



MEDIA CONTACTS:

David Zucker, dzucker@hbbf.org, 917.617.0584

Jennifer Hazelton, Jennifer.hazelton@hbbf.org, 404.368.2533

Unprecedented Alliance of Scientists, Health Professionals, & Advocates Agree Toxic Chemicals Hurting Brain Development

Project TENDR calls for immediate action to reduce toxic exposures in the environment

New York, NY (July 1, 2016) – An unprecedented alliance of leading scientists, health professionals, and children’s health advocates agree for the first time that today’s scientific evidence supports a link between exposures to toxic chemicals in food, air and everyday products and children’s risks for neurodevelopmental disorders. The alliance, known as Project TENDR, is calling for immediate action to significantly reduce exposures to toxic chemicals to protect brain development for today’s and tomorrow’s children.

Neurodevelopmental disorders include intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, attention deficits, hyperactivity, and other maladaptive behaviors, and learning disabilities. Project TENDR’s consensus statement can be found [here](#).

Prime examples of the chemicals and pollutants that are contributing to children’s learning, intellectual and behavioral impairment include:

- Organophosphate (OP) pesticides
- Polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) flame retardants
- Combustion-related air pollutants, which generally include polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter
- Lead
- Mercury
- Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

“This is truly an historic agreement. Ten years ago, this consensus wouldn’t have been possible, but the scientific research is now abundantly clear: toxic chemicals are harming our children’s brain development,” said Irva Hertz-Picciotto, environmental epidemiologist at UC Davis and TENDR Co-Director. “As a society, we can eliminate or significantly lower these toxic chemical exposures *and* address inadequate regulatory systems that have allowed their proliferation. These steps

can, in turn, reduce high rates of neurodevelopmental disorders.”

“This national problem is so pressing that the TENDR scientists and health professionals will continue their collaboration to develop and issue recommendations aimed at significantly reducing exposures to toxic chemicals that are harming children’s brain development,” says Maureen Swanson, with the Learning Disabilities Association of America and TENDR Co-Director. “Calling for further study is no longer a sufficient response to this threat.”

The following experts are available to answer reporters’ questions about Project TENDR’s findings via the **telephone briefing at 11am ET on Friday, July 1st**.

- **Call-in Bridge: 1-800-215-0618; Access Code: 337-8044**

Participants:

- **Dr. Irva Hertz-Picciotto** is Professor of Epidemiology and of Environmental Health in the Department of Public Health Sciences and the MIND Institute at UC Davis, and Director of the NIH-funded Environmental Health Sciences Core Center. She is co-founder and co-director of Project TENDR.
- **Mark Mitchell M.D., MPH, FACPM** is the principal of Mitchell Environmental Health Associates, a consulting firm on environmental health and environmental justice issues. He chairs the National Medical Association’s Council on Medical Legislation and co-chairs the NMA’s Commission on Environmental Health, which trains and coordinates advocacy on behalf of African American physicians and their patients.
- **Frederica P. Perera, DrPH, PhD**, is a Professor of Environmental Health Sciences and serves as the Director of the Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health.
- **Maureen H. Swanson** is Director of the Healthy Children Project of the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA), focused on raising awareness of environmental factors linked to learning and developmental disabilities, and on promoting policies and practices to reduce toxic chemical exposures, especially for pregnant women and children. She is co-founder and co-director of Project TENDR.

About Project TENDR:

Project TENDR, which stands for “Targeting Environmental Neuro-Developmental Risks,” is an alliance of 48 of the nation’s top scientists, health professionals, and health advocates ([See Author List](#)). It was launched by Maureen Swanson of the Learning Disabilities Association of American and Irva Hertz-Picciotto of UC Davis,

who brought together participants across many disciplines and sectors, including epidemiology, toxicology, exposure science, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, nursing, public health, and federal and state chemical policy. Medical and scientific societies that have signed on in support include American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Nurses Association, Endocrine Society, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, National Medical Association, National Hispanic Medical Association, Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, Physicians for Social Responsibility and the National Council of Asian Pacific Island Physicians. TENDR's long-term mission is to lower the incidence of neurodevelopmental disorders by reducing exposure levels to chemicals and pollutants that can contribute to these conditions, especially during fetal development and early childhood. More information about [Project TENDR can be found here.](#)