



THE COLLABORATIVE ON HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

February 24, 2004

Dear Colleague:

I am delighted to invite you to the first major national meeting of the Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative (LDDI) to be held at **the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD on May 19, 2004**. This full-day workshop will be followed by a day on Capitol Hill meeting with policymakers and agency officials on May 20th for interested individuals and organizations.

LDDI was established in Spring 2002 as a major working group of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE), a nonpartisan partnership working to further knowledge, action and cooperation regarding environmental contributors to disease and other health problems. For more information on both LDDI and CHE, see the enclosed information and/or www.cheforhealth.org.

Enclosed are the following materials:

- 1) Draft agenda
- 2) Map to the National Institutes of Health/Natcher Building
- 3) "Confirmation of Participation" form – **Please return by APRIL 15th**
- 4) Overview of LDDI
- 5) LDDI Resolution
- 6) List of current LDDI Working Group members and organizations
- 7) CHE brochure

OVERARCHING GOALS FOR THE MEETING: The planning committee has been very helpful in defining the intentions and agenda for this conference. Our goals are as follows:

- 1) Enhance understanding among groups in the LDD sector and key environmental health organizations of existing science linking certain chemical exposures to learning and developmental disabilities (LDDs);
- 2) Encourage further support for scientific research on these linkages;
- 3) Highlight existing initiatives of LDD groups that are already educating their constituencies about how to be more effective in protecting children and future generations from exposures to neurotoxicants;
- 4) Foster greater collaboration between LDD groups, researchers, health care professionals, environmental health advocacy organizations and others concerned with environmental contributors to neurological development;
- 5) Develop specific educational and policy opportunities and agendas regarding environmental contributors to LDDs; and
- 6) Engage a "critical mass" of those in the LDD sector and other interested organizations to move these agendas forward.

CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION: In order to make proper arrangements, we will need to hear from you **no later than APRIL 15th if you plan to attend.** Please fill out the attached “Confirmation of Participation” form regarding your plans. Also, if you know of other colleagues you think would be interested in participating, please have them contact Terry Portillo, Office Manager at the Institute for Children’s Environmental Health at: iceh@iceh.org or 360-331-7904.

LODGING: Through Monday, April 19th, the Bethesda Hyatt will hold discounted rooms for LDDI meeting participants for the nights of May 18th and 19th. Discounted rates are: \$189 single occupancy, \$214 double occupancy (\$107 per person). After April 19th these discounted rates will not apply. The Hyatt is conveniently located one Metro stop away from the National Institutes of Health campus, and the hotel is directly across the street from the Metro stop. To make reservations, contact the Hyatt Reservation Line at: 1-800-233-1234. Mention the LDDI meeting for discounted rates. For directions from nearby airports, please see their web site: www.bethesda.hyatt.com. Participants are also welcome to make alternative lodging arrangements in the area. For other hotels, you might check: www.faresrus.com/hotels or www.travelnow.com.

FOOD: Before and during the conference, participants may purchase food at the cafeteria in the Natcher Building of the National Institutes of Health. There are also a number of restaurants in Bethesda within a 10-minute walking distance.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: Though we have a limited amount of money to cover travel and lodging for participants, we will try to accommodate as many requests as possible. If your organization can cover part or all of your expenses, that means more needy individuals and organizations will be able to join us. In other words, do let us know if you simply would not be able to come without financial aid, but please reflect carefully on whether you can attend without additional resources. **Please fill out the financial assistance request section of the “Confirmation of Participation” form.**

DAY ON CAPITAL HILL: We are still refining plans for this day, but if you are interested in meeting with key policymakers on specific legislation related to neurotoxicants, **please indicate this on the Confirmation of Participation form.** In addition, we encourage those who wish to do so to set up individual meetings with their respective Congressional representatives to underscore a particular issue. We intend to provide fact sheets and talking points.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached at: emiller@iceh.org or phone: 360-331-7904. I greatly look forward to being in touch and seeing you in May.

With warm regards,

Elise Miller, M.Ed.

Executive Director, Institute for Children’s Environmental Health

National Coordinator, the Collaborative on Health and the Environment’s Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative