

# **BIOMONITORING CALIFORNIA**

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DATA SUMMARY REPORT**

### **July 1, 2012**

These highlights are from the second Data Summary Report of the California Environmental Contaminant Biomonitoring Program, also called Biomonitoring California. The Program was established in 2006, and is required by law to make its summarized results available to the public every two years.<sup>1</sup> Many of the projects and collaborations described in the report are not yet complete, so the current report offers a preliminary view of the anticipated findings. The Program plans to provide detailed findings from individual studies as the results are finalized. The 2012 report reflects substantial progress in the magnitude and complexity of Program activities since the initial report was released in 2010.

### **Report Highlights**

- The Program has developed laboratory capacity and infrastructure to analyze more than 100 different chemicals, and has tested samples from more than 700 California residents.
- The Program has measured many chemicals, including heavy metals, flame retardants, pesticides, and plasticizers, in Californians. Because high levels of flame retardants have previously been found in Californians, the Program has made it a priority to measure recently banned flame retardants, some of their breakdown products (metabolites), and some substitutes of concern.
- The preliminary results presented in the 2012 report come from studies of eight groups of participants in California, including pregnant women, firefighters, residents of agricultural communities, and pre-adolescent girls.
- The Program identified elevated levels of mercury in a mother and her newborn, who had been exposed via face cream purchased and altered in Mexico and brought back to the U.S. In addition to reducing the family's exposure to this toxic metal, this finding led to considerable media coverage and a national consumer alert to increase public awareness about mercury exposure hazards from some face creams.
- The Program adds significant value to national biomonitoring efforts by providing information about chemicals of particular concern in California and by studying the diverse populations in the state.

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<sup>1</sup> The Data Summary Report is required to be issued biennially by California Health & Safety Code (HSC) section 105459(d). The first Biomonitoring California Data Summary Report is available at: <http://www.oehha.ca.gov/multimedia/biomon/pdf/BiomonitoringDataSumJuly2010.pdf>.