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**From the Director's Desk**

**--John Howard, M.D. Director, NIOSH**

**April eNews 2010**

**At the Cusp**

It is exciting to stand at the cusp of history as events unfold, and to seize opportunities from those events.

What opportunities and potential successes for occupational safety and health are offered by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which was passed by the House of Representatives on March 21, 2010, and signed by President Obama on March 23, 2010? Does the legislation offer a role or roles for NIOSH, and if so, what might that role or those roles be?

At this time, we don't know the answers to those questions with specificity or certainty.

However, we can glance through the legislation and suggest possibilities, as we and our stakeholders comb its pages in greater detail.

Within the new law are several provisions relating to preventive services, wellness, and health promotion. Work-related injuries and illnesses impose a tremendous burden on workers, their families, businesses, and the economy. Keeping workers safe and healthy through prevention is the cornerstone of occupational safety and health. Wellness and health promotion are prongs of NIOSH's WorkLife Initiative, which aims to sustain and improve worker health through better work-based programs, policies, and practices. WorkLife seeks to remove the traditional - and artificial - distinctions between occupational health and personal health.

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/TWH/>

Also in the new law are provisions to strengthen, support, and develop a 21st Century health care workforce. One important strategy for enhancing this dedicated workforce, and thereby helping to improve patient care, is the prevention of painful, often disabling, and potentially life-threatening occupational injuries and illnesses among health care workers. Under the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA), NIOSH and its partners work diligently to develop, implement, and evaluate preventive approaches in the health care sector. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/comment/agendas/hlthcaresocassist/>

In the March 29 NIOSH Science Blog, I discuss some of the provisions of the new law that appear, in one degree or another, to relate to NIOSH's areas of responsibility and authority. I invite you to read the Blog, and to offer your thoughts about ways in which we might use these changes as a platform for advancements in occupational safety and health. <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2010/03/29/reform/>

## **President's Science Council Reviews Nanotechnology Effort**

On March 25, the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology released its review of the National Nanotechnology Initiative, noting the importance of health, safety, and environmental research to the success of nanotechnology, and NIOSH's role in that research. [www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/pcast](http://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/pcast)

## **SENSOR-Pesticides on Wikipedia**

Get the scoop on NIOSH's SENSOR-Pesticides Program on Wikipedia in an entry written by Jessica Keralis, a NIOSH Fellow. The article, which has reached "Good Article" status (meaning that it is vetted by Wikipedia as being balanced, well-referenced, reliable, and of good quality), describes the program and its impact on occupational health, public health, and pesticide awareness. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SENSOR-Pesticides>.

## **NIOSH Research Highlighted by EPA in Pesticide Fogger Requirements**

The value of the SENSOR-Pesticides program for monitoring potential health risks was also highlighted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a March 23 announcement of revised pesticide labeling rules to reduce risks of exposures from use of "total release fogger" products. The March 23 EPA letter to companies that hold registrations for total release fogger products cited a 2008 research article by Sarah Luckhaupt and Geoff Calvert of NIOSH. The article discussed 466 cases of illnesses and injuries related to

total release foggers that agencies in eight states had investigated, predominantly under the SENSOR-Pesticides program. The March 23 EPA letter is available at <http://www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1/reevaluation/label-lang-fogger-letter.pdf>. The 2008 research article is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5741a3.htm>.

## **Commissioned Officers from NIOSH Serve in Haiti Relief Deployment**

NIOSH salutes two of our own, Leslie MacDonald and Jennifer Hornsby-Myers, for dedicated service during deployment by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to Haiti as commissioned officers of the U.S. Public Health Service. Leslie and Jennifer suggested modifications of operating procedures to reduce risks of heat stress for colleagues in the HHS Disaster Mortuary Team as part of the U.S. relief effort in earthquake-ravaged Haiti. Members of the team worked long hours in the intense Haitian heat and humidity with little if any time to become acclimated after arrival. Leslie and Jennifer also provided technical assistance on reducing health risks from air pollution, asbestos, silica dust, and psychological stressors. More information about the HHS-led recovery efforts in Haiti can be found at [www.hhs.gov/haiti/](http://www.hhs.gov/haiti/).

## **Hearing Conservationist Award Presented to Mark Stephenson**

Congratulations to Mark Stephenson, Ph.D., a senior audiology researcher at NIOSH, who received the National Hearing Conservation Association's Outstanding Hearing Conservationist Award. Dr. Stephenson was honored specifically for his research in the areas of hearing protection, signal detection, and hearing loss prevention programming as well as for his nearly 30 years of national leadership in the hearing conservation profession.



*Mark Stephenson*

### **Mark Threton, Ph.D., Receives NIOSH School Safety Award**

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and NIOSH named Mark D. Threton, Ph.D., professor at Pennsylvania State University, as this year's NIOSH School Safety Award recipient. The ACTE and NIOSH Safety Award is given to a teacher or professor who promotes occupational safety and health in school laboratories. Dr. Threton is a professor in Penn State's Workforce Education and Development Program. For more information on this award, contact Cara DiMattina, ACTE, at [cdimattina@acteonline.org](mailto:cdimattina@acteonline.org).

### **Upcoming Institute of Medicine Workshops Focus on Personal Protective Equipment**

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) is planning public workshops pertaining to two IOM studies for NIOSH regarding personal protective technologies (PPT). One study assesses the need for further testing and certification of nonrespiratory PPT (e.g., eye protection, hearing protection, medical masks, protective clothing) given the positive impact NIOSH's ongoing certification process has had on the quality of respirators

in the workplace. The second study will provide recommendations on research and standards-setting for PPT for healthcare workers to prevent the transmission of pandemic influenza and other viral respiratory infections. This study updates the 2008 IOM report, *Preparing for an Influenza Pandemic: Personal Protective Equipment for Healthcare Workers*. More information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/nationalacad.html>.

## Study Finds High Burden From Work Fatalities, Injuries, Illnesses in Wholesale and Retail Trades

A new peer-reviewed article by NIOSH scientists finds that the wholesale and retail trades sector accounts for a disproportionately high percentage of all work-related injuries and illnesses in private industry. "Occupational Fatalities, Injuries, Illnesses, and Related Economic Loss in the Wholesale and Retail Trade Sector," by Anderson et al., explores factors that pose work-related risks, estimates the high costs of these occupational injuries and illnesses, and identifies areas for potential safety and health interventions. The article is available from the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, ahead of print, at <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/123313948/PDFSTART>.

## National Work Zone Awareness Week

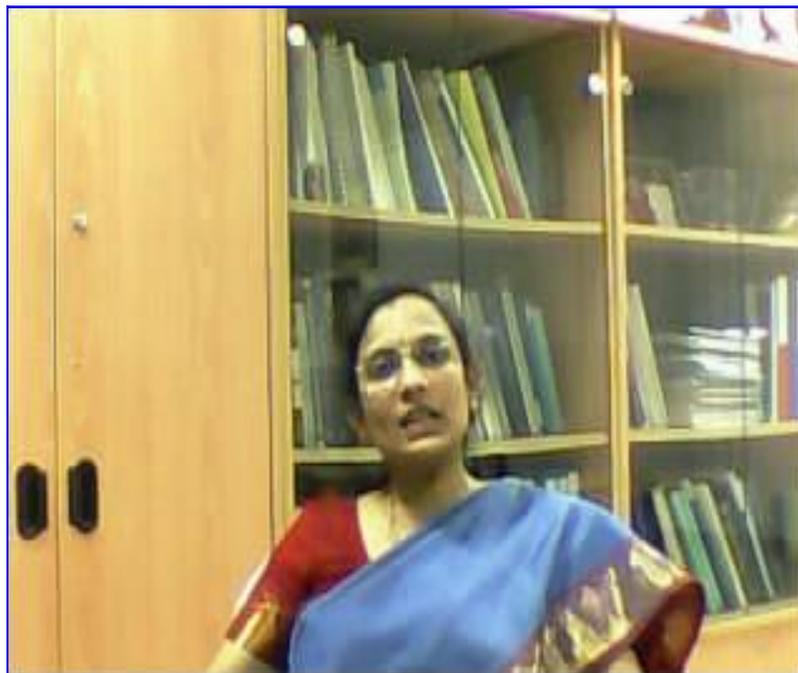
The 11th annual National Work Zone Awareness Week will be observed April 19-23, with a national kickoff scheduled for April 19, 10:30 a.m., in New York City at Battery Park. This year's theme is "Work Zones Need Your Undivided Attention." See the following Web sites for ideas and resources for promoting work zone awareness: the Federal Highway Administration, ([http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/outreach/wz\\_awareness.htm](http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/outreach/wz_awareness.htm)), NIOSH work zone safety research (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/highwayworkzones>), American Traffic Safety Services Association ([http://www.atssa.com/cs/root/news\\_pr/nwzaw](http://www.atssa.com/cs/root/news_pr/nwzaw)), and a national resource for work zone safety (<http://wzsafety.tamu.edu>).

## Global Happenings

Dr. Kalpana Balakrishnan discusses the first Masters of Public Health degree program in Occupational and Environmental Health in India. Dr. Balakrishnan is an associate professor and head of the Department of Environmental Health Engineering in the Sri Ramachandra Medical College & Research Institute, Sri Ramachandra University, a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre. View the video at <http://www.archive.org/download/Dr.Balakrishnanvideo/drkb.wmv>. Windows media player is required to view

this video. Download the latest version of the Windows media player at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/download.aspx>.

Video run time is 6:53



*Dr. Kalpana Balakrishnan discussing the new MPH program*

### **NIOSH Requests Comments on the Following:**

Draft Current Intelligence Bulletin: *Asbestos Fibers and Other Elongate Mineral Particles: State of the Science and Roadmap for Research, Version 4*, NIOSH Docket Number NIOSH 099-C. Comments will be accepted through April 16. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/099-C/default.html>

*Ten-Year Review of the NIOSH Radiation Dose Reconstruction Program*, NIOSH Docket Number NIOSH 194. Comments will be accepted through June 4. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/194/>

NIOSH seeks comments on the proposed collection of information for a survey of home care workers to evaluate newly developed educational intervention materials. NIOSH has developed educational intervention materials for home care workers to prevent exposure to work-related hazards. Materials have been developed

and piloted in Alameda County, California. The goal of this data collection is to evaluate these materials before disseminating them more broadly. <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/2010-5841.htm>

## **New Health Hazard Evaluation Report Now Available**

*Evaluation of Exposure to Epoxy Resin While Manufacturing Artificial Floral Arrangements.*  
<http://www2a.cdc.gov/hhe/select.asp?PjtName=47423&bFlag=3>



Click [here](#) to read about these recent releases and access the full HHE reports.

## **News from Our Partners**

### **'Hot Tub Lung' in New Mexico**

The New Mexico Occupational Health Surveillance Program, New Mexico Department of Health, is investigating *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections in spa workers that may have resulted from occupational exposures to the organism in water aerosols. MAC has been associated with "hot tub lung," a form of hypersensitivity pneumonitis (HP) which is a lung inflammation that acutely produces fever, cough, chills, and shortness of breath with repeated exposure. The chronic form of HP can result in permanent scarring (fibrosis) of the lung. A report of findings is scheduled to be posted on the state agency Website, <http://nmhealth.org/eheb/occhealth.shtml>.

### **Brochure for Workers Who Perform Soldering Using Rosin-Core Solder**

[Rosin-core solder](#) is commonly used by workers in many industries to make electrical connections. When rosin-core solder wire is heated by a soldering iron, fumes are produced that contain a wide variety of chemicals, including aldehydes, terpenes, and resin acids. Inhalation of these fumes can aggravate existing asthma or lead to new onset asthma, and can cause irritation of the upper respiratory tract and the eyes, and dermatitis can result from skin contact.

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services' (NJDHSS) Work-Related Asthma Surveillance and Intervention Project has identified 13 workers since 1990 who have experienced the development or aggravation of asthma as a result of exposure to solder flux fumes. On-site industrial hygiene investigations revealed that local exhaust ventilation systems are often lacking or improperly used.

NJDHSS developed a concise brochure intended to alert solderers of the fume hazard and methods for preventing exposure: <http://www.nj.gov/health/surv/documents/wrarosin.pdf>.

The United Kingdom's Health and Safety Executive has published more detailed safety and health information on solder flux fumes: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg249.pdf>.

## **Oklahoma Releases Report on Work-Related Traumatic Brain Injuries**

The Oklahoma State Department of Health has found that approximately 900 Oklahoma workers were hospitalized with a traumatic brain injury (TBI) from 2004-2007, accounting for approximately 5 percent of all Oklahoma TBI hospitalizations. TBI injuries are frequently disabling and have a profound impact on workers and workplaces. The Oklahoma report identifies the leading causes of these injuries in Oklahoma, quantifies outcomes from these injuries, includes compelling case examples, and makes recommendations for prevention. The full report is available at <http://www.ok.gov/health/documents/Work%20TBI%202004-2007.pdf>.

## **AOEC Resource on Occupational Issues for Adolescents**

In 1998, the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics (AOEC) established the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU). Funded by a cooperative agreement through ATSDR with additional funding through EPA, the PEHSU program is a collaboration between the academic pediatric and occupational medicine departments to provide free consultation and outreach. Although funded to address environmental issues, the PEHSUs also address occupational issues for adolescents. For more information, contact the AOEC offices at 1-888-347-2632 or go to the PEHSU Web site at <http://www.pehsu.net>.

## **NORA**

### **NORA Implementation at AIHCE**

Taking steps to achieve the goals of the NORA sector agendas will require the involvement of researchers, occupational safety and health professionals, trade associations, unions, and others. Industrial hygienists will have an opportunity to learn about the national sector goals and become involved in efforts to advance them during a panel session and luncheon discussions at the Tuesday session of the American Industrial Hygiene Conference and Exhibition (AIHCE) on May 22-27 in Denver, Colorado. For a description of each session, consult the conference program at <http://63.146.183.217/aihce10/education/conference-program.htm>. For questions or suggestions about NORA, contact the NORA coordinator ([noracoordinator@cdc.gov](mailto:noracoordinator@cdc.gov)) or visit the

.NORA sector agendas at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/>.

## r2p Corner

### Trenching Safety Classes



NIOSH, in partnership with the Associated General Contractors of Kentucky, Kentucky Labor Cabinet, Bluegrass Community and Technical College, and Heckmann Sales and Leasing, sponsored a series of trenching safety classes in Lawrenceburg, Ky., on March 16 and 17. Approximately 85 people were trained over the two days. Participants included small business employers and employees, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) instructors, safety consultants, military personnel, and students. For more information about the classes, contact Ray Sinclair at [rsinclair@cdc.gov](mailto:rsinclair@cdc.gov). For more information about trenching safety, contact T.J. Lentz at [tlentz@cdc.gov](mailto:tlentz@cdc.gov) or visit [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/trenching/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/trenching/).

### NIOSH Science Blog

#### What's New on the NIOSH Blog?

Last week, Congress passed and the President signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. For a summary of the prevention provisions in the bill and potential implications for occupational safety and health, read the new NIOSH blog post "Prevention in Health Reform" from NIOSH Director John Howard.

[http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb032910\\_reform.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb032910_reform.html)

Add your favorite occupational safety and health-related movie to the growing list on the blog "Mad as a Hatter: Mercury and Other Occupational Hazards at the Movies."

[http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb031610\\_movies.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb031610_movies.html)

### New Communication Products

#### More Than Aches and Pains

The incidence rate for work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) within the U.S. manufacturing sector is 41 per 10,000 workers. Experience has shown that reducing MSDs can improve productivity and reduce workers' compensation and healthcare costs. Thus, NIOSH and its partners on the NIOSH National

Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) Manufacturing Sector Council have developed an agenda that identifies areas of research in surveillance, epidemiology, exposure assessment, etiological research, work organization, and control technology that are vital for helping prevent such disorders.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-129/>

### **Interventions Against Disinfection Byproduct Effects**

Lifeguards and patrons in the rapidly growing indoor waterpark industry can be exposed to numerous disinfection byproducts and microorganisms that can cause adverse health effects such as eye and respiratory irritation, skin rashes, and flu-like symptoms. Practical and effective interventions for the industry are recommended in *NIOSH Workplace Solutions: Reducing Illnesses at Indoor Waterparks*.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/wp-solutions/2010-138/>

### **The adult human body is unwieldy, heavy, and certainly doesn't come with handles, at least not practical ones.**

Love handles don't count. So lifting a person is no small task. In nursing, work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), such as back and shoulder injuries, persist as the leading and most costly U.S. occupational health problem. A large body of evidence indicates that a substantial number of work-related MSDs reported by nurses are due to the cumulative effect of repeated manual patient-handling activities and work done in extreme static awkward postures. NIOSH has created a web-based training for nurses to learn safe patient handling techniques aimed to reduce injuries. Also included is a training manual for nursing students. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2009-127/>

### **Proceedings of Mine Modeling Workshop Published**

High tech meets an age-old industry. NIOSH announces the publication of *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Numerical Modeling for Underground Mine Excavation Design*. Advances in the capabilities of numerical modeling software, together with ever increasing computational speeds, have made it possible to investigate the very nature of the large-scale rock mass and its response to mining excavations. The improved understanding of the rock response obtained from modeling enhances mine designs, resulting in greater stability and safety of the mining excavations.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/pubs/pubreference/outputid3208.htm>

### **Firefighter Fatality Compilation CD-ROM**

*Compilation of Line-of-Duty Injury and Death Investigation Reports and Publications* is a CD-ROM containing all NIOSH fire fighter fatality and injury investigation reports completed through August 2009. This CD-ROM also contains 21 NIOSH publications and one safety advisory covering a number of topics specific to fire fighter safety and health. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2009-155c/>

## **NIOSH Training Materials for Mine Map Reading**

NIOSH offers innovative resources to train new miners to read mining maps. This online safety training includes three components for teaching and testing map reading skills.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/products/product165.htm>

### **More...**

To see other new NIOSH communication products, including documents and new and updated topic pages, go to the NIOSH "What's New" page. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/whatsnew/>

## **Upcoming Conferences & Workshops**

### **IOM and Personal Protective Technologies Certification**

The Institute of Medicine will conduct a workshop, Certification of Personal Protective Technologies, on April 13 in Washington, D.C. An agenda and online registration are now available at <http://www.iom.edu/certppt>.

### **IOM and Personal Protective Technologies for Healthcare Workers**

The Institute of Medicine will conduct an additional workshop, "Personal Protective Equipment for Healthcare Workers During an Influenza Pandemic: Current Research Issues," on June 3 in Washington, D.C. Online registration and further information will be available in early to mid April at [www.iom.edu/influenzappe](http://www.iom.edu/influenzappe).

### **Nanomaterials and Worker Health**

NIOSH and the Mountain and Plains Education and Research Center will hold a conference, "Nanomaterials and Worker Health: Medical Surveillance, Exposure Registries, and Epidemiologic Research", July 21-23 in Keystone, Colorado. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/nanotech/keystone2010/>

### **National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing, and Media**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Fourth Annual National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing, and Media, August 17-19, 2010, Omni Hotel in Atlanta, GA.

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthmarketing/NCHCMM2009/>

A comprehensive list of upcoming conferences can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/exhibits.html>.

## Word of the Month

**Rosin-core solder** - Rosin-core solder is commonly used by workers in many industries to make electrical connections. It is a wire product that is manufactured from tin/lead or tin/antimony alloy, with rosin-based flux making up the inside core of the wire.

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