

NEETF

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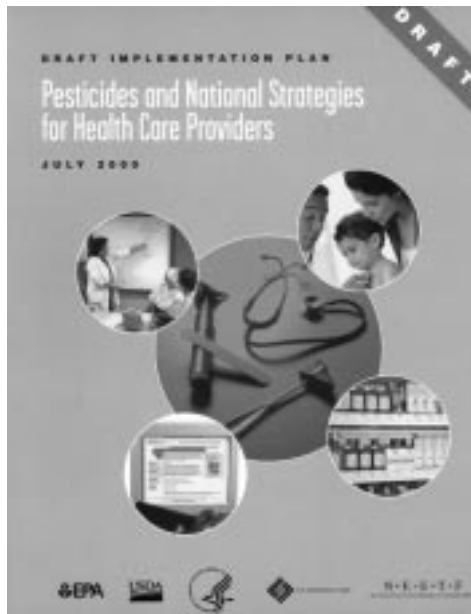
The National Environmental Education & Training Foundation

NEETF Releases Draft National Pesticides Plan

In partnership with a multi-agency Federal task force, NEETF has published a national strategic plan designed to improve the health of agricultural and urban communities. "*Pesticides and National Strategies for Health Care Providers: a Draft Implementation Plan*" encompasses what will become a strategic tool to improve the medical and nursing professions' ability to recognize, manage and prevent pesticide-related health conditions.

"The complexity that surrounds pesticide-related illnesses warrants a coordinated effort between groups with first-hand knowledge of exposure," says Kevin Keaney, a divisional branch chief within EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs. "This plan is intended as a model for other environment-related health issues reflected in today's realities."

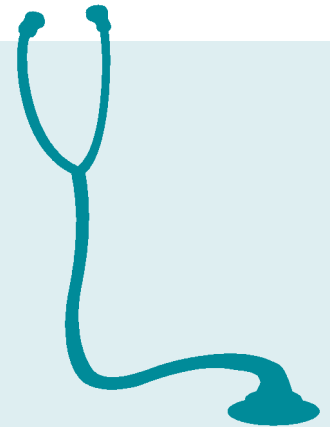
The *Draft Implementation Plan*, a three-prong strategy to reach health care professionals through formal education (i.e. medical schools, nursing schools, residency and practicum programs), practice settings (i.e. clinics, hospitals), and the use of quality resources, makes a strong case for the introduction of environmental health education as a means to change educational and practice settings. Environmental health education is recommended as an important part of responsible, superior-quality health care.



The *Draft Implementation Plan* represents collaboration among four federal agencies including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Depts. of Health and Human services (HHS), Agriculture (USDA), and Labor (DOL), along with hundreds of nurses, doctors, farm worker clinicians, nursing and medical school faculty, public health practitioners and pesticide safety educators. The draft plan was available for public comment until December 1, 2000. Initial responses from health professionals have been positive.

To request a copy, call 202-833-2933, ext. 535. The final version of the Plan is expected in 2001.

Wellness & The Environment is a periodic publication published by NEETF in coordination with its Wellness Initiative. Further information on all stories is available from Jennifer Bretsch, NEETF's Health and the Environment Program Associate: bretsch@neetf.org tel. 202/261-6470



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NEETF's Pesticides Resource Library, www.neetf.org/health/pestlibrary.htm, provides access to useful, easy-to-find information from government agencies, medical associations, universities, non-profit organizations, and pesticide publications.



Health Web Page Gets New Look

Check out NEETF's new Wellness & the Environment web pages. They've been updated to become more attractive and user-friendly. The site now features links to health partners and colleagues, this newsletter, environmental health resources and information about our current projects. Health care professionals can now access information about the Wellness Initiative and NEETF's efforts to improve health care through environmental health education.

Check out the new and improved site!
www.neetf.org/health/index.htm

NEETF's Pesticides Resource Library Opens On-line

The first resource that allows health care professionals to research illnesses linked to pesticide exposure is now up and running on-line. Found at www.neetf.org/health/pestlibrary.htm, the Pesticides Resource Library contains useful, accessible and easy to find information from government agencies, medical associations, universities, non-profit organizations, and pesticide publications. Information sources include books, web sites, articles, pamphlets, and college curricula. Information referred to on this site can be downloaded electronically or received by mail.

Links to NEETF's resource library and other Internet pages will be posted as new information becomes available.

AAP Handbook of Pediatric Environmental Health Provides Clinical Answers

Wellness Initiative Steering Committee Member RUTH ETZEL, MD, PhD, recently collaborated on

an American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) publication with Associate Editor Sophie J. Balk, M.D. Dr. Etzel introduces this new resource.

When it was published in 1999, *U.S. News and World Report* called *The Handbook of Pediatric Environmental Health* "the latest coup in the decades-old drive to get physicians and policy-makers thinking about the effects of toxic compounds on kids." (October 18, 1999)

Dr. Bill Robertson wrote in *Doody Review*, "This is a winner and so easy to use." (August 5, 2000)

Pediatric News praised the publication saying it includes "everything that parents want to know about environmental health. [*The Handbook of Pediatric Environmental Health*] addresses scores of timely parental questions from 'Should my child drink bottled water?' to 'How can we better prepare the house to prevent asthma attacks?' (May 1999)

AAP's Handbook of Pediatric Environmental Health is creating a real media buzz. As these excerpts demonstrate, the handbook is receiving rave reviews from pediatricians. A 400-page text, the handbook was released late last year. It provides practical advice to pediatricians on a wide variety of issues, from air pollution to ionizing radiation. The handbook features more than 30 chapters on prevention and treatment of childhood environmental health problems. Topics covered include the reduction of asthma triggers in the environment, preventing lead and mercury exposure, recognizing and preventing acute pulmonary hemorrhages associated with exposure to toxigenic molds in infants. Each chapter includes a list of frequently asked questions and responses, making this a handy desk reference for busy clinicians. 15,700 pediatricians have already ordered the handbook.



Order your handbook on-line from the AAP for \$44.95: www.aap.org Or call 1-888-227-1770 or FAX 1-847-228-1281.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Wellness & the Environment News sought out an environmental health expert, Lillian Mood, RN, MPH, a public health nurse and community liaison in South Carolina's Department of Health & Environmental Control, to answer questions about current health issues in communities nationwide. Mood, a steering committee member for NEETF's Initiative on Wellness & the Environment, provides answers that illuminate the paramount issues.

Q. *What environmental issues affect communities most often? Can you identify recurring issues?*

A. Most frequently, community concerns fall into 3 groups:

- Concerns about the quality of the air and water
- Concerns about unexplained illness in communities, especially cancer
- Issues of adequate information and involvement on environmental decisions

Q. *What can be done about these environment-related concerns?*

A. Ongoing open communication to the public is the best cure for any community's "need to know." Government, private companies and communities all have communication roles in providing news people can use. Environmental agencies, for instance, can assure public notice of permit applications and opportunities for public input early and throughout a decision-making process. Local government can keep communities informed and involved in land use planning and economic and community development initiatives. Industries can reach out to neighbors for input on what is important to the surrounding community. This often involves decisions on the location of a plant, adequate tree and other vegetative buffers, routing of truck traffic (not along roads that school busses travel), dust, noise and odor control and emergency plans. Early community involvement can result in sound plan development and a trusted "good neighbor" policy.



Public Health Nurse Lillian Mood is a welcome resource for many South Carolina neighborhoods.

Unexplained illnesses require more complete science and databases. Information from cancer registries and hospital and emergency room admissions are steps in the right direction but still leave many questions unanswered. Health professionals need to become more involved in assessing exposure histories and researching environment/health linkages.

Government and industry can address concerns about air and water by providing data collected through monitoring systems. Citizens can help safeguard vital elements by preventing non-point source water pollution, practicing litter control, preserving trees and wetlands and promoting less surface-paving in communities.

Q. *What can health care providers with environmental education provide to communities that other public health professionals—those without environmental education—cannot?*

A. As a public health nurse, I gather information on specific situations from environmental professionals around me and provide that information to communities. Citizens count on me to help them find answers, to know the agencies and how they work, and to ask the right questions of the right people. They need access to someone who has the ear of decision-makers, who can make community concerns known in discussions where citizens are not present. I try to be that person. ❖



“Health professionals need to become more involved in assessing exposure histories and researching environment/health linkages.”

**—Lillian Mood,
RN, MPH**