Environmental Health: Nurses Making A Difference

Brenda M Afzal, MS, RN
20th Annual U.S. Public Health Service Nursing Recognition Day Conference
Objectives

1. Describe at least two resources that provide a framework for environmental health principles and standards for nursing practice.

2. Discuss how nurses are engaging on issues related to the environmental health of their patients and communities.
Environmental health comprises those aspects of human health, including quality of life, that are determined by physical, chemical biological, social and psychosocial processes in the environment. It also refers to the theory and practice of assessing, correcting, controlling, and preventing those factors in the environment that can potentially affect adversely the health of the present and future generations.

-World Health Organization, 1993
ENVISION
Unsafe Chinese-made toys cause alarm
By Eric Lipton and David Barboza
Monday, June 18, 2007

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Senator seeks probe of unsafe toys
Products from China are a key concern
By Maurice Possley | Tribune staff reporter June 26, 2007

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CBS News
Annual Alert: Beware Unsafe Toys
Recalled Toys May Still Be On Store Shelves or In Your Home
WASHINGTON, Nov. 25, 2003
A confined feeding operation of cattle in Yuma, Az.
Environmental Health is Fundamental to our Roots

In 1860, Florence Nightingale provided the foundation for nursing attention to environmental exposures and health effects when she wrote about the need for fresh air and clean water in *Notes on Nursing.*
Why Nursing?

- IOM Report
- Gallup Polls
- Nurses, as primary health providers in the community, must be able to field questions and guide vulnerable populations to informed decisions.
Why Nurses?

- We recognize the wisdom of heeding early warnings.
- We are “fix it” people.
- We care passionately about our patients and our communities.
- We are trusted conveyors of health information to our patients, community members, AND policy makers.
- There are a lot of us!
- And because we get it!
Our bodies are becoming alarming reflections of the toxic chemicals in our AIR...
OUR FOOD....

WHAT'S IN YOUR MILK?

An Exposé of Industry and Government Cover-Up on the DANGERS of the Genetically Engineered (rBGH) Milk You’re Drinking

SAMUEL S. EPSTEIN

Introduction by BEN COHEN
President, Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream

Foreword by JEFFREY SMITH
International bestselling author, Star of the Wood

WARNING
FISH CONTAMINATED
DO NOT EAT
FOR INFORMATION CALL:
(508) 881-0114

B碧 C碧
Ca Bi Ngoc Dac
Khong An Duc
Muoi Aii Tin Tiau, Giel
Aiso
Palwe Contaminado Peces Contaminados
Nao Coma No Los Coma
Para Informes, Chamer: Para Obtener Informacion Llame Al (508) 881-0114

Safe eating guidelines for fish from Wisconsin lakes, ponds, and rivers and for fish bought in restaurants and stores.

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Raising a Stink
The factory farm debate

A Family Guide to Eating Fish from Wisconsin
OUR WATER....
AND OUR WORKPLACES

NURSES’ HEALTH
A Survey on Health & Chemical Exposures

As you help others, is your own health at risk? Please join in an important new research effort exploring relationships between nurses’ health and on-the-job exposures to chemicals, drugs, and other harmful agents.

A joint project of Environmental Working Group and Health Care Without Harm
### Timeline: Organizational Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>ICN</td>
<td>Nurses role in Safe Guarding the Environment</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>NASN</td>
<td>Environmental Impacts in Schools</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>AORN</td>
<td>Definition of Regulated medical Waste</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Reduction of Health Care Production of Toxic Pollution</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>ICN</td>
<td>Reduce Environmental and Lifestyle Created Hazards</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>NASN</td>
<td>Position Paper on Indoor Air Quality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AWOHNN</td>
<td>Protecting the Health of Women and Children from Environmental Toxins</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>ICN</td>
<td>Universal Access to Water</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>ACNM</td>
<td>Environmental Pollutants in Breast Milk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Adopts the Precautionary Principle</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Resolution on Inappropriate Use of Antimicrobials in Agriculture</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>APHA</td>
<td>Environmental Health Principles &amp; Recommendations for Public Health Nursing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AORN</td>
<td>Guidance Statement: Environmental Responsibility</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Resolution, Nursing Practice, Chemical Exposure and Right to Know</td>
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<td>ANA</td>
<td>Board of Directors passes position statement on use of Thimerosal in Vaccines</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ICN</td>
<td>Occupational Health and Safety for Nurses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NSNA</td>
<td>Increased Awareness Regarding Minimizing Exposure to Medically Generated Toxins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Environmental Health Principles to be Published</td>
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</table>
Environmental Health Principles for Public Health Nurses

1. Safe and sustainable environments are essential conditions for the public’s health.
2. Environmental health is integral to the role and responsibilities of all public health nurses.
3. All public health nurses should possess environmental health knowledge and skills.
4. Environmental health decisions should be grounded in sound science.
5. The Precautionary Principle is a fundamental tenet for all environmental health endeavors.
6. Environmental justice is a right of all populations.
7. Public awareness and community involvement are essential in environmental health decision-making.
8. Communities have a right to relevant and timely information for decisions on environmental health.
9. Environmental health approaches should respect diverse values, beliefs, cultures, and circumstances.
10. Collaboration is essential to effectively protecting the health of all people from environmental harm.
11. Environmental health advocacy must be rooted in scientific integrity, honesty, respect for all persons, and social justice.
12. Environmental health research addressing the effectiveness and public health impact of nursing interventions should be conducted and disseminated.

http://www.apha.org/membergroups/newsletters/sectionnewsletters/public_nur/winter06/2550.htm
STANDARD 16. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
The registered nurse practices in an environmentally safe and healthy manner.

Attain knowledge of environmental health concepts, such as implantation of environmental health strategies.

Promotes a practice environment that reduces environmental health risks of workers and healthcare consumers.

Assesses the practice environment for factors such as sound, odor, noise and light that negatively affect health.

Advocates for the judicious and appropriate use of products used in health care.

Communicates environmental health risks and exposure reduction strategies to healthcare consumers, families, colleagues and communities.

Utilizes scientific evidence to determine if a product or treatment is a potential environmental threat.

Participates in strategies to promote healthy communities.

How are Nurses Engaging?

- Advocacy
- Practice
- Education
- Research
What is “policy” and “advocacy” and how are they relevant to nursing practice?

“To prepare the profession for a broader range of advocacy activities, nursing curriculum and continuing education programs may come to include content on lobbying, use of media, mediation, expert testimony, community organizing, and the like. In the meantime, whether with institutional support or on their own, nurses who are stretching the definitional boundaries of advocacy practice will need to build skills that were likely not part of their basic nursing education.” (IOM, 1995)
Kudos to the Maryland Nurses Association for their Work Related to Healthy Air Legislation
Dannon Latest to Yield to Health Industry Demands

Arlington, VA — Dannon has announced to Health Care Without Harm that it will stop using milk from cattle injected with the growth hormone rBGH (recombinant bovine growth hormone) to make its yogurt products by the end of 2009.
Education


Knowledge Network

http://envrn.org/pg/groups/421/our-environment-our-health/

EnviRN Knowledge Network

Environmental Health Nursing Initiative

Education
Research

ANHE-Research Work Group
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

Barriers and Facilitators to the Incorporation of Environmental Health into Public Health Nursing Practice
1. Wade G. Hill
2. Patricia Butterfield
3. Sandra Kuntz
Article first published online: 18 FEB 2010
DOI: 10.1111/j.1525-1446.2010.00835.x

Measuring People's Engagement in Environmental Health
Funded by NIH/NIEHS
R15ES12396
One of the strengths of Public Health Nurses is our inclusiveness—a refusal to be insulated, the desire to be connected and to make partners of all who share our mission, our passion for championing the public’s health—the health of people and the connection between health and the conditions in which we live.

Connection is a key word. One of the first basic principles I was taught by my colleagues in environmental health was “Every**thing** is connected to everything else.”

—Lillian Mood, RN, MPH, FAAN

APHA, 2009