

# Chemicals Policy, Politics and Public Health

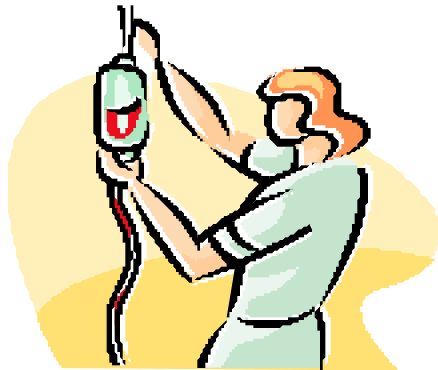
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# AGENDA

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- ❑ Links between the public's health and chemicals
- ❑ Need for well-defined chemical policies and laws to protect the public's health
- ❑ The role of nurses and nursing groups in achieving national chemical policies that address hazards, testing, regulation and incentives for safer alternatives



# *A Snapshot of Where Dangerous Chemicals Lurk*

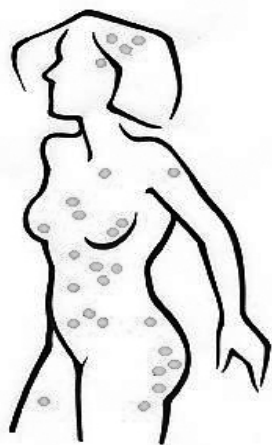
- Home, work and the community



# Body Burden: Are We Exposed?

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- ❑ Persistent, Bioaccumulative and Toxic Chemicals are ubiquitous
- ❑ 80,000 chemicals registered in the US
- ❑ U.S. CDC 3<sup>rd</sup> National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals
- ❑ Fetal Exposure Studies
- ❑ State Biomonitoring Projects (CA, ME, WA)



## ***What is our Chemical Trespass?***

*Phthalates, dioxins, PCBs, PBDE (brominated flame retardants), heavy metals, PVC, and perfluorinated compounds.*

# Health Effects Linked with or Exacerbated by Chemical Exposure

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- ❑ **Acute toxicity:** Immediate illness—asthma, systemic poisoning
- ❑ **Respiratory & Cardio Toxicity:** Occupational-induced asthma, emphysema, hypertension, angina
- ❑ **Cancer:** Childhood leukemia, childhood brain tumors, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, testicular cancer, breast cancer
- ❑ **Neurotoxicity:** Parkinson's disease, heavy metal poisoning, ADHD? Autism?
- ❑ **Reproductive toxicity:** Sterility, infertility
- ❑ **Developmental toxicity:** Birth defects, impaired growth and development
- ❑ **Endocrine disruption:** Birth defects, infertility

# Toxic Substance Control Act: The System Is Broken

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USA regulation for authorizing, screening, and registering “existing” and “new” industrial chemicals

## Limitations:

- ❑ “Grandfathered” in 62,000 “existing” chemicals when enacted in 1976
- ❑ No screening or safety data requirements
- ❑ No chemical use tracking capabilities
- ❑ EPA must first prove chemicals pose “unreasonable risk”
- ❑ Confidential Business Information interferes with community and worker Right-to-Know

# Toxins Are a Global Problem...



*...Requiring  
a Global  
Solution*

# Alternative Vision for Chemicals

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- ❑ Close the Data, Safety, Technology Gaps
- ❑ Require safety test data and chemical use information
- ❑ Prove chemical safety before market entry
- ❑ Move towards comprehensive reform
- ❑ Move away from chemical specific campaigns

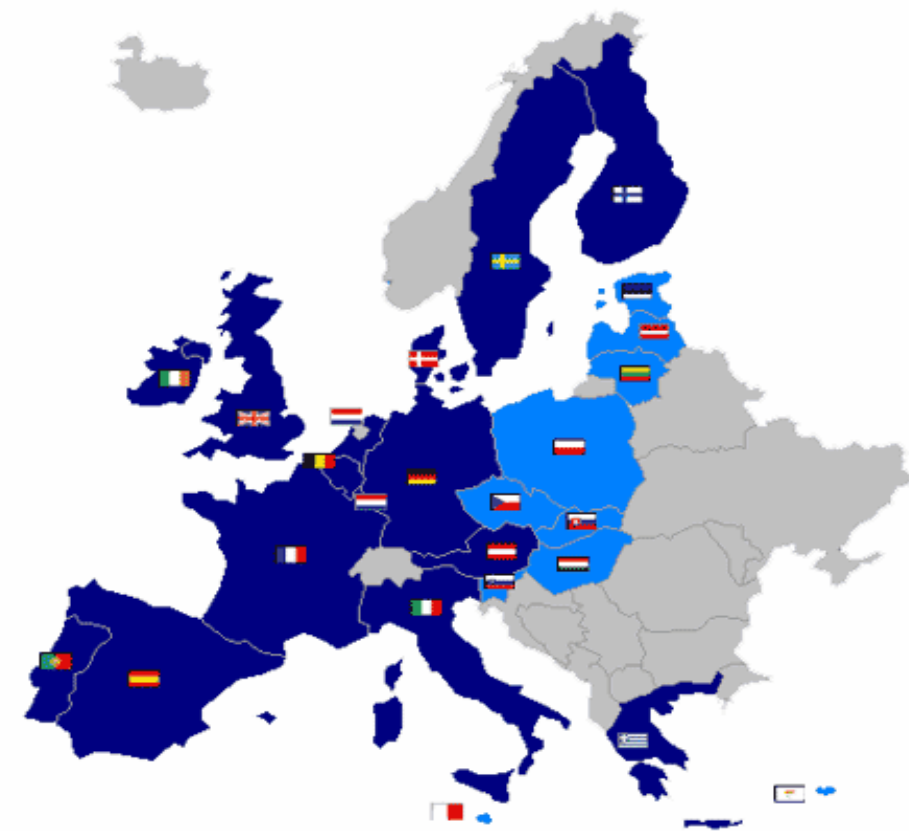
**Paradigm Shift:**

**Hazard Assessment not Risk Assessment**



# The “New” European Union

- ◆ Europe enacted Legislation in June 2007 to tackle 10,000+ chemicals!
- ◆ 25 Nations
- ◆ 450 million people
- ◆ World’s Largest Chemical Industry



# The Intended Spirit of REACH: “No Data, No Market”

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- ❑ Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals
- ❑ Companies Bear More Responsibility
- ❑ Data Gaps Filled on Hazards, Uses
- ❑ EU to “Authorize” Chemicals of Concern
- ❑ Market Rewards for Safer Substitutes

# Louisville Charter

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- ❑ Require safer substitutes & solutions
- ❑ Phase out persistent, bioaccumulative or highly toxic chemicals (3,000)
- ❑ Give the public and workers the right to know and participate
- ❑ Act with foresight
- ❑ Require comprehensive safety data for all chemicals
- ❑ Take immediate action to protect communities & workers

[www.louisvillecharter.org](http://www.louisvillecharter.org)

# ANA and Chemicals Policy

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## Nursing Practice, Chemical Exposure and Right-to-Know Resolution 2006

- ❑ Reduce use of toxic chemicals
- ❑ Educate legislators
- ❑ Educate nurses about hazardous chemicals and workplace exposures
- ❑ Integration of Environmental Health Principles for Nurses
- ❑ Require that less harmful/toxic chemicals be substituted whenever feasible
- ❑ Demand adequate information on the health effects of chemicals before they are introduced on the market
- ❑ “National Campaign for Safe Cosmetics” (<http://www.safecosmetics.org/index.cfm>)



# What can **you** do to promote chemicals policy reform?

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- ❑ Educate yourself and colleagues about chemical hazards
- ❑ Educate legislators
- ❑ Advocate for Environmental Justice
- ❑ Disaster preparedness: chemical security and first receiver training
- ❑ Support protection for children and other vulnerable populations from exposures to toxic chemicals
- ❑ Get involved in your professional organizations
- ❑ Participate in your state's ANA Environmental Health Task Force



# Nursing is the Most Trusted Voice for Health Issues:

## We Must Advocate for Change!

- Advocate for the Profession
  - Disaster preparedness & First Receiver Training
  - Be an institution driver for change
  - Adopt safer products in the health care setting
  - Support Labeling and Full Disclosure
- Advocate for change in our communities
  - Deliver the health message related to hazardous chemicals
  - Educate and ask policy makers to adopt safer chemicals legislation
  - Advocate for **Green Chemistry** funding and research





# Toxic Chemical Reduction Practices

## Look for these products:

- Medical devices free of DEHP/PVC
- Medical devices, immunizations and medications free of mercury
- Green cleaners
- Produce free of pesticides
- Meat and dairy free of growth hormones and non-therapeutic antibiotics
- Electronics, furniture, etc. that do not contain BFRs (brominated flame retardants)

## Ensure your healthcare facility is:

- Following integrated pest management protocol
- Reducing/eliminating unnecessary fragrances
- Avoiding use of medical waste incinerators
- Recycling batteries, plastics, aluminum, glass, paper, OR blue wrap, etc.
- Reducing hazardous chemicals, replacing them with safer alternatives

# For More Information

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