



**Contact:**

Margie Kelly, [Margie@safestates.org](mailto:Margie@safestates.org), 541-222-9699

Sian Wu, [sian@resource-media.org](mailto:sian@resource-media.org), 206-374-7795 x102

Elizabeth Crowe, [elizabeth@cwwg.org](mailto:elizabeth@cwwg.org), 859-986-0868

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**NEW REPORT DEMONSTRATES REDUCTIONS IN TOXIC CHEMICAL EXPOSURE  
WOULD MAKE AMERICANS HEALTHIER, WEALTHIER**

*Congressional reform of toxics law could save billions in health care costs*

WASHINGTON –According to a new analysis released today, “**The Health Case for Reforming the Toxic Substances Control Act,**” the U.S. has the opportunity to prevent rising rates of chronic disease and reduce health care costs by overhauling federal chemical policy. Evidence is strong and growing that chemical exposures contribute significantly to the rise in many chronic diseases, according to this new report synthesizing peer-reviewed science.

As the U.S. debates the costs of health care and its reform, “The Health Case” documents the enormous health care costs of treating cancer, learning and developmental disabilities, asthma and other diseases and conditions linked to chemical exposure, according to recent studies. By updating toxic chemical laws, the report found that Congress would reduce exposure to chemicals contributing to chronic diseases. Conservative estimates show that reducing the incidence of these diseases by 0.1 percent could save \$5 billion in health care costs. This dollar figure is based on expected health care costs projected for 2020, and assumes full implementation of the new legislation by that year.

The primary federal law governing chemical safety is the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), which has never been significantly amended since its adoption in 1976. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson has identified comprehensive reform of the toxics law as a key Obama Administration priority, stating that the law fails to provide EPA with the authority it needs to ensure chemicals are safe. Of the 80,000 chemicals used in the U.S., EPA has been able to require safety testing on only 200. And 60,000 chemicals - including bisphenol A - were grandfathered in for use without any testing for health safety. New legislation to bring the toxics law into the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be introduced by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL) in early 2010.

“Scientific evidence is piling up, revealing how chemicals are contributing to the alarming increases we are seeing in childhood leukemia, learning disabilities, reproductive disorders and other health problems,” says Charlotte Brody, RN, National Field Director of the [Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families](#) coalition and lead author of the report. “But meanwhile the federal law that is supposed to protect us has stayed frozen in time.”

The report summarizes a number of peer-reviewed studies that estimate the disease burden attributable to chemical exposure. These estimates vary widely, from five percent of childhood cancer to 30 percent of childhood asthma. Conservatively assuming that chemical policy reform were to reduce the contribution of toxic chemical exposures to chronic diseases by 0.1 percent, the resulting reduction in annual health care costs would amount to an estimated \$5 billion. The Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families coalition has estimated health care cost savings on a state-by-state basis, using census figures projected for 2020.

"Our community is adjacent to Rubbertown, a cluster of 11 chemical plants, located in Louisville Kentucky. We feel each day the urgent need for chemical policy reform," said Eboni Neal Cochran, a resident of the Chickasaw neighborhood and Co-Coordinator of Rubbertown Emergency Action (REACT). "This report should get decision makers here in Louisville and in Washington DC thinking more critically about not only the financial cost to government and private business but also the physical and financial cost to those who are suffering from toxic exposures."

"Failure of TSCA has direct implications for the health of America's children. Infants and children are uniquely vulnerable to toxic industrial chemicals. Research from CDC documents show that several hundred industrial chemicals are in all of us. Some of these chemicals are known to cause asthma, cancer, learning disabilities and birth defects," said Philip J. Landrigan, MD, Pediatrician and Director, Children's Environmental Health Center, Mount Sinai School of Medicine. "But for too many of the chemicals that are in us, no toxicity testing has ever been done. For too many of the industrial chemicals that are in us we have no idea of their potential toxicity to our children. This is very unwise and terribly short-sighted. Failure of TSCA is cause for great concern not only for the health of our children, but also for the future of our nation."

During the last 30 years, tens of thousands of peer reviewed studies have built a large body of evidence demonstrating that chemical exposure can cause and contribute to some of our nation's most serious health problems — from childhood cancer to infertility.

Leukemia and other childhood cancers have increased by more than 20 percent since 1975. A woman's lifetime risk of breast cancer is now one in eight, up from one in ten in 1973. Infertility affected 40 percent more women in 2002 than in 1982. The once-rare birth defect of undescended testicles in baby boys increased 200 percent between 1970 and 1993. Since the early 1990s, reported cases of autism spectrum disorder have increased tenfold.

For Ashley Cochrane of Berea, Ky., those statistics are personal. She and her mother are both cancer survivors, and Ashley is concerned for the future health of Sylvia, her 5 month old daughter. "I am acutely aware that each day, simply by living, all of us are exposed to chemicals that may be harming our health. We should not have to worry that products we buy in the grocery or pharmacy or hardware store, to eat or use on our bodies or in our homes, are making us sick, causing diseases, or leading to birth defects in future generations," said Cochrane. "It is my strong hope that someday all of our children will know that the chemicals around them have been tested and proven to be safe for their health."

The full "Health Case" report, additional quotes and state-based economic information is available at [www.saferchemicals.org](http://www.saferchemicals.org).

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