

1 **SAB Science Integration for Decision Making Fact-Finding Meeting**
2 **Office of the Administrator, Office of Children's Health Protection and Environmental**
3 **Education (OCHPEE)**
4 **Ariel Rios North, Washington, DC**
5 **January 21, 2010**
6

7 Four members of the SAB Committee on Science Integration for Decision Making
8 conducted one interview with EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection and Environmental
9 Education's (OCHPEE). Drs. Terry Daniel and Thomas Wallsten in person, and Drs. Deborah
10 Cory-Slechta, and Thomas Theis by telephone. Dr. Vanessa Vu, Director of the SAB Staff
11 Office, provided a brief introduction to the purpose of the interview and the Designated Federal
12 Officer, Dr. Angela Nugent, took notes to develop a summary of the conversation. All
13 interviewees were provided a copy of the committee's Preliminary Study Plan in advance.
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15 Dr. Vu noted in each interview that the purpose of the interview was to help SAB
16 Committee members learn about OCHPEE's current and recent experience with science
17 integration supporting EPA decision making so that the SAB can develop advice to support
18 and/or strengthen Agency science integration efforts. Dr. Vu thanked participants for taking
19 time for the interviews.
20

21 **Meeting with the OCHPEE Director and Scientific Staff (10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)**
22 **Participants:**
23

24 Dr. Peter Grevatt, Director

25 Dr. Greg Miller, Public Health Scientist and Coordinator for OCHPEE's regulation and
26 science team.

27 Dr. Louis D'Amico, AAAS fellow working on chemicals management and children's
28 special vulnerabilities to environmental hazards.

29 Dr. Carolyn Hubbard, Designated Federal Officer, Children's Health Protection Advisory
30 Committee

31 Ms. Catherine Davis, Special Assistant
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33 The Office of Children's Health Protection and Environmental Education (OCHPEE) has
34 the responsibility to work closely with all of EPA's programs and Regions to ensure that the
35 programs and regions are carefully considering potential vulnerability of children in all of their
36 actions. Although the office dates back to the 1990's, the current Administrator has elevated
37 interested in children's health and her interest has had a positive impact on the kind of work
38 performed by the office.
39

40 Because the responsibility of the office is so broad, resources are stretched tightly.
41 OCHPEE relies on the "science shops" within different program offices to integrate information
42 related to children's health so risk managers can take appropriate action. OCHPEE plays an
43 integrating role elevating attention across EPA on this issue.
44

45 OCHPEE works to overcome barriers to addressing children's health issues in several
46 ways. Where there are uncertainties in data or lack of information about children's health effects,

1 OCHPEE works "side-by-side" with program scientists to interpret available data, bringing into
2 the analysis a general theory that children are more vulnerable to exposures to chemicals than
3 adults. OCHPEE reviews science assessments, such as chemical-specific Integrated Risk
4 Information System (IRIS) files, to determine whether documents are sufficiently protective of
5 children's health. Because few EPA employees are medical doctors or public health experts,
6 OCHPEE reaches out to medical associations, health care providers, and public health
7 departments at the state and local levels. OCHPEE turns to them for information about
8 education and opportunities for voluntary efforts to collaborate to protect human health.
9

10 OCHPEE relies on the Children's Health Advisory Committee to identify priority areas to
11 advance the science needed to protect human health. Currently, EPA generally adds a 10-fold
12 safety factor, as required by the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), to allow a special safety
13 margin in risk assessments to allow for children's risk. Additional research on the
14 appropriateness of this approach may be needed. Regions have asked for assistance tailoring
15 exposure assessments for site clean-ups for children's exposures, and EPA now has a Children's
16 Exposure Factor Handbook, which provides guidelines for assessing exposures to soils, air,
17 water, and skin. Additional research to reduce uncertainties relating to those methodologies may
18 be useful.
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20 Research strategies to address the uncertainties related to children's exposures have been
21 "extraordinarily controversial." Political and ethical issues were raised when EPA considered
22 conducting a study to validate methods in the exposure factor handbook by monitoring and
23 recording different kinds of children's behavior and exposures.
24

25 The federal government, however, is undertaking a major longitudinal study of children's
26 health, monitoring the health of 100,00 participants from birth to age 21 and their exposure to a
27 variety of environmental factors including the home and school environment. EPA is
28 participating in defining the study parameters and the EPA Administrator has made it a priority
29 for the study to include environmental exposures. The study is estimated to cost several billion
30 dollars; EPA has contributed only a very small proportion of the cost to date.
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32 The FQPA may provide a model to stimulate generation of data on children's health. The
33 Act requires EPA to provide a 10-fold protection children's factor in risk assessments for food
34 use pesticides in the absence of data demonstrating that such a factor is not needed to protect
35 against risks to children. This requirement has stimulated manufacturers to conduct research on
36 toxicity and exposures related to children's health. A similar approach may be useful for other
37 EPA programs.
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39 OCHPEE relies on a variety of sources to provide research related to children's health.
40 EPA co-sponsors ten children's health research centers with the National Institute for
41 Environmental Health Sciences through the extra-mural grant program of ORD's National Center
42 for Environmental Research. OCHPEE collaborated with ORD on RFA and plans to collaborate
43 on efforts to communicate the results of the extramural research to EPA programs and regions,
44 so they can "translate results into practice." OCHPEE also tracks research on children's health in
45 the international arena, especially longitudinal studies in Japan and Europe.
46

- 1 Other research issues discussed included:
- 2 • Cumulative Risk - If EPA undertakes a new effort to address cumulative risk, there may
- 3 be opportunities to build in research related to cumulative risk issues for children.
- 4 • OCHPEE is concerned about increasing rates of autism and attention-deficit hyperactivity