



THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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Dr. Sheela Sathyanarayana  
Chairwoman  
Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee  
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Dear Dr. Sathyanarayana:

Thank you for December 30, 2013, letter regarding the prevention of harmful preconception and prenatal exposures. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency appreciates the depth of your insight and the amount of care the Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee has taken to provide a thoughtfully laid out strategic plan that highlights the importance of addressing myriad exposures that may affect the health of future generations.

Your emphasis on messages that the EPA and others can use to inform parents, caregivers and communities about preventing harmful exposures will help us to address these critical issues first. We appreciate your recommendation that focusing on exposure to lead, mercury and pesticides is of paramount importance and understand that parents are faced with many difficult decisions that may affect a child's health when preparing their home and nursery for a newborn.

The EPA's commitment to protecting children's health is longstanding and encompasses the entire lifespan. As research findings continue to illuminate the nature of growth and development and interactions between genetics and environmental factors, we will continue to update and tailor our messages, consider possible policy interventions and conduct children's environmental-health research focused on critical knowledge gaps and emerging issues. Our Office of Children's Health Protection will work across the EPA to ensure consideration of early life-stage exposure and related risks in the EPA's regulatory activities. We have already engaged our communications and engagement team and will commit funds to outreach efforts. The EPA has also convened experts from other federal agencies and from the professional medical community to discuss the need to identify and seek input from appropriate stakeholders; prioritize, understand and translate research; expand the role of the pediatric environmental-health specialty units to better address prenatal exposures; and provide informed and actionable messages to the public.

How preconception and prenatal exposures contribute to birth outcomes and health in children will be a primary objective in the Children's Health Research Roadmap currently being developed by the EPA's Office of Research and Development. A primary objective of the EPA-National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences-sponsored Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Centers is to explore the impact of prenatal exposures and stressors on children's health. Studies from these centers will continue generating biomonitoring data for chemicals of concern during pregnancy.

For example, the Center at the University of California at San Francisco focuses specifically on understanding the impacts of exposures to chemicals and chronic stress on placental function during pregnancy while other centers at Columbia University, the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Washington are continuing their groundbreaking work with longitudinal children's cohorts to evaluate the impacts of prenatal exposures to prevalent environmental contaminants, such as endocrine disruptors, pesticides, chemicals in household products and air pollution, on the full range of children's disease outcomes ([www.epa.gov/ncer/childrenscenters](http://www.epa.gov/ncer/childrenscenters)).

We look forward to an ongoing discussion with you about preconception and prenatal environmental-health issues and appreciate all the hard work and constructive advice you continue to provide. We will continue to engage key partners, many of whom you mentioned in your letter, and work to further consider preconception and prenatal environmental-health in our decisions as the state of the science improves. To do this, we recognize that we will continue to rely on your advice and experience. Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,



Gina McCarthy

cc: Jim Jones, Assistant Administrator, OCSPP  
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