



CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH &
PROTECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council
Thursday, August 15, 2024
10:00am – 12:30pm

MINUTES:

Members:

Cliff Mitchell
Subha Chandar
Ben Gitterman
Megan Latshaw
Kelly Love
Paul Ferraro
Laura Allen
Nsedu Witherspoon
Kylan Simpson (Staff)

Guests:

Veronika Carella
Sean Lynch
Alexander Lehmann

Welcome

- Dr. Clifford Mitchell Remarks
 - Cliff called the meeting to order and welcomed all members.
 - Cliff shared his new responsibilities, including working with Morgan State University on a groundbreaking Environmental Health Apprenticeship Program, the first of its kind in the U.S.
 - He expressed his appreciation for working with CEHPAC and highlighted the Council's achievements during his tenure.
 - Cliff paid tribute to Delegate Jim Hubbard, the founder of CEHPAC, and reflected on his unexpected but significant contributions to children's environmental health.
 - All council members and guests shared memories and acknowledged Dr. Mitchell's impact on the Council's work.
- Introduction of new CEHPAC Chair, Subha Chandar, MPH
 - Cliff introduced Ms. Subha Chandar, outlining her extensive background in environmental health, including her work with the Maryland Department of Health, NACCHO, and the CDC.
 - Subha expressed her gratitude and enthusiasm for leading CEHPAC, emphasizing her commitment to continuing the Council's mission.
 - The council members gave brief introductions to Subha.
 - Kelly Love mentioned that she will be transitioning out of her role as the representative for MDA. Alexander Lehmann will now be the representative for MDA.

Old Business

- Approval of June 25, 2024 Minutes

- Quorum was not established in order to approve the June meeting minutes. However, Subha allowed for discussion and review of the minutes from the council.
- Ben Gitterman, Megan Latshaw, and Kelly Love confirmed the minutes were accurate and mentioned no edits were necessary.
- Letters to Maryland Department of Agriculture
 - Dr. Mitchell provided background to the motions of the June meeting and the letters intended to be sent to MDA.
 - Cliff Mitchell mentions the progress on two letters regarding pesticide application in schools. The first motion urges MDA to report on pesticide applications in schools and make them publicly available. The second motion is about creating a database related to these applications.
 - Megan Latshaw had originally drafted a letter, and Cliff later drafted a shorter version. These letters are meant to be reviewed by the council, but due to administrative issues, they were not sent out for review after the July meeting was postponed.
 - Cliff apologizes for the delay in sending out the letters and discusses the need for the council to review the letters before they are finalized and sent.
 - Subha emphasizes the need to follow through on the completion and sending of these letters. Since the council had already voted on the actions, the letters just need to be finalized and sent without requiring a new motion.
 - There was discussion among council members about how to proceed with reviewing the letters. Some members suggest reviewing the letters immediately during the meeting to avoid further delays.
 - Megan shares her letter and Cliff's letter for the council to review in real-time during the meeting.
 - Laura Allen and others provide feedback, with some members favoring Megan's more detailed letter over Cliff's brief version.
 - Subha confirmed that the review was complete and that the letter would be distributed before the next meeting, without requiring an additional vote since it had already been motioned forward.

New Business

- Discussion of CEHPAC priorities and focus areas moving forward
 - Subha Chandar sought input from the council members on focus areas for the future. She proposed going around the group to gather everyone's thoughts.
 - Nsedu Witherspoon emphasized the importance of narrowing focus while remaining flexible, particularly regarding legislative sessions. She suggested that the council should be more proactive and organized, especially when dealing with numerous health-focused bills. She also highlighted the importance of community engagement and proposed reviving work on schools' indoor air quality.
 - Laura Allen echoed the need for a focus on schools, particularly in areas like indoor air quality, green cleaning, and lead in water. She expressed concern about the recent decline in community engagement and suggested bringing in external experts to inform the council's work.
 - Megan Latshaw suggests increasing community engagement by appointing a more active parent representative to the group, as the current representative has had difficulty attending meetings. She also mentions that the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities (CEJSC) has been successful in engaging affected communities and suggests that the council could learn from their methods.

- Subha agrees with Megan and notes that the CEJSC has had to do significant outreach to expand its membership and suggests that site visits might help make the council's discussions more tangible by meeting people where they are.
- Ben Gitterman expresses his appreciation for the new Chair's enthusiasm and passion. He emphasizes the importance of learning from other states' experiences to avoid "reinventing the wheel" and suggests that the council should regularly include presentations from external experts to educate and inform the members.
- (Public) Veronika Carella, representing the Maryland Children's Environmental Health Coalition, shares her concerns about the lack of representation of children and parents on the council. She describes her frustration with the council's handling of urgent issues and feels that the real issues are often poorly represented in the minutes. Veronika also emphasizes the importance of work groups in addressing complex issues and mentions her involvement in the "Just Air" Summit, offering to submit the summit report as public input.
- Subha responds to each of these contributions, acknowledging the points raised and expressing a desire to continue the conversation in future meetings. The segment ends with Subha inviting any additional reflections or thoughts from the participants.
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Pesticide Use in Schools
 - Cliff emphasized the importance of reviewing current IPM practices to ensure they are effective in minimizing pest issues while also reducing the use of harmful pesticides. He suggested that the committee should evaluate recent data on the effectiveness of various IPM strategies and consider integrating new technologies or methods that have shown promise in other regions.
 - Laura expressed concerns about the efficacy of existing IPM strategies in schools. She recommended that CEHPAC conduct a thorough review of recent case studies and research to assess the effectiveness of different IPM approaches. Laura also highlighted the need to evaluate how well these strategies are being implemented in schools and to identify potential areas for improvement.
 - Megan inquired about the availability and effectiveness of alternative pest control methods that are less harmful than traditional pesticides. She suggested that the committee should explore new research on pesticide alternatives and assess their applicability in school settings. Megan emphasized the importance of protecting students and staff from the potential health risks associated with pesticide use.
 - Paul supported the idea of reviewing IPM strategies and suggested that the committee focus on the impact of these strategies on long-term health outcomes. He recommended that CEHPAC look into how different IPM practices influence both immediate and long-term health effects on students and school staff.
 - Nsedu advocated for a comprehensive approach to IPM in schools, including stakeholder engagement. She suggested that the committee reach out to school administrators, teachers, and parents to gather feedback on current pest management practices and identify any concerns or areas for improvement. Nsedu also emphasized the importance of including community input in the evaluation process.
 - (Public) Veronika Carella provided an update on the status of IPM and pesticide use in schools. She highlighted several key issues, including the need to update obsolete training manuals and address the presence of PFOS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in pesticides. Veronika mentioned that many pesticides registered in Maryland contain PFOS, a concern given the availability of safer alternatives. There was discussion

about continuing efforts to address these issues and integrate findings into upcoming meetings.

- Future Meeting Schedule
 - Subha Chandar proposed the following dates for future meetings to ensure consistency and accommodate members' schedules:
 - September 17, 2024: 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM
 - October 21, 2024: 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
 - November 14, 2024: 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
 - Nsedu suggested that the committee should review the meeting schedule on a quarterly basis to ensure it remains flexible and accommodates all members' availability. She emphasized the need for scheduling flexibility to maintain high participation levels.
 - Paul supported the proposed meeting dates but suggested that reminders be sent out well in advance to ensure that all members can plan accordingly. He noted that advance notice would help in managing members' schedules and maintaining consistent attendance.

Public Comment

- Subha opened the floor for public comment, inviting Veronika Carella and Sean Lynch to provide their remarks or feedback.
- Veronika Carella Remarks:
 - Veronika expressed her appreciation for the meeting and the opportunity to discuss the current issues. She mentioned that the letter being prepared for distribution is a significant step and thanked the council for their efforts in this regard.
 - She also emphasized the importance of continuing to work on the issues related to CEHPAC findings and encouraged the group to remain engaged with ongoing work, particularly concerning the training materials and IPM strategies.
 - Veronika concluded by expressing her enthusiasm for collaborating with the council and working together on the outlined priorities.
- Sean Lynch Remarks:
 - Sean echoed the sentiment of appreciation for the meeting and expressed a strong commitment to advancing the council's objectives. He stressed the need to stay focused on actionable items and emphasized the importance of moving forward with concrete steps.
 - Sean highlighted the necessity of setting clear goals and ensuring that the council's actions are well-coordinated to achieve the desired outcomes.
 - He encouraged the council to maintain momentum and remain dedicated to addressing the issues at hand.

Adjourn