

Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health, We Act for Environmental Justice to Host “Translating Science to Policy”

***U.S EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson and NIEHS Director Dr. Linda S. Birnbaum
to be Keynote Speakers at Day-Long Event***

NEW YORK CITY, March 30, 2009 — The Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health (CCCEH) at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health and WE ACT for Environmental Justice (WE ACT) will host a day-long conference, “Translating Science to Policy: Protecting Children’s Environmental Health,” that will bring together scientists, public officials, community leaders, and advocates to discuss more efficient methods of translating recent environmental health research into improved public policy. The conference will be held at Alfred Lerner Hall at Columbia University from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 30, 2009.

Led by keynote speakers Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Dr. Linda S. Birnbaum, Director of National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), **Translating Science to Policy** will focus on three major environmental health concerns affecting children in urban areas: air pollution from fossil fuel combustion, residential pesticides, and endocrine-disrupting chemicals found in common consumer products.

“**Translating Science to Policy** will provide a forum for more than 400 scientists, community members, policymakers, and advocates to share ideas on how to turn a rich set of data on environmental risk factors for children into more effective public policy protections,” said Frederica P. Perera, DrPH, professor of Environmental Health Sciences at Columbia’s Mailman School of Public Health and director of CCCEH. “We are honored to have Lisa Jackson and Dr. Birnbaum joining us as keynote speakers to discuss their views on how we can accomplish this.”

In addition to the keynote addresses from Ms. Jackson and Dr. Birnbaum, **Translating Science to Policy** will feature a series of case studies and roundtable discussions. Researchers, advocates, and policymakers participating in the event will review a decade of environmental health research findings from the CCCEH and others, and discuss strategies to leverage these findings to affect positive public policy changes.

“We now have more than a decade of findings on residents’ exposure to pollutants. WE ACT with the support of Columbia and other partners has been effective at strategically using this data to educate new constituencies and policymakers and to generate new policies that are more protective of public health,” said Peggy Shepard, executive director and co-founder of WE ACT for Environmental Justice.

The morning session of the conference will present three case studies and interventions undertaken to address them:

CASE STUDY 1: Air Pollution From Traffic and other Fossil Fuel Combustion Sources

Presenters include:

- Frederica Perera, DrPH, Director, Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health – *“Impact of Prenatal exposure to Air Pollution From Traffic and other Fossil Fuel Combustion Sources on Children’s Health and Development”*
- Patrick Kinney, ScD, Associate Professor and Director, Program in Climate and Health, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University—*“Fossil Fuels, Climate Change and Children’s Health: Impacts and Opportunities.”*

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: Leveraging Research to Policy

- Peggy Shepard, Executive Director, WE ACT for Environmental Justice—*“Translating Community-Based Research into Policy and Public Health Action”*

CASE STUDY 2: Pesticides and Integrated Pest Management

Presenters include:

- Virginia Rauh, ScD, Professor and Deputy Director, Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health—*“Prenatal Chlorpyrifos Exposure and Neurodevelopment: How Exposure to a Common Pesticide Can Damage the Developing Brain”*
- Daniel Kass, MSPH, Assistant Commissioner, Environmental Surveillance and Policy, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene—*“A Collaborative Effort to Evaluate the Impact of Integrated Pest Management in New York City Public Housing”*

CASE STUDY 3: Endocrine Disruptors

Presenters include:

- Sandra Steingraber, PhD, Scholar in Residence, Division of Interdisciplinary and International Studies, Ithaca College—*“The Health Effects of Endocrine Disruptors on the Growth and Development of Children”*

The afternoon session of the conference will feature roundtable discussions moderated by Brian Lehrer, MPH, Host, The Brian Lehrer Show, WNYC Radio, am820, 93.9fm

ROUNDTABLE 1: Addressing Urban Air Pollution and Climate Change

Participants include:

- Rohit Aggarwala, PhD, Director, Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, Mayor’s Office of Operations, City of New York
- John Balbus, MD, MPH, Chief Health Scientist, Program Director, Environmental Defense Fund
- Cecil D. Corbin-Mark, MPhil, Deputy Director, WE ACT for Environmental Justice
- Michel Gelobter, PhD, Chief Executive Officer, Cooler, Inc.
- Rachel Miller, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine and Environmental Health Sciences, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons; Deputy Director, Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health

ROUNDTABLE 2: Healthy Homes—Regulating Residential Pesticides and Consumer Products

Participants include:

- Jay Feldman, MS, Executive Director, Beyond Pesticides
- Philip Landrigan, MD, MSc, Director, Center for Children’s Health and the Environment, Mount Sinai School of Medicine
- Erik Olson, Director, Chemical and Food Safety Programs, The Pew Charitable Trusts
- Gina Solomon, MD, Senior Scientist, Natural Resources Defense Council
- Robin Whyatt, DrPH, Professor and Deputy Director, Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health

About the Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health (CCCEH)

The Columbia Center for Children’s Environmental Health – part of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University – is a leading research organization dedicated to understanding and preventing environmentally related disease in children. Founded in 1998, the Center conducts research in New York City, including the study of mothers and children in Northern Manhattan and South Bronx, a World Trade Center Study, as well as cohort studies in Krakow, Poland, and Chongqing, China. Its mission is to improve the respiratory health and cognitive development of children and to reduce their cancer risk by identifying environmental toxicants and conditions related to poverty that increase their risk of disease. In NYC, the Center collaborates with residents and partner organizations in Washington Heights, Harlem and the South Bronx to share research findings with the local communities in ways that are meaningful and usable in daily life. The CCCEH is one of 11 National Centers funded by the NIEHS and EPA and one of three Disease Investigation through Specialized Clinically-Oriented Ventures In Environmental Research (DISCOVER) Centers funded by the NIEHS. www.ccceh.org.

About WE ACT for Environmental Justice

Founded in 1988, WE ACT for Environmental Justice (West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.) was New York’s first environmental justice organization created to build community power to improve environmental health, policy and protection in communities of color. WE ACT is a nationally recognized organization in the field of community-based participatory research in partnership with the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. Based in Northern Manhattan, WE ACT advances its mission through research, public education, advocacy, organizing, government accountability, litigation, legislative affairs, and sustainable economic development. WE ACT works for environmental and social justice on issues of land use, waterfront development, brownfields redevelopment, transportation and air pollution, open space and environmental health. In its first organizing campaign, WE ACT won a 1.1 million dollar settlement of its lawsuit against the City regarding the North River sewage treatment plant in late December 1993, as well as a monitoring role with the Natural Resources Defense Council in the enforcement of the city-state consent agreement on a five-year plan to fix the North River Plant.

About the Mailman School of Public Health

The only accredited school of public health in New York City and among the first in the nation, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health pursues an agenda of research, education, and service to address the critical and complex public health issues affecting millions of people locally and globally. The Mailman School is the recipient of some of the largest government and private grants in Columbia University’s history. Its more than 1,000 graduate students pursue master’s and doctoral degrees, and the School’s 300 multi-disciplinary faculty members work in more than 100 countries around the world, addressing such issues as infectious and chronic diseases, health promotion and disease prevention, environmental health, maternal and child health, health over the life course, health policy, and public health preparedness. www.mailman.columbia.edu.