

Choosing Safer Products and Chemicals at Your Institution

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The Problem with Chemicals . . . and with Products

- Production, use, disposal of chemicals
- Accumulation in environment and people
- Exposure to chemicals linked to health
 - From air, water, food
 - From products!
- No effective regulation of chemicals

The Rationale for Choosing Safer Products and Chemicals in Healthcare

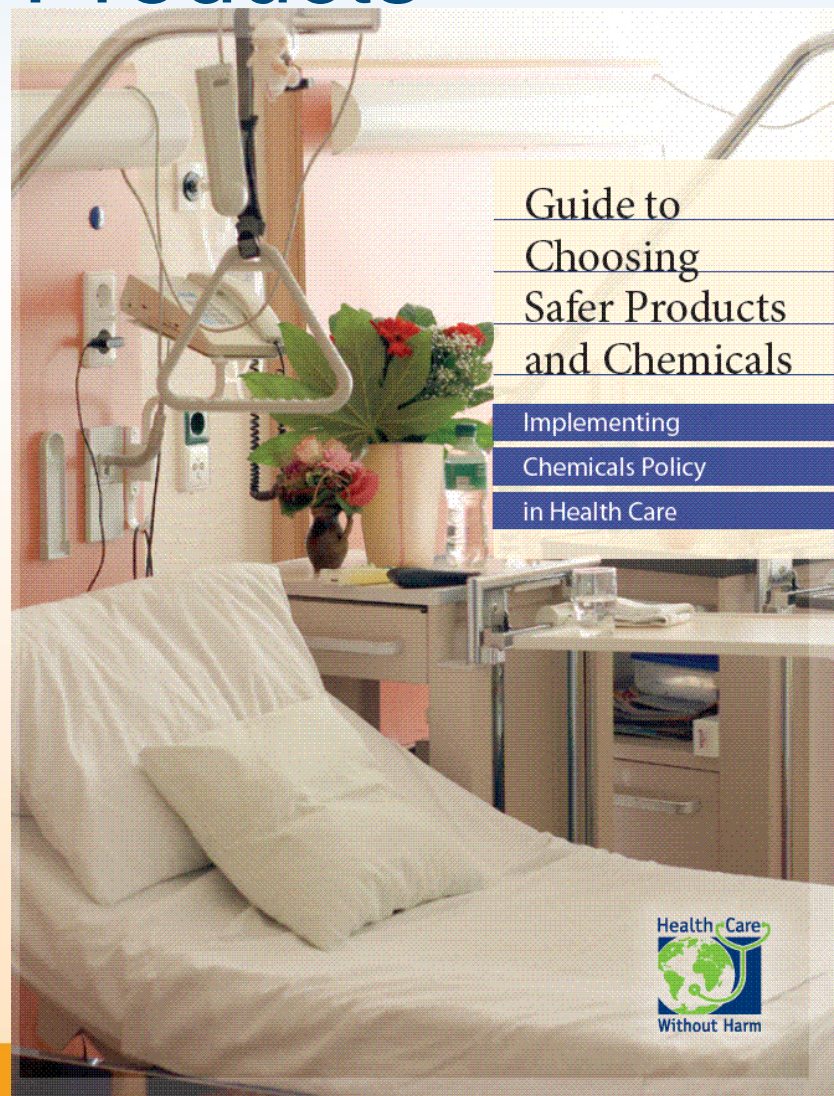
- Need for full evaluation of health impacts of existing and newly developed industrial chemicals
- Need to assess human and environmental health hazards of industrial chemicals and reduce use of those of greatest concern
- Need to produce and use chemicals in ways that minimize adverse effects on human health and the environment

American Medical Association

Resolution 404 – Modern Chemicals Policies - 2009

Guide to Choosing Safer Chemicals and Products

- Step-by-Step guide for healthcare organizations
- Useful for any institution that purchases supplies



Guide to
Choosing
Safer Products
and Chemicals

Implementing
Chemicals Policy
in Health Care

Making the Case at Your Institution

- First, do no harm!
- Ethical responsibilities
- Benefits patients, workers, community
- Reductions in disease, risk, liability
- Improvements to decision making, markets

Case Study: Policy Statement

- Recognizing the interconnection between human health and ecosystem health,
- and consistent with Healthcare System's missions/values,
- Healthcare System is committed to aligning our purchasing decisions with the long term goal of a healthy environment and workplace
- by implementing a comprehensive chemicals policy program.

Developing a Plan of Action

Healthcare System Strategies

Internal

Contractual

External

HCWH Guide Resources Planning

Workplace

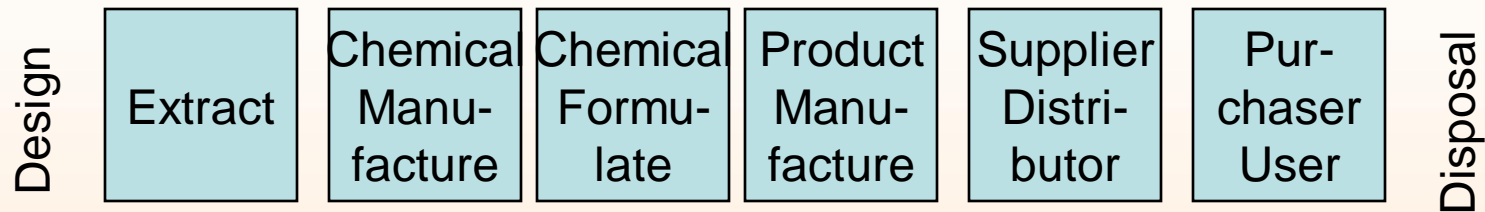
Supply Chain

Advocacy

Targeted Chemicals
Data Gap (Disclosure)

Focus on EPP and Supply Chains

- Includes all responsible for bringing product to market



- Life cycle approach includes product design and disposal

Examples of Chemicals and Products

Chemicals:	Example:	Mercury	Other	PVC/DHP	BFR	PBTs	BPA/phth	Pesticides
as Chemicals	Laboratory							
in Materials								
in Products	Cleaners							
in Supplies	IV Bags			▲			▲	
in Equipment								
in Electronics	Computer							
in Furnishings	Chair				▲			
in Built Environment	Flooring							
In Indoor Air								
In Drinking Water								
In Food								▲
In Food-Ware								

Material Safety Data Sheet

- MSDS must list *hazardous* ingredients above 1% (0.1% for carcinogens).
- No enforcement of MSDS accuracy or definition of “hazardous.”
- Aberdeen Proving Ground found very high inaccuracy in MSDSs.

What do we know?

- Chemicals can disperse from products into the environment
- Untested chemicals present in products
 - No way to know what products contain untested chemicals
- Known toxic chemicals in products
 - Also often unidentifiable

Supply Chain Strategy

- By seeking suppliers that share your environmental goals, you can use your purchasing dollars to support a shift in the marketplace.
 - Mercury thermometers
 - Cleaners

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

- EPP is the process of selecting products and services whose environmental impacts have been considered and found to be **preferable** to those of comparable alternatives.
- “Considered,” not “Exhaustively Evaluated”

EPP-Supply Chain Strategy 1: Targeted Chemical Approach

- What are you doing to address:
 - Mercury
 - Latex
 - PVC/DEHP
 - Halogenated (Brominated) Flame Retardants
 - Carcinogens

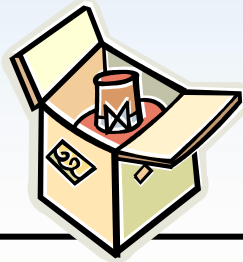
Implementing a Targeted Chemical Strategy

- Identify targeted chemicals
- Ask suppliers for disclosure regarding targeted chemicals
- Where products otherwise equal, prefer products without targeted chemicals.

Standard Chemical Disclosure

- Mercury
- Phthalates
- Halogenated flame retardants and other halogenated organics (chemical class)
- Persistent, Bioaccumulative Toxic chemicals (EPA Waste Min list)
- Carcinogens and Reproductive Toxicants (Prop. 65)

Which product is preferable?



Product 1	Product 2
No mercury	No mercury
No phthalates	No phthalates
No halogenated organic	No halogenated organic
No listed PBT	No listed PBT
No listed carc/repro	Listed carc/repro
\$2/gallon	\$2/gallon

EPP-Supply Chain Strategy 2: Data Gap Strategy

What are the “data gaps” for chemicals?

- Lack of information on
 - Chemical ingredients in products
 - Health and environmental impacts of these chemical ingredients
- Lack of monitoring for presence of these chemicals in people and environment

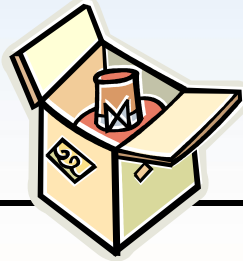
Example Supplier Question

- Does your company avoid introducing the use of chemicals and materials that do not have sufficient toxicity testing or that have not been evaluated for persistence or bioaccumulation?

Public Disclosure

- Do you publicly disclose full ingredient and materials lists for all your products, beyond what is required on Material Safety Data Sheets?

Which product is preferable?



Product 1	Product 2
No mercury	No mercury
No phthalates	No phthalates
No halogenated organic	No halogenated organic
No listed PBT	No listed PBT
No listed carc/repro	No listed carc/repro
26 untested ingredients	No untested ingredients
Unknown Repro Toxin	No untested ingredients

How Can Vendors Answer These Questions?

- Vendors are often unable to obtain answers to these questions from the manufacturers of the products they sell.
- Vendors have told us they want a central source for chemical toxicity testing information.

Role of Government

- Should untested chemicals be allowed on the market?
- Would chemical testing requirements make it easier for health care facilities to evaluate products?
- Should the government create incentives for safer products to come to market?

Advocacy Strategy

- Some health care systems and GPOs have advocated in their states or at the national level for phase outs, testing
- Some health care organizations have sent letters of support for regulatory action and testified before regulatory agencies

On the Way to Safer Chemicals and Products at Your Institution

- Get the Guide!
- Make the Case
- Adopt a Policy
- Plan of Action
- Implement
- Advocate!

Environmentally Preferable
Purchasing
and
Supply Chain Strategies

Targeted Chemicals
(list & communicate)

Narrowing Data Gaps
(ask questions, set preferences)

www.noharm.org/us/chemicalpolicy/guide



Health Care Without Harm
Chemical Policy Program

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