

CEHPAC/CEJSC Joint Meeting
January 17, 2024
1:00-3:00 PM

WELCOME

- The meeting opens with introductions and updates from CEHPAC and CEJSC members.
- CEJSC Chair, Camille Burke, mentions the importance of the joint session and acknowledges the presence of both councils.

OLD BUSINESS

- CEHPAC Chair, Cliff Mitchell, suggests bypassing old business to move directly to new business.
- Chair Burke agrees, and there is consensus to skip old business and proceed.

NEW BUSINESS

Environmental Justice (EJ) Screening Tool:

Chair Burke introduces Kate to discuss the Environmental Justice (EJ) Screening Tool.

- Kate discusses the evolution from version 1.0 to version 2.0, incorporating overburdened and underserved areas.
- Demonstrates the tool's splash screen with hyperlinks for guidance.
- Explains the table of contents, category expansion, and use for assessing EJ impacts for new permit applications.
- Guides through address input and navigation for viewing EJ scores.
- Explains transparency feature and criteria for better data visibility.
- Describes query options for overburdened and underserved communities.
- Discusses future plans, including additional scores and screening report features.
- Emphasizes user-friendliness, interactivity, and data download capabilities.

User-Friendly Improvements:

Chair Burke stresses the need for user-friendly tools and collaboration with Dr. Wilson's team for enhancements.

- Aims for alignment with University of Maryland and EPA standards.
- Discusses plans to include climate change-related data and ongoing tool development based on feedback.
- Brandon Brooks plans to refine data with Kate, ensuring relevance.
- Kate continues demonstrating the screening report, emphasizing emissions facilities and data details.
- Describes final EJ score summary and highlights distribution of overburdened pollution EJ scores.
- Demonstrates air emissions facilities data, discussing bio solids and ozone data.
- Invites questions from participants.

Participant Questions:

- Lesliam Quiros asks about database update frequency and vintage data communication, with Kate responding about the 2020 Census start and seamless updates.

- Dr. Ichniowski inquires about EJ score considerations for various exposures, with Kate confirming the inclusion of relevant data.
- Dr. Ichniowski asks if health outcomes factor into the EJ score, with Kate mentioning consideration and collaboration with Chair Mitchell's team.

Future Collaboration and Data Integration:

- Kate expresses intention to collaborate with Chair Mitchell's team on data integration and health-related data discussions.
- Acknowledges efforts to obtain information on health outcomes and life expectancy.

Additional Questions and Answers:

- Discussion on life expectancy, lead poisoning, infant mortality, asthma prevalence, and collaboration with Dr. Wilson for data connection.
- Response to Dr. Ichniowski's query on industrial stormwater construction and MS4 data, with updates on MS4 data inclusion.
- Mention of potential workgroup creation for synergy among tools and platforms.

Acknowledgment and Thanks:

Chair Burke thanks Kate for her dedication, highlighting user-friendliness.

- Kate appreciates the acknowledgment and offers contact information.
- Emphasizes collaboration among EJ tools and platforms, suggesting a meeting for shared insights.

Chair Mitchell commends Kate for her work on the EJ screening tool.

- Advises against a single, all-encompassing tool, emphasizing diverse information sources.

Environmental Public Health Tracking Portal:

Chair Mitchell shares the Environmental Public Health Tracking Portal's front page, highlighting topics.

- Explains mapping applications, displaying age-adjusted cancer rates as an example.
- Demonstrates adjusted trends over time for all jurisdictions.

Census Tract Level Data:

- Allows viewing data at census tract level for finer resolution.
- Acknowledges confidentiality criteria challenges, especially for rare conditions.

Confidentiality Protections and Data Suppression:

- Discusses confidentiality protections, especially for rare diseases, and potential solutions.
- Presents exportable hospitalization data covering 2010 onwards.

Graduate Student Comparison Study:

- Mentions a comparison study using different tools for a comprehensive health impact assessment.
- Emphasizes using multiple tools for holistic understanding of health-related issues.

User Comments and Feedback:

Chair Burke acknowledges participant comments, stressing usability concerns.

- Responds to ED visits localization question and emphasizes ongoing evolution of environmental justice definitions.

Acknowledgment of Tools' Contributions:

Chair Burke appreciates contributions of both tools, highlighting their usability challenges.

- Emphasizes the evolving nature of the term "environmental justice."

Usability Challenges:

- Kate acknowledges challenges in reducing information display without overwhelming users.
- Emphasizes climate change integration and the importance of practical examples and assistance.
- Chair Mitchell suggests instructional videos for tool usage.

Technical Assistance from EPA Region 3:

Dr. Sacoby Wilson discusses technical assistance in Maryland from EPA Region 3.

- Displays the agenda for upcoming discussions.

Children's Environmental Health as part of State EJ Priorities:

Chair Mitchell suggests the need for an integrated agenda or an agenda with items of interest to both the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities and the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council. He proposes a discussion focusing on aspects of environmental justice and sustainability related to children's environmental public health.

- Chair Mitchell's proposal is open-ended but aims to initiate a conversation about questions integral to environmental justice and sustainability with a focus on the technical aspects of children's environmental health. He sees an opportunity for both groups to define a common agenda.

Intersection of Priorities:

- Chair Burke acknowledges the intersections between the two groups' priorities. She highlights the need for collaboration and recognizing areas where both groups support similar initiatives during sessions.
- Members are encouraged to contribute to the discussion, sharing insights or specific subjects where the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities and the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council intersect.

Children's Environmental Health and Justice Integral to Sustainability:

- A comment from Michael emphasizes the importance of recognizing that children cannot be separated from environmental justice, and health equity for children is crucial for their future.
- Paulette Hammond mentions sharing an article related to the discussion. She attempts to copy and paste the article but encounters technical difficulties. Chair Burke suggests emailing it directly if needed.

Ambiguity in Children's Environmental Justice Definition:

- Dr. Ben Gitterman refers to a side remark made by Chair Burke about the ambiguity in the definition of children's environmental justice. He suggests discussing how to work on improving this definition before moving forward.
- Dr. Ben Gitterman suggests that a joint project could focus on improving the definition of children's environmental justice. He emphasizes the need for a relatively uniform definition within the state of Maryland.

Aligning with State Priorities:

- Rebecca Rehr suggests aligning the priorities of children's environmental justice with the existing priorities of the state, such as safety, affordability, and competitiveness. She emphasizes the importance of messaging and framing to connect environmental justice initiatives with the stated priorities.

Intersectionality and Social Determinants of Health:

- Dr. Sacoby Wilson acknowledges the importance of intersectionality and social determinants of health in the context of environmental justice. He suggests not reinventing the wheel and focusing on identifying case examples that put children first.

Case Examples for Communication:

- Nse Witherspoon proposes creating official public statements from both entities, highlighting the identified intersectionality and providing solution-oriented examples. She suggests offering case examples in a one-pager format or through quick blogs to communicate the benefits of prioritizing children's needs.
- Nse Witherspoon emphasizes the unique opportunity to put the needs of vulnerable children first and suggests articulating alignments, identifying areas of protected interest, and showcasing tangible progress being made.
- Nse Witherspoon stresses the importance of articulating alignment, identifying areas of protected interest, and showcasing tangible progress to direct attention, strategic planning, and advocacy efforts. She suggests offering tangible solutions that demonstrate progress in reducing harm and protecting children.

Ongoing Evolution of Ideas:

- Chair Burke acknowledges the ongoing evolution of ideas and expresses readiness to spend time with Chair Mitchell to further explore and develop concrete answers.
- Chair Mitchell emphasizes the need to move beyond theoretical frameworks and focus on practical applications. The challenge is to define how the theoretical framework applies on a practical level to the state's business and operations.
- Chair Burke mentions her reluctance to create workgroups due to members' time commitments. However, she is open to the idea if it helps in defining practical actions. The suggestion is to have a workgroup that can provide concrete outcomes, revisiting as needed.

Building Children into the EJ Screen:

- Dr. Wilson notes efforts to build children more into the EJ screen based on feedback and funding from EPA Region Three.

Strong Statement Leading to Action:

- Laura Allen emphasizes that a strong statement should lead to action. She suggests bringing programs and groups together to build a coalition and work collectively on priorities.

Framework for Action:

- Dr. Wilson, Laura, and Nse agree on the need for a framework for action or a blueprint. The goal is to develop practical strategies that address environmental justice and children's environmental concerns.
- Nse Witherspoon suggests the term "blueprint for protecting children's environmental health" and volunteers to take the lead in developing it.

Bill to Revise Clean Indoor Air Act:

- Chair Mitchell informs the group about a bill filed by the department to revise the Clean Indoor Air Act. The bill addresses changes related to electronic smoking devices and recreational cannabis.

Additional Bills of Interest:

- Chair Burke requests commission and council members to send any bills they find interesting for further discussion. She mentions that there will be a second meeting in January, featuring Secretary Day from DHCD.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Veronika Carella expresses disappointment that the legislative session was not discussed in detail, particularly bills related to PFOS and other issues. She raises concerns about data gaps, specifically regarding hazardous chemicals like pesticides and fertilizers. Veronika emphasizes the need for transparency and access to data controlled by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to assess the impacts of pesticides.
- Veronika Carella urges the commission and council to work on closing data gaps related to pesticide use in Maryland. She stresses the importance of MDA taking possession of pesticide application records and providing transparency to state agencies, commissions, and the public.
- Veronika points out that some pesticides contain PFOS as an active ingredient, and she advocates for avoiding the intentional use of such toxins, especially when alternatives exist. She emphasizes the need for monitoring and testing for substances like PFOS.
- Veronika notes that her concerns about data gaps were raised in the previous joint meeting in December 2022. She urges the commission and council to prioritize addressing these concerns in the coming year.

Closing Remarks:

- Chair Mitchell and Chair Burke express gratitude to the members for their work and dedication.
- Chair Mitchell mentions the excitement about the current administration and encourages joint efforts to advance the cause of children's environmental justice and sustainability.
- Chair Burke appreciates the work being done and looks forward to the upcoming activities.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Participants:

A Miller
Asha Smith **
B. Thomas Burton
Barbara Paca **
Ben Gitterman *
Brandon Brooks -MDE- ** (CEJSC Staff)
Bukola Agboola
Camille Burke ** (CEJSC Chair)
Cliff Mitchell -MDH- * (CEHPAC Chair)
Crystal Faison **
Dennis De Shields **
Dianna Abney -MDH- *
Dr. Reneé Carr **
Greg Faison
Haile Tadesse
Jacquetta A. Wright
John Papagni -DHCD- **
Kate Majchrzak -MDE- **
Kellie Gaither
Kelly M. Love -MDA-, *
Kristen Rawlett, *
Kylan Simpson -MDH- * (CEHPAC Staff)
Laura Allen, *
Lesliam Quiros **
Lisa Horne -DHS- SSC *
Lori Cunningham *
Lori Tantlinger,
Maeve Kessler,
Megan Latshaw *
Michael Ichniowski *
Monica Brooks *
Nadya Chehab -MDA-
Noble Smith -MDE- **
Nse Witherspoon *
Patrick DeArmey
Paulette Hammond **
Rebecca Rehr **
Sacoby Wilson **
Sean Lynch
Shawn Dolan
Veronika Carella
Voncia Molock – CEJSC **
Yasmin Behram -MDP-

CEHPAC: *
CEJSC: **