

The DNP and Environmental Health Policy:
Opportunity for Leadership and Collaboration

Noelle Lipkin, DNP, APRN-BC
Gulf Coast Practitioner Services

Objectives

- Identify three policy issues relevant to DNP practice
- Identify "major players" in environmental health policy making
- Verbalize beginning familiarity with concept as leader in environmental health policy development



"Our research shows that heredity and environment are both very significant, but that neither is as important as government regulation."

Policy

- Personal
- Professional
- Institutional
- Community
- Legislative

Pertinent Policy Issues

- Safe water, air, buildings

- Cosmetics and personal care products

- Food – insecurity, labeling, origin, pesticides, antibiotics, hormones, working conditions

Illnesses Linked to Environmental Exposures

- Cancer: "Cancer Alley", Louisiana: Includes rare cancers (rhabdomyosarcoma)

- Asthma: Significant disparities between socioeconomic groups, geography, with urban, poor, African American children 15-20% increased incidence

- Obesity: Linked to brominated flame retardants, artificial sweeteners, other chemical exposures

- Type 2 Diabetes: Emerging evidence linking to pesticide exposure

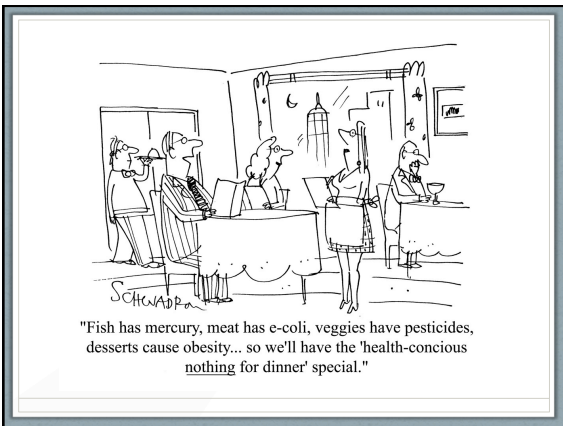
What are the impacts?

- Cancer
- Asthma
- Endocrine disruption
- Obesity
- Autoimmune disorders
- Vector-borne disease (malaria, dengue, West Nile)
- Heavy metal toxicity
- Climate change and resulting health issues –
 - Food disruption (malnourishment)
 - Displacement (access, diseases of poor hygiene)

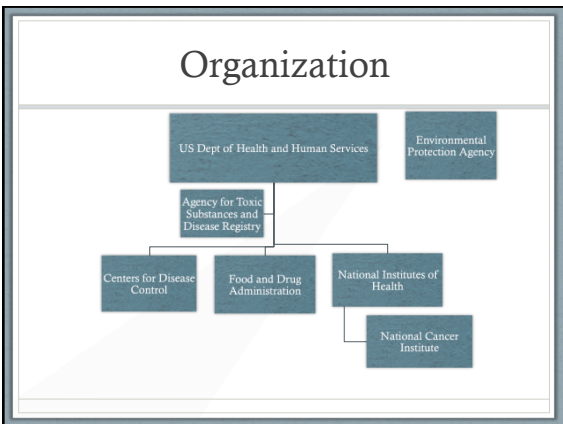








"Fish has mercury, meat has e-coli, veggies have pesticides, desserts cause obesity... so we'll have the 'health-conscious nothing for dinner' special."



Environmental Protection Agency

- “Our mission is to protect **human health** and the **environment**.”

Health and Human Services

- “...the US government’s principal agency for protecting the **health of all Americans** and providing essential human services, especially for those who are **least able to help themselves**.”

Food and Drug Administration

- “... responsible for **protecting the public health** by assuring the safety, efficacy, and security of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, medical devices, our nation’s food supply, cosmetics, and products that emit radiation.”

**Agency for Toxic Substances and
Disease Registry**

- "...serves the public by using the best science, taking **responsive public health actions**, and providing trusted public health information to prevent harmful exposures and diseases related to toxic substances."

The Good, the Bad, the Ugly

US Senate	US House of Representatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• S.228• S.231• S.482• S.493	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.R.97• H.R.153• H.R.199• H.R.910• H.R.1705• H.R.2401

Why Nursing?

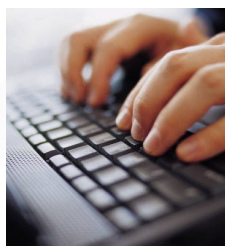
- Most intimately acquainted with impacts of environmentally-mediated and -acquired illnesses
- APRNs offer unique perspective
- Attuned to emotional and psychological effects on patient and family
- Vulnerability of populations

Why DNPs?

- Depth of experience
- Breadth of knowledge
- Multi-faceted approach

Strategies for Leadership

- Membership in representative organizations
- Contact state senators and representatives
- Guest editorials



Strategies for Leadership

- Talk to your patients!
- Educate colleagues
- Consider including in competency education
- Pitfalls:
 - Assumptions
 - "Not my responsibility"
 - Hopelessness

Strategies

- Establish personal policy
- Investigate institutional policies
- Consider action through groups such as Alliance of Nurses for a Healthy Environment, Healthcare Without Harm
- National nursing organizations and PACs - ANA

Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- Opportunity for leadership for nursing
- Not one "pure science"
- Education of public, private sector
- Can be designed to serve the individual

Resources

- HealthCare Without Harm: www.noharm.org
- Alliance of Nurses for A Healthy Environment: www.envirn.org
- Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov

