

CHAPTER NEWS

Commemorating Fukushima One Year Later

Dr. Gould's Trip to Hong Kong & the Future of Nuclear Power

I was invited to represent PSR and IPPNW as a featured speaker in “Cracking the Nuclear Labyrinth,” an international forum commemorating the anniversary of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. The conference was held at the Polytechnic University in Hong Kong on March 10. About 120 people attended the all-day conference, which was organized by a number of local organizations opposed to plans for expanding nuclear power in Asia, including Hong Kong Alliance Against Nukes and their leader, Dr. Man Si Wai, of the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The conference featured a keynote address by Dr. Gordon Edwards, President of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, along with representatives of Taiwan’s Green Citizen’s Action Alliance and local trade union representatives. Also present were Japanese individuals who related eye-witness accounts of the devastation wrought by the Fukushima events, the widespread contamination of food, and the extensive cover-up by Japanese authorities. The Japanese representatives included the popular writer Lill Liu, a former correspondent for the China Times, whom I was often paired with in various speaking engagements during my visit, and who has written a number of recent books on Fukushima and the dangers of nuclear power, such as “We Cannot Afford a Nuclear Disaster,” and “Last Words from the Nuclear Plant Worker.”

In my own address at the conference “Environmental and Public Health Impacts of Nuclear Power,” I covered a number of issues related to the current nuclear “renaissance,” including how health issues related to nuclear power have been hidden from the public, and how alternative and sustainable forms of energy, including conservation/efficiency measures, can better meet the energy and environmental challenges posed by global warming than expanding nuclear power. Following my presentation, German journalist and author Wolfgang Pomrehn spoke about the relevant lessons from the German anti-nuclear movement, which has resulted in the current halt to the nuclear power program in Germany and neighboring European countries. Some of the speakers also participated



in a press conference dealing with various aspects of the “Tragedy of Fukushima.”

On March 9, the day before the “Labyrinth” conference, my hosts had organized a “Nuclear Concern Day” at Chinese University in Hong Kong, which began with a press conference including Lill Liu, Man Si Wai, and myself. I had a lengthy interview with an independent mainland Chinese TV station. Later in the day, as an invited lecturer, I gave a talk at the university entitled “Protecting Generations at Risk: PSR’s Opposition to Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear Power” for a special forum entitled “Reflections on a Nuclear-Powered Asia,” which covered PSR and IPPNW’s long-standing work in this arena. In the evening, I had a filmed interview at the Hong Kong Readers bookstore in the Mongkok neighborhood of Kowloon during which I was able to engage the expert participation of Dr. Gordon Edwards, who happened to be in the audience, to deepen our discussion about the significant health, ethical and moral issues related to the promotion of nuclear power throughout Asia.

On March 11, the anniversary of the disaster in Fukushima, many of the conference attendees participated in a rally of about 100 people at Kowloon Park near the famous Kowloon mosque. In addition to speaking at the demonstration, Dr. Gordon Edwards and I were both interviewed by Reuters



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California Healthy Food & Beverage Initiative

The way food is produced, processed, packaged, distributed and consumed in the U.S. has significant impacts on human health, climate change, air and water pollution and the viability of future agricultural production. Our industrialized food system encourages quantity over quality, abundant use of dangerous pesticides, overuse of non-therapeutic antibiotics, and highly processed foods over fresh and whole foods, all of which negatively impact the environment and individual health. Nationally, the United States spends billions of dollars to treat diet-related, chronic diseases—\$147 billion to treat obesity alone, another \$116 billion to treat diabetes, and hundreds of billions to treat cardiovascular disease and cancers.

Hospitals can affect positive changes in our current food

system with their significant institutional purchasing power. By prioritizing sustainably produced food, hospitals have the ability to improve the health of their patients, staff and visitors, and invest in the well-being of communities and the environment. Hospitals also have the opportunity to educate and model healthy eating habits and the importance of fresh, nutritious foods. And indeed they are doing just that, from coast to coast. Health care organizations are rewriting healthier menus, working with local farmers to purchase locally, sustainably-grown products, reducing the amount of meat they purchase and serve, and purchasing more fair trade and certified organic products than ever before. There are many different strategies a facility can implement to make this goal a reality, and the new California Healthy Food and Beverage Initiative provides an excellent roadmap.

HEALTHIER HOSPITALS INITIATIVE: Six Challenges Towards Sustainability	
CHALLENGE	MENU OF OPTIONS
Leaner Energy	Partner with Energy Star for energy performance tracking and conservation
Less Waste	Gather baseline data Recycling Red bag reduction Construction & Demolition Debris Recycling
Smarter Purchasing	Use of the Standardized Environmental Questions for Medical Products Surgical kit reformulation EPEAT computer purchase Single use device reprocessing
Safer Chemicals	Mercury elimination Green cleaning DEHP and PVC reduction Healthy interiors
Healthier Foods	Take the Balanced Menu Challenge Promote healthy beverages Increase procurement of local and sustainable food
Leadership and Culture	Create an organizational structure Adopt a sustainability strategic plan Develop a sustainability budget

Three Benchmarks Towards Building a Healthier, More Sustainable Food System

The Healthy Food and Beverage Initiative is made up of three benchmarks for sustainable food procurement, with a baseline commitment of signing the Healthy Foods in Health Care Pledge (see www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org) or formally adopting a sustainable food policy. The benchmarks include:

- ① **Take the Balanced Menus Challenge.** Decrease amount of meat purchased by 20% over baseline year, within three years.
- ② **Increase Purchases of Healthy Beverages.** Increase the percentage of healthy beverage purchases by 20% of total beverage purchases annually over baseline year OR achieve healthy beverage purchases of 80% of total beverage purchases, for use throughout the hospital (patient, retail, vending, and catering) within three years. (Include promotion of tap water over bottled water where possible.)
- ③ **Increase Procurement of Local and/or Sustainable Foods.** Increase the percentage of local and/or sustainable food dollar purchases by 20% annually over baseline year OR achieve local and/or sustainable food dollar purchases of 15% of total food purchases within three years.

Healthier Hospitals Initiative

The California Healthy Food and Beverage Initiative is part of the larger nationwide Healthier Hospitals Initiative

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CA Healthy Food ...

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(HHI), a national campaign to implement a completely new approach to improving environmental health and sustainability in the health care sector. Eleven of the largest, most influential U.S. health systems, comprising over 425 hospitals with more than \$20 billion in purchasing power, worked with Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) and Practice GreenHealth (PGH) to create the HHI as a guide for hospitals to reduce energy and waste, choose safer and less toxic products, and purchase and serve healthier foods. The Initiative will enroll at least 2,000 hospitals in 50 states and the District of Columbia over the next three years to implement sustainable operations. As a comprehensive, sector-wide initiative, the HHI campaign is fully consistent with and builds upon the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Triple Aim—Better Health, Better Care and Lower Costs, and will institute frameworks and implementation tools that can be used by every healthcare facility in the nation. The Initiative was formally announced on April 3rd in Washington, D.C. Two of the eleven systems are our own California-based Kaiser Permanente and Dignity Health. SF Bay Area PSR will be assisting with the outreach and coordination of HHI efforts here in California, primarily through our leadership with the California Healthy Food and Beverage Initiative.

Because of the initial investment of the eleven founding systems, HHI is available to systems at no charge and provides an advanced data collection tool that all participating systems will contribute to throughout the three-year life of the Initiative. Hospitals and health systems that commit to the HHI agenda will now be able to aggregate data, measure progress, and assess the environmental and public health impacts of their collective efforts in all six HHI Challenge areas (see sidebar on page 2). For example, we will be able to assess the collective climate mitigation impacts of all of the HHI-related activities in the state of California over a three-year period.

Lucia Sayre, SF Bay Area PSR Co-Executive Director, said, “The framework of the HHI and the organization of California Healthy Food and Beverage Initiative will allow us to make significant improvements in health care environments in California and nationwide. HHI will reduce energy use, exposure to environmental toxins, and waste. It will also build a healthier food system through hospitals’ purchasing and serving healthier foods to patients, staff and the surrounding community. It’s an ambitious agenda, and we have no time to lose.” ■

For more information about the HHI or the Healthy Food and Beverage Initiative, please contact Lucia Sayre at 510-559-8777 or luciasayre@sbcglobal.net.

Fukushima ...

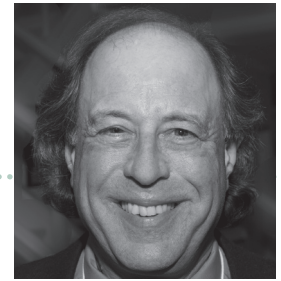
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journalists. Afterwards, we marched through the hub of the working class and shopping districts of Kowloon en route to a final rally at the headquarters of Hong Kong Power and Light where many speakers, including myself, called for an end to the use of nuclear power and for investing instead in alternative technologies.

Overall, for me this was a very exciting and eye-opening trip regarding the implications of the push for nuclear power in Asia, and I was deeply impressed by the resistance of groups throughout the region galvanized by the still-unfolding disaster of Fukushima. It was a great to make such solid connections with the courageous regional activists, by sharing the perspective of PSR/IPPNW physicians on the manifold public and environmental health issues incorporated in the current nuclear “renaissance.” As such, I am looking forward to continued collaborative work so integral in developing a global movement adequate to ending all dangers inherent in the nuclear power-weapons continuum.

My experience in Hong Kong also underscored for me how disturbing it is that our own government has stopped regular monitoring of radiation emissions from the Fukushima meltdown, at a time when sporadic reports of significant levels of radioactive materials in food in Japan and even in western North America have surfaced. To fully protect our public health, we need EPA and other relevant government agencies to immediately institute regular monitoring of our food and water, and to provide information to public health agencies so that clear guidelines can be given to physicians to communicate with patients who are appropriately concerned about the safety of our food and water, particularly in regard to the potential impacts on the health of our children. Moreover, we in PSR need to redouble our efforts to phase out nuclear power, starting with the shutdown of reactors that share the vulnerabilities of the Fukushima plant designs, and those, such as Diablo Canyon and San Onofre, that are astride active earthquake fault zones. For more information, please check out the new report, *Nuclear Power and Public Health*, prepared by colleagues in National PSR in time for the recent anniversary of Fukushima. ■

Congratulations to Dr. Bob Gould on His Retirement from Kaiser!



Dr. Bob Gould, President of SF Bay Area PSR since 1989, retired from the Pathology Department at San Jose Kaiser after 31 years of service. Dr. Gould has been a national and regional leader in PSR for more than two decades. In addition to serving as President of SF Bay Area PSR for 23 years, he has served on the national board of directors of PSR since 1993 and been Co-Chair of National PSR Board's Social Justice Committee since 2007. Dr. Gould served on the Executive Committee from 1994-2006; was President of National PSR in 2003; and was Chairperson of National PSR Board's Security Committee from 2005-2006.

Dr. Gould has also been an active member of the Environmental Committee of the Santa Clara County Medical Association (SCCMA) since 1992, a leader in the Peace Caucus of American Public Health Association (APHA) since 1986, and has authored numerous publications. Dr. Gould was listed as one of Santa Clara County's "Top 400 Physicians" in peer-review surveys published in *San Jose Magazine* in 2001 through 2007. The SCCMA awarded him its "Outstanding Contribution in Community Service" award in 2001, and this June he will receive SCCMA's award for "Outstanding Contribution to the Medical Association." ■

"Bob is the epitome of the ideal physician advocate who has managed a career and activism at the local, state, national and international levels. I hope he has saved up his energy to continue to work for a better world as I know he will continue to exercise his passion, his inspiration, and his generosity of spirit for the sake of us all."

—Dr. Catherine Thomasson, Executive Director, National PSR

"Bob's extraordinary work in clinical pathology has been of enormous value to many people. Now that he is retiring, his full-time work dealing with social pathology in the United States and abroad will be even more useful! It will be a pleasure continuing to work with him in PSR, IPPNW, APHA, PNHP and other groups that help make the world a safer and more equitable place to live."

—Victor Sidel, co-founder of PSR,
and Dr. Ruth Sidel, professor and author

"Bob's decades-long efforts to educate health professionals and the public about nuclear weapons and effects of militarism have made a huge impact on the physician community and have also been personally inspiring to me. It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with him, and it will be great to have even more of his time dedicated to PSR's work on healing the world now that he is retired! We hope he can enjoy his PSR work and time with his grandkids, too!"

—Tom Newman, SF Bay Area PSR
Steering Committee Member

"I joined SF Bay Area PSR in 1986. Since then, and even before I arrived, Bob has been the catalyst, inspiration and glue that made the Chapter the vital organization that it is. Always ready to lend a hand, to take on the challenging backroom chores, and to travel, speak out and write about the issues, Bob has been a wonderful leader for PSR locally and nationally. We look forward to many more years of his contributions to the efforts to find peace in our world."

—Tom Hall, SF Bay Area PSR Steering Committee Member



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