



Seattle Children's
HOSPITAL · RESEARCH · FOUNDATION

July 24, 2012

Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chair, Environment and Public Works
Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg
Chair, Superfund, Toxics, and
Environmental Health Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member, Environment and Public
Works Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member, Superfund, Toxics, and
Environmental Health Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Boxer, Lautenberg, Inhofe, and Crapo:

As members of the health care sector, which collectively comprises 18% of the gross domestic product, we write in support of the Safe Chemicals Act of 2011 (S. 847). This comprehensive legislation would strengthen the nation's system for managing chemical safety to better protect human and environmental health.

People are exposed every day to a complex mixture of industrial chemicals. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has measured hundreds of chemicals in urine and blood samples of Americans, finding widespread human exposure to many of them, including flame retardants, perfluorinated compounds, phthalates, and heavy metals, among others.¹ Many of these chemicals are linked to diseases and conditions, such as cancers, learning and developmental disabilities, birth defects, and asthma.² Unfortunately, there are far more chemicals about which we have little to no data on the potential for negative impacts.

While the evidence linking chemical exposures to negative health outcomes continues to rise, the federal law created to protect the public from hazardous chemicals—the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)—remains inadequate.

The Safe Chemicals Act would address the fundamental problems of TSCA by:

- Ensuring that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has information on the health risks of all chemicals by requiring chemical companies to supply this information for each chemical they produce and providing public access to the data.
- Expediting regulatory action on chemicals that persist in the environment, build up in the food chain, and end up in the blood and tissue of average Americans.
- Promoting the development of safer alternatives to chemicals of concern.

With the Safe Chemicals Act, Congress has a unique opportunity to create a chemical management system that effectively regulates potential hazards and provides stronger protections to human and environmental health. If you would like to talk further about our support for this important legislation or learn more about our organizations, please contact Rachel Gibson, Safer Chemicals Program Director, Health Care Without Harm, at rgibson@hcwh.org or (650) 208-2525.

Sincerely,

Catholic Health Association of the United States
Dignity Health
Fairview Health Services
Mount Sinai Children's Environmental Health Center
Novation
Seattle Children's

The ***Catholic Health Association of the United States*** is the nation's largest group of not-for-profit health providers, representing 629 Catholic hospitals and 56 Catholic health systems nationwide, which account for more than one-fifth of admissions in 22 states and the District of Columbia. The Catholic health ministry employs more than 750,000 women and men who deliver services combining advanced technology with the Catholic caring tradition.

Dignity Health is the fifth largest health system in the country with 10,000 physicians and 55,000 employees across Arizona, California, and Nevada. Through its network of more than 150 ancillary care sites and 40 acute care hospitals, Dignity Health is committed to delivering compassionate, high-quality, affordable health care services with special attention to the poor and underserved.

Fairview Health Services is a Minnesota-based, non-profit healthcare system with 7 hospitals (including the University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview), over 40 primary care clinics, and a wide range of specialty services. Fairview's medical practice includes more than 700 Fairview-employed physicians and more than 700 affiliated academic physicians within University of Minnesota Physicians, employing more than 22,000 people across the state.

The ***Children's Environmental Health Center at the Mount Sinai Medical Center*** supports programs in research, education, and patient care to protect children against environmental threats to health. CEHC's core work is to conduct research to learn how toxic chemicals in the environment cause disease in

children. CEHC also educates medical students, pediatricians, obstetricians, and other practicing physicians to become the next generation of leaders in environmental pediatrics and preventive medicine. CEHC provides medical consultations to families, health care professionals, public health officials, and community organizations.

Novation is the health care industry's largest supply chain expert and contracting company, serving the purchasing needs of more than 65,000 members. Through its affiliation with VHA Inc. and UHC (two national health care alliances), Children's Hospital Association (an alliance of the nation's leading pediatric facilities), and Provista, Novation represents the largest purchasing volume in the industry with more than \$42 billion in annual purchases. Novation's agreements with approximately 600 suppliers and distributors encompass nearly 90 percent of the products and services health care organizations purchase and use.

Seattle Children's consists of Seattle Children's Hospital, Seattle Children's Research Institute, and Seattle Children's Hospital Foundation. Seattle Children's Hospital serves as the pediatric and adolescent academic medical referral center for the largest landmass—Washington, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho—of any children's hospital in the country. It also is the primary teaching, clinical, and research site for the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Washington School of Medicine. Seattle Children's Research Institute engages in medical research to find cures for pediatric diseases and improve outcomes for children all over the world.

Cc: Senate Environment and Public Works Committee members
Administrator Lisa Jackson, Environmental Protection Agency
Jim Jones, Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and
Pollution Prevention (OCSPP), Environmental Protection Agency
Nancy Sutley, Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality

¹ "Fourth National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009, <http://www.cdc.gov/exposurereport/pdf/FourthReport.pdf>.

² Diamanti-Kandarakis E *et al.* Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals: An Endocrine Society Scientific Statement, *Endocrine Reviews* 2009; 30(4):293-342; P. Grandjean and P. Landrigan, "Developmental neurotoxicity of industrial chemicals," *The Lancet* 2006, Volume 369, Issue 9564, 821-822.