in environmental health with the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
- Comprised of four work groups:
  - Policy/Advocacy
  - Practice
  - Research
  - Education
- Join us: EnviRN.org
Together We Win: Collaboration

ACAT
Alaska Community Action on Toxics

Clean & Healthy New York

Safer Chemicals Healthy Families

Safer States

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Environmental Health Defined

- Addresses all human-health-related aspects of the natural and built environment
- Assesses/controls those factors that could affect health
- Targeted towards disease prevention and creating health-supportive environments
- Excludes behavior not related to environment, such as social and cultural factors, genetics
The Toxics Problem

- >90% of toxics are in products, not environmental releases
- TRI data captures only about 5% of toxics that leave a manufacturing facility
- Toxics in products are largely unregulated
- Information about product ingredients is confidential
Snapshot of Chemicals in the US

- >80,000 chemicals in commerce today
- >60,000 assumed safe in 1976 – “grandfathered in” and allowed in products
- ~200 have adequate safety data
- 5 chemicals/classes have partial bans
- 1 chemical class banned – in law
- 0 since 1990 –
  - EPA couldn’t ban asbestos
# Drug vs. Chemical Approval Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Antineoplastic Agent to Market (Phase I – III Trials):</th>
<th>Current Status of Chemical Safety:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Pre-market testing</td>
<td>- No required pre-market testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Toxicity-interactions</td>
<td>- Unknown human health threats due to cumulative exposure (air, water, food, cosmetics, products, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recommended doses</td>
<td>- Chemical interaction impact unknown i.e. lead in H2O, mercury in fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Labeling requirements - package inserts</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Post-market reporting; removal with data</td>
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Policy Failure:
Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA)

- Passed in 1976
- Implemented by US Environmental Protection Agency
- Never updated
- Onerous burden of proof of harm from chemicals
- Expensive testing requirements for EPA
- Reform efforts began in 2004: Kid Safe Chemicals Act
- Safe Chemicals Act of 2012 – Senator Frank Lautenberg
  - S.B. #847
  - No House match
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TSCA Reform Our Way</th>
<th>TSCA Reform Their Way</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Take immediate action on the worst chemicals</td>
<td>• No pre-market testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hold chemical makers responsible</td>
<td>• Protect Confidential Business Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use the best science</td>
<td>• Prevent states from passing stronger laws</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Safe Chemicals Act of 2011

- **Stronger Authority for EPA**
  - Requires EPA to identify and restrict chemicals that persist and build up in the food chain;

- **Stricter Requirements for Chemical Makers**
  - Requires safety information before chemicals enter the market;

- **Environmental Justice**
  - Reduce exposures on communities of color and low-income;

- **Stronger Science**
  - Evaluates chemicals using practices called for by National Academy of Science

- **Increases EPA Resources**
  - Gives EPA adequate funding to address health and environmental concerns
Three-Way Squeeze on Federal Reform

- **State-Based Approach**
  - Acts as laboratory for policy elements
  - Creates patchwork quilt

- **International Efforts**
  - Demonstrates Achievability
  - Creates competitive disadvantage

- **Market Pressure**
  - Rewards innovation
  - Is most visible to the public
States Leading the Way: SAFER

- **State-Based Approach**
  - Single chemical restrictions (lead, BPA, cadmium, decaBDE)
  - Chemical class restrictions (PBDEs, Tris, phthalates)
  - Product sector safeguards (electronics, cosmetics, cleaners)
  - Infrastructure-style reform:
    - Create list of high-hazard chemicals
    - Prioritize chemicals based on use
    - Require product makers to disclose use of priority chemicals
    - Assess alternatives
    - Require safer solutions when feasible
  
  - [www.saferstates.org](http://www.saferstates.org)
International Efforts

- European Union REACH legislation
- EU RoHS legislation
- Stockholm Convention (www.ipen.org)
- Countries acting on specific chemicals of concern (Japan, Germany, Denmark, France, Canada)
- Frequent link to universal health care
Market Shifts

Consumer demand drives safer products

- BPA-free Baby Bottles and Thermographic Paper
- Electronics Recycling and Take Back
- Green Building Materials
- Safer Cosmetics Ingredients
- Household Cleanser Ingredient Disclosure
- Green Chemistry Research and Development
- Retail Regulation
Political Action

- Advocacy
  - Social and Political Advocacy is just another form of caring (Morrell, D. 2005).
  - Nurses need to speak out on issues related to nursing and the health of the public (Social Policy Statement, ANA).
TWITTER 2012
The Freshest Statistics on the King of Microblogging Services

TOP 3 COUNTRIES
United States 107.7 MILLION
Japan 29.9 MILLION
Brazil 33.3 MILLION

over 465 million ACCOUNTS

175 million TWEETS A DAY

Twitter Terms

- Hashtags: # - related to subject matter & is searchable
  - #TSCA
  - #Saferchemicals
  - #Nurses
- At replies or mentions: @ - directly tied to Twitter accounts
  - @envirn
  - @saferchemicals
  - @lisamurkowski
Anatomy of a Tweet

- A provoking yet concise ask, message, or info with link (limit to 125-130 characters to allow for easy retweeting)
- 1-3 hashtags to join relevant conversations
- Include @influentialperson to get your message on the leaders’ radars
Engaging on Facebook

- Engage with supporters
- Post compelling content
- Make your community human
- Reply to comments
- Don’t be repetitive
Facebook Advocacy in Action

http://www.facebook.com/NurseRiseNursesforSafeWater
Blogs

- Write great titles
- Understand your audience
- Create scannable content
- Write content that readers will understand
- Use a variety of media
- Keep it short
- Get people to comment (Can be really difficult!)
- You don’t need to be perfect
Generating Press Coverage

- Seven must-haves for generating press:
  - A solid understanding of the story
  - Knowing what is and isn’t news (timely, relevant, interesting)
  - Getting story to the right people at the right time
  - Ability to act fast and seize opportunities
  - Long-term vision and planning
  - Relationships and contacts
  - Patience and persistence
Holding a Press Conference – When, Where, How

- Offer advantages – interesting visuals, hearing directly from experts or officials
- Choose accessible location with electricity
- Best days are Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday
- Best time is before noon
- Invite the media with *media advisory* (enough info for them to decide if they’ll come, but not the full story)
Media Advisory

- Who, what, when, where, why
- Fax and email advisory a week in advance
- Follow up calls a day before (morning of for TV and radio)
  - Opportunity to pitch event, schedule follow up interviews
  - Gives you an idea of how many reporters will attend
Press Kit

- Press release containing key information
- Background materials to help reporter further understand the issue
- Copies of charts, graphs, reports, other visuals
- Bring press kit to event
- After the event, distribute kit to reporters who cover the topic but couldn’t attend
- Monitor the press for coverage
Press Conference – 9 tips

- Plan two weeks ahead. Decide what to do & how to do it
- Prepare props, posters, banners and a press kit
- Create a media list
- Write, email and fax a media advisory
- Write the statement you will make at the press conference
- Call reporters to remind them about the press conference
- Arrive early to situate speakers, organize materials, etc.
- Include a pad for members of the press to sign in, to help you track your coverage
- Thank reporters for coming, to build relationship
Editorial Board Meetings

- Goal: convince newspaper to write editorial taking favorable position on your issue
- Them: People who write editorials for the newspaper. Us: 3-5 advocates, nurses, etc.
- Send meeting request letter, including topic and attendees
- Follow up via phone or email to schedule
- Pre-meet to determine who is saying what
- Don’t talk too much, let them ask questions
- Ask them questions to draw them out
Op-Eds

- Great follow up to a news story or editorial
- Gets more mileage, extends life of news
- Adds a new story element, perspective
- See newspaper website for word count, exclusivity, other rules
Joyce Stein, RN, guest commentary in Detroit Free Press advocating for TSCA reform

(This column appeared as a guest commentary in the Detroit Free Press on June 7, 2012)

As a nurse, I empathize with the strong desire to find a cure for many of today’s medical problems: cancer, infertility, immune disorders and learning and developmental disabilities. They all have profound and devastating effects on American individuals and families.

But as a nurse, I recognize that even more important than finding a cure is preventing these health problems before they start. Even with all the advances in medical science, we have seen the rates of many diseases rise over the past 40 years. Every decade since the passage of the first Toxic Substance Control Act of 1976, scientists have learned more and more regarding the dangerous effects toxic chemicals have on infants, children and adults.

But without better regulation, this knowledge has gone unheeded. The effects of toxic chemicals found in our homes, the environment and our workplaces can be seen in the increase in neurodevelopmental disorders, cancers and chronic diseases. Childhood cancers have increased 20 percent since 1975, breast cancer rose by 40 percent between 1973 and 1998, and infertility affected 40 percent more women in 2002 than in 1982.

While Americans are living longer, we are sicker while we’re alive. What can account for the rise in these health trends?

Peer-reviewed science shows alarming links between toxic chemicals, to which Americans are routinely exposed, and many of the negative health trends we’re currently experiencing today. Since the 1950s, the use of and exposure to chemicals in this country have risen exponentially.

Under federal law, chemicals are virtually unregulated for their health effects. The result is that every day we are exposed to toxic chemicals found in our homes, workplaces and schools.

My interest in how chemicals may be impacting human health began in the 1990s with the exposure of premature infants to DEHP, a chemical commonly found in IV tubing and bags, in the newborn intensive care unit. The very products we were using to treat premature infants were unknowingly a source of toxic chemical exposure.

Many people think of “environmental” as existing outdoors, but as a nurse who works every day with patients and families, I know that chemicals can invade our homes and workplaces.

As a nurse, I have heard patients ask if their home is safe from chemical exposures. Their question has inspired me to combine my personal experience with my professional knowledge to call for an end to these dangerous exposures and for reform of the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976.
Letters to the Editor

- Can generate several letters among colleagues, which reinforces editorial, Op Ed
- Also increases likelihood one will be printed
- Can use a number of different voices
- See website for word count, exclusivity, other rules
- Easiest of all press outreach strategies
In-person Meetings

• Know your policy makers
• Anticipate and be prepared to counter likely opposition arguments
• Become an information resource
• Tie your information to legislators’ issues
• Identify key people and communicate
• Show appreciation
Call to schedule in advance – ask for scheduler and try and meet with policymaker in person

Make sure your materials are concise and compelling – don’t bury them in paper!

Invite colleagues, experts, advocates, and meet with them in advance

Be brief and concise, with offers to follow up and clarity on meeting outcomes and next steps
Tying it Together

- Tweet /facebook right from your press events/hearings/legislative visits!
- Bring copies of your own blogs/press coverage to legislative visits in your information packets
- Use twitter/emails/facebook to invite people to your rallies/press events
- Each activity can leverage and strengthen the others
NURSES FOR SAFER CHEMICALS

Health for the many, supersede wealth for the few.
Thank you!

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