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Environmental Health Tools Now Available in Spanish
User-friendly tools help clinicians and parents keep kids healthy

WASHINGTON, D.C. – New tools for health care professionals to identify potentially harmful environmental exposures to children – and to help clinicians advise families about steps to control their children’s environmental exposures – are now available in Spanish, the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) announced today.

NEEF’s new resources come at a time of wide disparities in children’s environmental health. Racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately exposed to a variety of environmental hazards, leading to higher rates of adverse health outcomes. Hispanic children are almost twice as likely to be hospitalized for asthma as white children, while recent figures indicate Hispanic children under six years old were nearly three times as likely to have elevated blood lead levels.

The new health tools reflect NEEF’s commitment to reach a broad and often underserved audience through its Health and Environment initiative, said Leyla Erk McCurdy, senior director of NEEF’s Health & Environment program.

“We continue to increase our efforts to make our health care provider resources and tools more appropriate for diverse communities,” McCurdy said. “There has been a high demand for Spanish materials from health care providers serving Hispanic communities throughout the United States.”

The new materials include Spanish-language pediatric asthma guidelines, environmental history questionnaires, online presentations and supplemental resources for clinicians on environmental history taking and controlling environmental triggers of asthma.

The tools include “Environmental Management of Pediatric Asthma: Guidelines for Health Care Providers,” designed to help pediatric primary care providers advise families about environmental interventions to help reduce or eliminate triggers for children diagnosed with asthma, the nation’s leading pediatric chronic illness.

Also available in Spanish is the Pediatric Environmental History Screening form, a five-minute, one-page questionnaire administered by primary health care providers to capture most of the common environmental exposures to children. A follow-up survey, with more in-depth questions, can then be administered to collect more information on specific types of exposures.

NEEF is conducting a multi-year initiative to facilitate the integration of environmental health knowledge and tools into health care, especially populations disproportionately impacted by environmental health disparities

In order to ensure that the Spanish tools are culturally appropriate, NEEF worked in partnership with the National Hispanic Medical Association in translating the English documents into Spanish.

"We appreciate the support of NEEF to develop culturally appropriate information for our Latino patients," said Dr. Elena Rios, president & CEO of the National Hispanic Medical Association. "We look forward to sharing the materials with our networks".

Pediatric medical and nursing education currently lacks the environmental health content necessary to appropriately prepare pediatric health care professionals to prevent, recognize, manage, and treat environmental-exposure-related disease.

Taking a good environmental history is a critical first step for addressing health conditions associated with environmental exposures. However, few health care providers are trained in environmental history taking.

More than six million American children have asthma, which is the leading cause of school absenteeism attributed to chronic conditions and the third-leading cause of hospitalizations among children under age 15. Asthma can be a life-threatening disease if not properly controlled through appropriate asthma care management, which relies on physicians' and nurses' clinical knowledge and skills, as well as parents' and children's daily attention to asthma triggers and medications. Environmental asthma triggers include allergens and pollutants. Allergens can be dust mites, cockroaches, animal allergens, molds, and pollens. Indoor and outdoor pollutants include secondhand smoke, chemicals, combustion by-products, smog and fine particles.

The Spanish-language tools are available at: <http://www.neefusa.org/health/index.htm>

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THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) provides knowledge to trusted professionals who, with their credibility, amplify messages to national audiences to solve everyday environmental problems. Together, we generate lasting positive change.

NEEF partners with professionals in health, education, media, business and public land management to promote daily actions for helping people protect and enjoy the environment. Through our primary programs -- Classroom Earth, National Public Lands Day, National Environmental Education Week, Business and Environment, Earth Gauge® and Health & Environment -- we offer Americans knowledge to live by. To learn more, visit www.neefusa.org.

NATIONAL HISPANIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Established in 1994 in Washington, DC, the National Hispanic Medical Association is a non-profit association representing 36,000 licensed Hispanic physicians in the United States. The mission of the organization is to improve the health of Hispanics and other underserved populations. As a rapidly growing national resource based in the nation's capital, NHMA provides policymakers and health care providers with expert information and support in strengthening health service delivery to Hispanic communities across the nation

Our agenda includes expanding access to quality health care, increasing opportunities in medical education, cultural competence, and research for Latinos. Another focus is policy development and education efforts focused on eliminating health disparities faced by Latinos. The NHMA works closely with the Federal government and Congress, the private sector, private foundations as well as national Hispanic organizations. As a member of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, we meet regularly with Federal officials to hold them accountable on Hispanic issues. NHMA has worked closely with the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda and the National Hispanic Health Coalition in Washington, DC and with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC).

