

# Biomonitoring California

## Overview of Draft Public Integration Plan

### Materials for May 24, 2010 Scientific Guidance Panel Meeting

#### Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the draft Public Integration Plan that is currently under development by the California Environmental Contaminant Biomonitoring Program (codified at Health and Safety Code section 105440 et seq., also known as Biomonitoring California). The overview will provide a basis for the Scientific Guidance Panel (SGP) and public to provide initial input on the development of the draft Plan.

Biomonitoring California was established in 2006 by Senate Bill (SB) 1379 (Perata and Ortiz). The legislation directs the Program to “develop a strategy and plan ... to establish the framework for integrating public participation in this program,” and specifies requirements for several different aspects of the Program’s public integration efforts. See Appendix 1 for relevant sections of the legislation.

Biomonitoring California has taken initial steps to integrate the public into the Program, including:

- Developing initial electronic communication avenues for the public, especially through the Program website and associated email address.
- Maintaining ongoing communication with a broad array of stakeholders via the Program listserv (approximately 600 current subscribers).
- Encouraging public participation in Panel meetings, either in person or via webcast for remote viewers, who can comment via email.
- Carrying out a major public awareness campaign in Spring 2008, that included:
  - Public workshops in Los Angeles, Oakland, and Fresno
  - Public teleconferences (three)
  - An online survey for input on chemicals to be included in the Program.
- Developing a draft public integration plan, to guide the Program’s efforts to engage the public over the next few years.

The overall strategy of Biomonitoring California’s public integration efforts is to carry out our activities in ways that reflect public engagement principles, to the extent possible given Program resources. One set of principles that will help guide these efforts is called the “Core Principles for Public Engagement.” These principles were developed in 2009 by the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, in collaboration with the International Association of Public Participation and others. See Appendix 2 for a copy of these principles.

## Goals of Biomonitoring California's Draft Public Integration Plan

Program staff developed four goals for Biomonitoring California's public integration efforts that reflect the requirements set out in SB 1379. These goals are to:

1. Build public awareness and understanding about the Program by making information available and accessible in a timely and understandable way.
2. Provide opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to Program design, implementation, and evaluation.
3. Achieve high participation rates within the target population to be biomonitored.
4. Communicate individual results and related resources in a manner that is understandable, supportive, and responsive to Program participants' concerns.

Objectives designed to help the Program achieve these goals are part of the draft Public Integration Plan that will be released in the summer of 2010 to the public for review and comment. Later in this overview document, we describe example activities that the Program is considering in order to advance these objectives. The draft Plan will include more description of these and other activities the Program is planning to carry out, to the extent that resources are available.

Following the public review and finalization of the initial draft Plan, the Program will provide ongoing updates every few years to reflect suggestions made by stakeholders, lessons learned from activities undertaken, available resources for additional public integration efforts, and new Program developments. Interim updates will be provided at the Biomonitoring California web page (<http://www.oehha.ca.gov/multimedia/biomon/index.html>).

## Examples of Activities Related to the Draft Public Integration Plan Goals

Goal 1. Build public awareness and understanding about the Program by making information available and accessible in a timely and understandable way.

- Conduct an online survey to identify the types of information and communication methods that best meet the needs of Program stakeholders.
- Develop information to meet needs identified by the survey (e.g., new content for the website; translations of critical documents).
- Carry out website design modifications to improve access to information.

Goal 2. Provide opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to Program design, implementation and evaluation.

- Identify additional stakeholders by reaching out to groups with potential overlapping interests and invite them to join listserv.
- Hold meetings in venues that are convenient to public transit and/or that offer webcasting potential.
- Provide an ongoing online comment form, accessible on the website, to allow website visitors to offer feedback and suggestions.

Goal 3. Achieve high participation rates within the target population to be biomonitored.

- Form partnerships with individuals and organizations trusted by the community, such as health care providers and clinics, to have their input on how to approach potential participants.
- Carry out field-tests of materials, such as focus groups and individual interviews, that involve local community members and potential or actual participants, and use their feedback to improve these materials.

The activities under Goal 3 would be carried out initially as part of the following pilot projects:

- The California Environmental Health Tracking Chlorpyrifos study in Tulare County
- The California Environmental Health Tracking study of perchlorate exposure in Imperial County, along the California-Mexico border
- Maternal and Infant Environmental Exposures Project (MIEEP), also known as Chemicals in Our Bodies Project
- Firefighter Occupational Exposure Project (FOX)

Goal 4: Communicate individual results and related resources in a manner that is understandable, supportive, and responsive to Program participants' concerns.

- Test specific approaches to conveying individual results to participants and assess their effectiveness as part of the above pilot projects.
- Interview staff of other biomonitoring programs who have developed their own approaches and strategies for the communication of biomonitoring results.
- Use findings from the efforts in various pilot projects, focus groups, and interviews to refine results communication approaches and develop "best practices" for the Program.

### Projected Timeline for Development of Public Integration Plan

Below is a projected timeline for the development of the Public Integration Plan. The dates after May 2010 are estimated.

May 2010	Present Overview of Draft Plan and obtain initial SGP and public input
August 2010	Release Draft Public Integration Plan for review and comment by the public and SGP <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Mail to listserv and SGP</li><li>➤ Post on website</li><li>➤ Hold teleconference(s) and/or use other active methods to facilitate public comment</li></ul>
October 2010	Present and discuss Draft Public Integration Plan at SGP meeting
December 2010	Finalize Public Integration Plan and post on website

## Request for Comments

We would like your thoughts and suggestions on the draft Public Integration Plan as outlined in this brief overview. Comments, especially in the following areas, are welcome during the Scientific Guidance Panel meeting and via email to [biomonitoring@oehha.ca.gov](mailto:biomonitoring@oehha.ca.gov).

1. Aspects of our public integration efforts that should be priorities.
2. Methods and practices that might be effective for increasing the number and diversity of Program stakeholders. Suggestions of groups or organizations that might be willing to invite their membership to join our listserv would be helpful.
3. Ideas about what actions may work best for achieving high participation rates in biomonitoring studies. Examples of successful approaches in biomonitoring or other studies would be helpful.
4. Suggestions of individuals or organizations we might interview to gain insight into effective communication of biomonitoring results.

## **Appendix 1 - Sections of Enabling Legislation (Senate Bill 1379) Related to Public Integration Activities**

105443. (a) All participants shall be evaluated for the presence of designated chemicals as a component of the biomonitoring process. Participants shall be provided with information and fact sheets about the program's activities and its findings. Individual participants may request and shall receive their complete results. Any results provided to participants shall be subject to the Institutional Review Board protocols and guidelines. When either physiological or chemical data obtained from a participant indicate a significant known health risk, program staff experienced in communicating biomonitoring results shall consult with the individual and recommend followup steps, as appropriate. Program administrators shall receive training in administering the program in an ethical, culturally sensitive, participatory, and community-based manner.

(b) Individuals selected to participate in the biomonitoring program shall reflect the age, economic, racial, and ethnic composition of the state. Other selection criteria may be applied, as appropriate, for studies of specific populations.

(c) Informational materials and outreach activities directed to program participants and communities shall, to the extent possible, be culturally appropriate and translated as needed. Educational materials shall be adapted to the biological specimens being used.

105444. (a) The program shall develop guidelines and model protocols that address the science and practice of biomonitoring to implement this chapter, including, but not limited to, study design, subject recruitment, and data collection and management, and that accomplish all of the following:

- (1) Ensure confidentiality and informed consent.
- (2) Communicate findings to participants, communities, and the general public.
- (3) Emphasize all aspects of the program in a culturally sensitive manner.
- (4) Serve as a guide for other biomonitoring programs supported by state funds.

105451. (a) As appropriate, the program shall utilize the principles of the agency's Environmental Justice Strategy and Environmental Justice Action Plan developed pursuant to Sections 71110 to 71113, inclusive, of the Public Resources Code, so that the activities of the panel and the implementation of the program provide opportunities for public

participation and community capacity building with meaningful stakeholder input. This strategy and plan shall accord the highest respect and value to every individual and community by developing and conducting public health and environmental protection programs, policies, and activities in a manner that promotes equity and affords fair treatment, accessibility, and protection for all Californians, regardless of race, age, culture, income, or geographic location.

(b) (1) To carry out this section, the program shall develop a strategy and plan that are to be followed in the implementation of the program. This strategy and plan shall be used to establish the framework for integrating public participation in this program. The department may utilize models used by boards, departments, and offices at the agency for community outreach pursuant to this section.

(2) Public participation shall include, but need not be limited to, conducting stakeholder meetings and workshops to solicit relevant information, data, suggestions, and feedback for the development and implementation of the program.

105459. (a) By January 1, 2010, and every two years thereafter, the department, in collaboration with the agency, the office, and DTSC, shall submit a report to the Legislature containing the findings of the program, and shall include in the report additional activities and recommendations for improving the program based upon activities and findings to date.

Copies of the report shall be made available via appropriate media to the public within 30 calendar days following its submission to the Legislature.

(b) The department shall provide the public access to information which they are required to release pursuant to the California Public Records Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code).

(c) The department and the office shall disseminate biomonitoring findings to the general public via appropriate media, including governmental and other Web sites in a manner that is understandable to the average person.

(d) Any health and environmental exposure data made available to the general public shall be provided in a summary format to protect the confidentiality of program participants. The data shall be made available, after appropriate quality assurance and quality control, by July 1, 2010, and at least every two years thereafter.

## Appendix 2 – Core Principles for Public Engagement

The Public Engagement Principles Project was launched in mid-February 2009 with the goal of creating clarity about the fundamental components of quality public engagement. The Principles listed below were developed collaboratively by members and leaders of the National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD), the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), the Co-Intelligence Institute, and others. The website for the NCDD ([www.ncdd.org](http://www.ncdd.org)) is currently being redesigned. The Principles can be accessed at [www.thataway.org](http://www.thataway.org).

### The Core Principles for Public Engagement

These seven recommendations reflect the *common* beliefs and understandings of those working in the fields of public engagement, conflict resolution, and collaboration. In practice, people apply these and additional principles in many different ways.

#### 1. Careful Planning and Preparation

Through adequate and inclusive planning, ensure that the design, organization, and convening of the process serve both a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants.

#### 2. Inclusion and Demographic Diversity

Equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas, and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy.

#### 3. Collaboration and Shared Purpose

Support and encourage participants, government and community institutions, and others to work together to advance the common good.

#### 4. Openness and Learning

Help all involved listen to each other, explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes, learn and apply information in ways that generate new options, and rigorously evaluate public engagement activities for effectiveness.

#### 5. Transparency and Trust

Be clear and open about the process, and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, and range of views and ideas expressed.

#### 6. Impact and Action

Ensure each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference, and that participants are aware of that potential.

#### 7. Sustained Engagement and Participatory Culture

Promote a culture of participation with programs and institutions that support ongoing quality public engagement.