

Minutes: June 2, 2008
Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council
Maryland Department of Environment,
1800 Washington Blvd., Baltimore, MD

Members Present: Clifford Mitchell (DHMH), Phil Heard (MDE), Alicia Mezu (MSDE), Christopher Loffredo (Georgetown University)

Guests: Pamela Bauer, Maryland Healthy Schools
Barbara Bice (MSDE)
Veronika Carella (Howard County PTO)
Dr. Cheryl DePinto (DHMH)
Dr. Lorne Garrettson (Pediatric toxicologist)
Lee Hurt (DHMH)
Judith Ann Shinogle (University of Maryland)
Romona Trovato US EPA (retired)

Staff: Nancy M. Servatius

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Clifford Mitchell at 9:40a.m.

Welcome and Overview

Members and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved by voice vote.

Regulation Review

- **DHMH Regulations**

Dr. Mitchell discussed pending regulations within the Department. The Environmental Health Protection Program is developing regulations to commercial tanning facilities to get custodial or parental consent before minors can use the facilities.

Dr. Shinogle recommended consultation with the skin cancer coalition. Dr. Garrettson recommended that the public announcement of the tanning regulations be accompanied by a peer review article from the American College of Dermatology or the backing of a professional renowned organization.

The Environmental Health Coordination Program of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is reviewing three regulations pertaining to child safety. These are:

- COMAR 10.19.02 Hazardous Substances
- COMAR 10.19.05 Flammable Articles
- COMAR 10.19.06 Poison Prevention Packaging

There was extensive discussion around the three regulations. Both the hazardous substances and poison prevention packaging regulations have been shown to be very effective; they are based on the corresponding regulations of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. There is, however, considerable controversy about the flammable articles regulation because of concern about the carcinogenicity and persistence of the poly-brominated compounds that are used by industry to impart flame resistance. Although there was a great deal of concern about the chemicals, no specific action or vote was taken regarding the regulation.

Maryland Healthy Schools

Pamela Bauer and Ramona Trovato engaged in a discussion with members of CEHPAC regarding the indoor air quality within Maryland's public schools. The group they are forming is concerned that productivity and health of Maryland students and school employees can be linked to indoor environmental quality. They intend to affiliate with the Healthy Schools Network. They raised a number of issues related to school environments: indoor air, cleaning products, idling policies for school buses, lead in drinking water, use of pesticides, and other topics.

There was considerable discussion on this issue. Council members pointed out that some of these issues were already addressed, although incompletely. For example, pesticide notification is required, but only for registered pesticides. Massachusetts has banned pesticides in schools (according to Ms. Carrella), and some Maryland counties are more restrictive than the State. Members also pointed out that there is no systematic surveillance in schools for either environmental problems, or health effects related to them.

Maryland Healthy Schools is trying to push for a state law that would require school systems to maintain healthy school environments, using EPA's Tools for Schools or a similar product. They asked whether CEHPAC would support such an effort, noting that Minnesota has adopted such a law. Members of CEHPAC discussed the benefits and challenges of implementing such a comprehensive law and pointed out that such legislation could take years. It was suggested, that other alternatives, although less in statute, might accomplish more in the short term; i.e., concentrating on "small victories" such as turning off school bus engines while idling; the education of school boards about the proper environmental health maintenance of schools; as well as the possibilities of buying more local foods from the farming communities.

Barbara Bice (MSDE) noted that there is a group at MSDE that develops guidelines for new school construction. Private schools sometimes use the MSDE guidelines as well. The public school construction program (which is separate from MSDE) surveys 250 schools per year and reports back to MSDE and the Board of Public Works on how maintenance and other facilities issues. The interagency committee on school construction can withhold funds from schools if they grossly neglect maintenance (the group is made up of the Departments of Planning, Education, and General Services).

It was further discussed that educational support come through partnerships with other environmental health organizations, such as the Maryland Asthma Control Program, etc.

Barbara Bice delivered a brief report on the progress of the working group that is developing regulations pertaining to the purchase of new portable classrooms. Of the \$340 million in capital projects this year, about \$45 million is devoted to mechanical upgrades. The new codes will not apply to existing portables.

Legislative Update

There were no specific legislative issues.

New Business

Dr. DePinto reported that the Office of Child Care is redoing its regulations pertaining to lead in child care facilities. In the past, the physical facilities section required lead testing only when there was visible dust; Dr. DePinto recommends now that all facilities should be tested.

The meeting ended at 11:50am.

The next CEHPAC meeting will take place am at MDE (Date to be determined).

Submitted by: Clifford S. Mitchell