

N E E T F

National Strategies for Health Care Providers: Pesticides Initiative BACKGROUND

In response to a call for action from organizations such as the American Medical Association and the Institute of Medicine, the *National Strategies for Health Care Providers: Pesticides Initiative* has been created to improve health care providers' recognition, management and prevention of pesticide poisonings and overexposures. This will be accomplished through a range of strategies focused on improving providers' education and practice skills, and by increasing resource linkages. The Initiative is a model for integrating other environmental health issues into health care provider education and practice. The *National Strategies for Health Care Providers: Pesticides Initiative* is a project of The National Environmental Education & Training Foundation (NEETF) in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Labor, and a wide range of stakeholders.

The Need

Although environmental health risks are a leading cause of illness, the average health professional receives minimal environmental education and training on a variety of issues, including pesticides. Even when environmental factors are identified as a source of a health problem, there is often little knowledge about how to address or prevent the problem. A study has shown that 75 percent of U.S. medical schools require only about seven hours of study in environmental medicine over four years. Due to the widespread use of pesticides in America in homes, agriculture, workplace, and communities, and the potential for related illness and injury, health care providers should be prepared to recognize, manage and prevent pesticide-related health conditions in their patients and communities.

Initiative Projects

Activities are targeted toward primary health care providers as well as decision-making bodies. Examples of specific projects detailed in the Initiative's Implementation Plan include:

- *National Pesticide Competency Guidelines for Education and National Pesticide Practice Skills Guidelines*—Companion documents that present specific educational competencies and practice skills recommendations
- *Audience Assessment of Education Settings and Primary Care Providers*—Documents the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and preferred learning methods of health care provider faculty and practitioners
- *National Review Board*—Identifies, selects, and assesses ideal pesticides resources for primary care providers in educational and practice settings
- *Information Gateway*—Providing centralized print, telephone, and Web-based resources
- *National Forum*—A “call to action” conference for executing the recommendations and strategies of the Initiative's Implementation Plan; invited leaders to convene September 18-20, 2002 in Washington, DC

Chartered by Congress in 1990, the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation (NEETF) is a private non-profit organization dedicated to advancing environmental education in its many forms. Since it was established, it has become a leader in the development of new policies, grant-making approaches, and direct programming to advance environmental literacy in America. We link environmental education to many of society's core goals such as: better health, improved education, environmentally sound and profitable business and volunteerism in local communities.

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