



For Immediate Release

January 21, 2010

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**NEW REPORT DEMONSTRATES REDUCTIONS IN TOXIC CHEMICAL EXPOSURE
WOULD MAKE AMERICANS HEALTHIER, WEALTHIER**

*Congressional reform of toxics law could save billions in health care costs, Senator Amy
Klobuchar will be a key Vote*

Minneapolis, MN-Minnesota based Healthy Legacy Coalition is co-releasing a report which shows strong and growing evidence that chemical exposures contribute significantly to the rise in many chronic diseases. Based on peer-reviewed science, **“The Health Case for Reforming the Toxic Substances Control Act”** finds that Americans would be healthier if exposure to toxic chemicals was reduced. As we debate the costs of health care and its reform, the report vividly illustrates the opportunity to prevent disease and reduce health care costs by overhauling federal chemical policy.

“The Health Case” documents the enormous health care costs of treating cancer, learning and developmental disabilities, asthma and other diseases and conditions linked to chemical exposure, according to recent studies. The report shows that if a new health-based legislative framework to ensure the safety of chemicals yields even a 0.1 percent decrease in the incidence of chronic diseases—a very conservative estimate—direct U.S. expenditures on health care would be reduced by \$5 billion per year. This dollar figure is based on expected health care costs projected for 2020, and assumes full implementation of the new legislation by that year.

The primary federal law governing chemical safety is the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), which has never been significantly amended since its adoption in 1976. New legislation to bring the toxics law into the 21st century will be introduced by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL) in early 2010. Senator Amy Klobuchar sits on the subcommittee on Superfund, Toxics and Environmental Health, the first committee that will vote on the bill to reform TSCA. “Senator Klobuchar has been a leader on these issues in the past but has not committed to sponsorship of the bill to reform TSCA. We hope she does become an original co-sponsorship and continues her great work in protecting Minnesota’s children and families from toxic chemicals,” said Peter Starzynski, coordinator of Healthy Legacy.

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson has identified comprehensive reform of the toxics law as a key Obama Administration priority, stating that the law fails to provide EPA with the authority it needs to ensure chemicals are safe. Of the 80,000 chemicals available for use in the U.S., EPA has been able to require safety testing of only 200.

The report will be release at a local news conference. The details are as follows:

WHEN: 9:00AM, Thursday, January 21

WHERE: Complete Home Health Services, 4001 Stinson Blvd. NE St Anthony, MN 55421 (Silver Lake Plaza Building) Ste. #LL28 in the basement -- free parking next to the building

WHO: Peter Starzynski, Health Legacy Coalition Coordinator, Kathleen Schuler, MPH, Healthy Legacy Co-Director, Dr. David Wallinga, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy and the Wm T Grant Foundation Distinguished Fellow, University of Minnesota School of Public Health, Dr. Sirri Nommo-Ongolo, Family Practice Physician. Dr. George Lundgren, Family Practice Physician.

There will also be a nationwide conference call at 12 PM CST featuring Jackie Hunt Christensen, a native Minnesotan who has been a public health activist for over 20 years and was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1998 at age 34. Call Number: **1-877-410-5657 Passcode: 31970**

The report summarizes a number of peer-reviewed studies that estimate the disease burden attributable to chemical exposure. These estimates vary widely, from five percent of childhood cancer to 30 percent of childhood asthma. Conservatively assuming that chemical policy reform were to reduce the contribution of toxic chemical exposures to chronic diseases by just one tenth of one percent, the resulting reduction in annual health care costs would amount to an estimated \$5 billion. The Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families coalition has estimated health care cost savings on a state-by-state basis, using census figures projected for 2020.

"The failure of TSCA has left Minnesota's families and children unnecessarily exposed too many toxic chemicals. Study after study finds toxic chemicals in the human body, including in umbilical cord blood. We simply have to do a better job of determining which chemicals are safe and which should be phased out to protect public health", said Kathleen Schuler, Co-Director of Healthy Legacy and co-author of the report.

Childhood cancers have increased by more than 20 percent since 1975. A woman's lifetime risk of breast cancer is now one in eight, up from one in ten in 1973. Infertility affected 40 percent more women in 2002 than in 1982. The once-rare birth defect of undescended testicles in baby boys increased 200% between 1970 and 1993. Since the early 1990s, reported cases of autism spectrum disorder have increased tenfold.

The Safer Chemicals, Healthy Family report concludes, "In simplest terms, real [TSCA] reform will lead to more healthy babies, fewer women with breast cancer, a return toward normal fertility patterns, and lower numbers of people with Alzheimer's disease. This is the promise of TSCA reform."

The full report, additional quotes and state-based economic information is available at healthylegacy.org

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