

President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children

Work Plan



Priorities, Short-Term Actions and Long-Term Actions

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President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children Work Plan Priorities, Short Term Actions, and Long Term Actions

Introduction

The President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children (Task Force) is the focal point for federal government agencies to scope, plan, and act together for the betterment of children's environmental health. The Task Force includes 17 federal agencies and White House offices and is uniquely positioned to coordinate federal efforts to address the array of chemical, biological, and social stressors that threaten the health of children. The Task Force engages the agencies named in Executive Order (EO) 13045¹.

In October 2015, the Task Force co-chairs—HHS Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell and EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy—convened the Task Force to renew the federal commitment to protecting children from environmental health and safety risks and to endorse future interagency actions that promote children's health and wellbeing. At the close of the meeting, the co-chairs requested the development of a work plan to guide future interagency collaborations. This work plan outlines the federal commitments by describing three immediate priorities and by listing the current short-term and long-term actions the Task Force has planned to support those priorities. In addition, an implementation table has been developed for short-term actions and includes specific activities that will be monitored by the Senior Staff Steering Committee—the interdepartmental working group of senior staff established to support the work of Task Force.

Three Immediate Priorities

I. Reducing Lead Exposures: Addressing sources of lead, such as paint, drinking water and consumer products, to protect children from exposures

Childhood lead exposure has fallen dramatically over the past 30 years. With the absence of an identified safe blood lead level without deleterious effects and with the recognition that some health outcomes may be irreversible², the Task Force will seek to reduce elevated blood lead levels and identify underlying disparities in lead exposure. The Task Force will work to protect children from lead hazards, including reducing exposure to lead in paint, drinking water and consumer products.

¹<http://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-executive-order-13045-protection-children-environmental-health-risks-and>

²Low Level Lead Exposure Harms Children: A Renewed Call for Primary Prevention, Report of the Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, January 4, 2012 (www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/acclpp/final_document_030712.pdf)

II. Protecting Health in a Changing Climate: Preparing families and communities to understand and minimize the effects of climate on children’s health

In order to minimize the impacts of climate change on children’s health, the Task Force will inform federal agencies about children’s risks, develop key information and outreach messages, continue to support the Climate Change and Children’s Health Policy Roundup, and address research needs.

III. Reducing the Burden of Environmentally-Related Illnesses: Addressing environmental origins of disease to promote children’s health and reduce health disparities

It has been estimated that environmental diseases in United States children account for more than \$76.8 billion (2008 dollars) in direct and indirect costs annually³. The Task Force is committed to reducing asthma disparities, reducing second hand smoke exposure, promoting healthy settings, and limiting chemical exposures; preventing preterm birth and childhood cancer; and crafting and disseminating messages on evidence-based prevention measures such as, farmworker protection, and other actions to reduce chemical exposures.

Short Term Actions

I. Reducing Lead Exposures

- Develop a Lead Inventory Report for “Eliminating Childhood Lead Poisoning: A Strategy Targeting Lead Paint Hazards”⁴ that the Task Force published in 2000. Report will include federal activities that address multiple sources of lead exposure, including air, soil, drinking water and consumer products.
- Share the Lead paint results with staff analysts in agencies of importance (with similar stakeholders such as Department of commerce/Trade Analysts, but also OSHA, SBA, etc.) to bring awareness on this matter and encourage safer choice products and processes.

II. Protecting Health in a Changing Climate

- Inform federal agencies about unique risks to children’s health from climate change
- Increase information and collaboration with analysts related to domestic and international commerce of products and processes; inform on innovation and encourage acceleration of adoption of safer products and products and processes.
- Develop key messages for the public about the impacts of climate change on children’s health

³Trasande L, Liu Y. Reducing the staggering costs of environmental disease in children, estimated at \$76.6 billion in 2008 (<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/30/5/863>)

⁴Eliminating Childhood Lead Poisoning: A Federal Strategy Targeting Lead Paint Hazards <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/about/fedstrategy2000.pdf>

- a. Disseminate relevant key findings of the 2016 Climate and Health Assessment Report at events including stakeholders such as academia, industry, and users. Use the federal family members to help support such participation.
- b. Continue to solicit, compile, and disseminate policies and programs aimed at protecting children

III. Reducing the Burden of Environmentally-Related Illnesses Through Partnerships and Collaborations

Educational Innovation: Communication and engagement is at the core of the Task Force's functions and underpins many of the Task Force's activities. Success in this area will include dissemination of critical information to appropriate stakeholders and building a federal community of practice in children's environmental health.

- Engage with research, medical, public health, academic, and advocacy communities to share information about programs and training on children's environmental health⁵
- Build the children's environmental health capacity in the health professions by working with Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU),⁶ the EPA-NIEHS Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Centers, and others to support fellowships and training

Asthma Disparities⁷ Broaden interagency and stakeholder collaboration on initiatives for reimbursement of in-home asthma care services (e.g., three regional summits in FY 2016)

Healthy Settings⁸

- Communicate the children's health benefits of smoke-free homes policies in federally assisted, low income, affordable and market-rate housing
- Conduct technical assistance, outreach and education activities to communicate benefits of smoke-free housing to public housing authorities (PHAs), officials of public housing member organizations, and PHA residents.
- Promote greater adoption of integrated pest management, especially in low-income multi-unit housing

Chemical Exposures

- Disseminate science and information on ongoing and emerging chemical exposures of concern for children such as brominated flame retardants in electronics and upholstery; inorganic arsenic in rice and rice products; pesticides used in agricultural, school

⁵Pope AM, Rall DP, eds. *Environmental Medicine: Integrating a Missing Element into Medical Education*, 1995 (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK231980/>)

⁶<http://www.pehsu.net/>

⁷EPA President's Task Force link to Coordinated Federal Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Asthma Disparities broken; see <http://www.epa.gov/asthma>

⁸http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/healthy_homes/hhi

- buildings and grounds, and home settings⁹; endocrine disruptors; formaldehyde in composite wood products; and tire crumb on playgrounds

EPA's Agricultural Worker Protection Standard¹⁰

- Agricultural Worker Protection Standard: Disseminate and amplify the provisions that are relevant to children's health
 - a. The minimum age restriction
 - b. Development of culturally appropriate and effective worker/handler pesticides safety training to reduce/prevent take-home exposures
 - c. Implementation of inspections/monitoring protocols with chemical manufacturers, distributors, sellers and users to assure compliance
 - d. Development of protocols to target enforcement actions to reduce children's exposure to pesticides

EPA's Safer Choice¹¹ Program on Chemical Alternatives

- Encourage incorporation of Safer Choice products into federal procurement specifications (such as Head Start)
- Support domestic and international activities related to innovation and competitiveness for safer Choice type products and processes.
- Explore methods for finding and providing support to small businesses interested in applying for the Safer Choice label

Long Term Actions

I. Reducing Lead Exposures Regulations and Policies

- Update federal dust-lead hazard and clearance standards
- Encourage inclusion of lead under home visit programs

II. Protecting Health in a Changing Climate

Communication and Engagement

- Encourage and support grants to communities for adaptation policies
- Include child-specific language in Climate Adaptation Plans of relevant federal agencies

⁹<http://www.epa.gov/managing-pests-schools/introduction-integrated-pest-management>; *Child Safe Playing Fields Act*; *Presidents National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators* (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/Pollinator%20Health%20Strategy%202015.pdf>); http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/healthy_homes/healthyhomes/ipm

¹⁰<http://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/agricultural-worker-protection-standard-wpsuhasdfs>

¹¹<http://www.epa.gov/saferchoice>

- Provide guidance on healthy and sustainable building efforts following extreme weather events and disasters
- Develop curricula for federal public health officials as well as officials in the field of international affairs and commercial exchanges to indicate how climate change affects children's health
- Foster sustainable and safe walking and biking to decrease greenhouse gas emissions

Research Needs

- Conduct and/or coordinate a research needs activity to identify gaps in knowledge on impacts of climate change on children's environmental health
- Encourage children's health outcome-specific language in federal climate change, chemical exposures, and other relevant areas of research funding opportunities
- Listen, assess and evaluate, when possible, co-benefits of climate change adaptation efforts on children's health by varied public and private sector stakeholders; continue to encourage advanced manufacturing and innovation in chemicals management toward industrial competitiveness, and improved health and environmental performances; build upon international interests to increase participation and enhanced range of projects.
- Evaluate the impact/co-benefits of climate change adaptation efforts on children's health

III. Reducing the Burden of Environmentally-Related Illnesses

Communication and Engagement

- Create children's environmental health internship rotations among federal agencies to build capacity in the federal workforce¹²
- Engage with specialists through Land-grant universities and Extension Educators in the Cooperative Extension System to share programs and curricula on children's environmental health and disseminate information for the public

Environmental Factors Related to Preterm Birth Prevention

- Compile state of the science on preterm birth and the environment for publication as white paper or public awareness effort
- Identify and disseminate messages on measures to prevent harmful prenatal exposures and preterm birth

Environmental Factors Related to Childhood Cancer Prevention

- Monitor emerging trends and share research findings relevant to childhood cancer and the environment from the National Toxicology Program Report on Carcinogens,

¹²<https://trainingcenter.nih.gov/intern/>; <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/federal-advocacy/Pages/AAP-Department-of-Federal-Affairs-Internship-Program.aspx>

- International Agency for Research on Cancer Monographs, and National Cancer Institute Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results program

Asthma Disparities¹³

- Expand research coordination across federal agencies to leverage resources to reduce disparities in childhood asthma
- Explore opportunities to partner and leverage efforts to provide comprehensive asthma care in Native American/Alaska Native communities
- Identify additional agencies and opportunities to partner and leverage efforts to sustainable financing for comprehensive in-home asthma care services across the nation, including in Native American communities

Healthy Settings

- Provide technical assistance and support efforts to increase the number of federally assisted multi-family properties with smoke-free policies
- Continue to identify and pursue opportunities to promote smoke-free policies in federally assisted, low income, affordable market rate housing, domestically and internationally (where and when U.S. industry is strongly represented).
- Use existing partnerships, stakeholders' events (academia, industry, consumers) to distribute and promote materials related to smoke-free housing (e.g., manuals, tool kits, videos, webinars, cessation guidance and tools for residents, and best practice documents)
- Support efforts to advance healthy schools and healthy childcare facilities
- Promote greater adoption of model housing and building codes to create green and healthy housing
- Continue to pursue greater adoption of integrated pest management, especially in low-income multifamily housing
- Identify opportunities to promote integrated weatherization/healthy homes interventions in low-income housing

EPA's Safer Choice¹⁴ Program on Chemical Alternatives

- Incorporate information about the Safer Choice program in Healthy Homes Initiative materials
- Support training and materials on the Safer Choice program to Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units and the Centers for Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research
- Inform commerce-related officials on Safer Choice; its opportunities for advanced manufacturing, innovation, and competitiveness. Encourage visibility, transparency and support of innovators in varied trade events: insist on the importance of acting early

¹³EPA President's Task Force link to Coordinated Federal Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Asthma Disparities broken; see <http://www.epa.gov/asthma>

¹⁴<http://www.epa.gov/saferchoice>

with trade partners to facilitate Mutual Recognition agreements on Safer Choice products and processes, between nations

- Work to expand the Safer Choice program to cover personal care products, in particular those used by children

Regulations and Policies

- Identify how federal agencies are knowing and addressing environmental health risks and safety risks disproportionately affecting children as required in EO 13045; and identify regulatory approaches for children’s environmental health outside of EO 13045
- Promote broad implementation of children’s environmental-relevant regulations and policies, for example, the smoke-free multi-family dwelling policy, integrated pest management, and farmworker protection standards; be interested in economic impacts of innovations.
- Continue work to extend National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey¹⁵ (NHANES) data collection and add to existing data for children aged 6-12 years to include children aged 3- 6 years
- Identify and promote effective injury prevention interventions for children in high-risk households

Research Needs

- Explore how the research findings of the NIEHS/EPA Children’s Research Centers can be most effectively translated to clinical practice, prevention, interventions, formal and non-formal education, and policy and regulations through work with Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and others
- Help monitor the state of the science, coordinate and focus discussions on research needs, and encourage scientific efforts on children’s environmental health topics. General surveillance will include monitoring findings from the NIEHS Children’s Health Exposure Analysis Resource¹⁶ (CHEAR) program; and monitoring new technologies and approaches in toxicology research and testing to inform regulatory agencies of appropriate use of results.
 - a. Asthma Disparities:** Expand collaborations to maximize the impact of federally supported research to reduce disparities in asthma outcomes in children
 - b. Healthy Settings:** Conduct surveillance and evaluation activities and support research to document the benefits of smoke-free housing policies, integrated pest management, residential injury prevention interventions, and integrated healthy homes interventions for children and other vulnerable populations
 - c. Chemical Exposures:** Develop information for estimating cumulative risks of phthalates to children and assess the relative contribution of food versus other sources for children’s chemical exposures.

¹⁵<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes.htm>

¹⁶<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/supported/exposure/chea/>

List of President's Task Force Agencies on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission www.cpsc.gov

U.S. Department of Agriculture www.usda.gov

U.S. Department of Education www.ed.gov

U.S. Department of Energy www.energy.gov

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services www.hhs.gov

U.S. Department of Homeland Security www.dhs.gov

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development www.hud.gov

U.S. Department of Justice www.justice.gov

U.S. Department of Labor www.dol.gov

U.S. Department of Transportation www.transportation.gov

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency www.epa.gov

Council of Economic Advisers www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cea

Council on Environmental Quality www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq

Domestic Policy Council www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/dpc

National Economic Policy Council www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/nec

Office of Management and Budget www.whitehouse.gov/omb

Office of Science and Technology Policy www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ostp