



## Clinical Advocacy in Environmental Health

**S**F Bay Area PSR members have long been recognized as trusted experts on health-related issues, not only where we work, but in the community at large. At the core of our educational efforts, we are increasingly encouraging our clinical colleagues to take a leading role in protecting public and environmental health. Through a variety of avenues that encourage strong advocacy for our patients and communities, these opportunities include serving in local and state government, participating on hospital sustainability committees, effective media outreach, and tapping into our professional networks and associations to promote effective public policy.

The Climate and Health Literacy Consortium and Food Matters are two examples of our clinical education and advocacy programs. Both of these nationwide efforts are partnerships between SF Bay Area PSR and Health Care Without Harm (HCWH), and include additional partners as well. HCWH, an international coalition of over 450 organizations, works to improve the environmental health and safety of the health care industry, primarily by changing the way hospitals and health systems operate. Our Climate and Food projects integrate the strengths of both organizations—to work with health system administrators to improve sustainability within the industry and to educate and motivate fellow clinicians as advocates on environmental health issues.

### Climate and Health Literacy Consortium

As we face the consequences of climate change, it is crucial for the health sector to develop an educated, effective voice on preventing and mitigating the worst impacts. The Climate and Health Literacy Consortium is working to educate clinicians about these issues and to give them the tools to communicate on three different levels: 1) with their patients and families in the clinic, about the health impacts of climate change and personal strategies that individuals can incorporate to help reduce their own climate “footprint;” 2) within their own health care facilities and health systems to promote mitigation strategies that can cut down energy use in operations; 3) on a local, regional and national level advancing health-protective climate legislation. Since the Consortium was established in 2010, over 800 health professionals have participated in workshops and seminars across the country.

In an article recently published in the *New York Times* (Doctors Prepare Their Professions to Explain and Treat Climate-Related Symptoms, Published: June 15, 2011), the Consortium was recognized for providing educational resources and tools for clinicians to communicate more broadly and effectively about the health effects of climate change.

As a recent example, in the upcoming August issue of *American Family Physician*, Dr. Cindy Parker of Johns Hopkins University and PSR presents the latest science on climate change, and connects this to the importance of talking to our patients about food choices that improve personal health while mitigating the impacts of global warming. SF Bay Area PSR's President Dr. Robert Gould contributes an accompanying editorial about the educational and advocacy efforts of HCWH, PSR, Practice Green Health (PGH), public health and medical associations around the intersection of climate change, health, and nutrition.

### Food Matters

All of these foregoing activities underscore the importance for health care systems and providers alike to embrace primary prevention strategies that promote healthy environments and behaviors. This would contribute greatly to reducing the burden of acute illness and chronic disease that is increasingly understood as being strongly linked to in-utero and early childhood exposures to pervasive environmental toxicants that have lifelong impacts.

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## SF Bay Area PSR Hosted Events

For more information, please visit <http://psrblog.wordpress.com> (click Events).

### From Hiroshima to Fukushima to Livermore: Confronting the Two-Headed Dragon of Nuclear Weapons & Nuclear Power

#### AUGUST 3RD

Potluck 6:30pm, screening 7:30pm. Fellowship of Humanity Hall: 390 27th St. Oakland, CA. Screening of *The Forgotten Bomb* [[forgottenbomb.com](http://forgottenbomb.com)] followed by Q&A with Director Stuart Overbey

#### AUGUST 6TH

6-9pm, Lawrence Livermore Lab. Dr. Robert Gould will be a speaker. Gathering, food, music, activities, and a live video conversation with a nuclear bomb survivor in Japan.

#### AUGUST 9TH

8am at the gates of Livermore Lab  
Ceremony and non-violent direct action

### “War and Public Health: The Role of Medical Students” with Dr. Vic Sidel, MD.

#### OCTOBER 5TH

Lunchtime Talk at UCSF, time and location TBA. Email Lucia Sayre at [luciasayre@sbcglobal.net](mailto:luciasayre@sbcglobal.net) for more information.

## Celebrating PSR's Fiftieth Year!

#### AUGUST 19TH

“How Peace Activists Saved the World from Nuclear War” Salon with Dr. Lawrence Wittner, PhD

#### OCTOBER 6TH

“Fifty Years of Physicians for Social Responsibility: Our past, present, and future” Salon with Dr. Vic Sidel, MD

Both events at Dr. Tom Hall and Liz McLoughlin's home, 1515 16th Ave., SF 94122. Buffet supper at 6:30pm and presentation and discussion from 7:30-9:00. Email [THall@epi.ucsf.edu](mailto:THall@epi.ucsf.edu) to RSVP (so we plan for enough food). There is no charge for either of these events; donations gratefully accepted.

# SF Bay Area Members Out and About



ur Steering Committee members and colleagues have participated in many wonderful events over the past few months!

Dr. Harry Wang, President of Sacramento's PSR chapter, served as California's Clean Air Ambassador on a visit to the EPA on May 2.

Dr. Tom Newman delivered the keynote address "Global Climate Change: What Pediatricians Need to Know" at UCSF's 44th annual Advances and Controversies in Pediatrics on May 12.

Congratulations to Dr. Tom Newman for being awarded the Sustainability Award in the faculty category at UCSF's LivingGreen Fair.

Dr. Robert Gould visited Senator Boxer's office on June 2 to discuss nuclear power.

Dr. Jeffrey Ritterman spoke on "Why We Need Today: The Critical Intersection of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Public Health" at the 6th Annual Physical Activity and Nutrition Forum in Richmond on June 2.

Dr. Jeffrey Ritterman spoke at the West County Urban Agriculture Summit on June 3 in Richmond.

Dr. Robert Gould spoke on "Health and Environmental Impacts of Nuclear Weapons" at the National Youth Leadership Forum on June 27 and July 11, held at the Clark Kerr UC Berkeley Center.

Dr. Robert Gould testified on July 7 at the Public Utility Committee (PUC) hearing on PG&E's application to recover costs associated with renewal of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant operating licenses. Dr. Gould spoke in support of the Alliance of Nuclear Responsibility's motion to dismiss the application.

*To read more about these activities, please visit our blog at [psrblog.wordpress.com](http://psrblog.wordpress.com). ■*

## E-NEWS!

Stay up to date on our activities and save trees by signing up for our Enews at [sfbaypsr.org](http://sfbaypsr.org) (see sign-up box in left-hand margin of that webpage).

## WITHDRAWING TROOPS FROM AFGHANISTAN

### *The Influence of National and Local PSR*

SF Bay Area PSR was proud to work with National PSR in its partnership with the Council for a Livable World (CLW), who delivered a petition signed by more than 12,000 people urging significant troop withdrawal from Afghanistan beginning in July. These efforts were part of increasing pressure on President Obama to take action, and on June 22nd, he announced plans to bring home 33,000 troops from Afghanistan by the end of September 2012.

Local efforts mirrored the national political climate, with the City of Richmond passing a resolution in May, brought by SF Bay Area Steering Committee member and Richmond City Council Member Dr. Jeffrey Ritterman, supporting the Congressional Progressive

Caucus's People's Budget. The People's Budget would bring U.S. troops home from the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan and eliminate the deficit. It is designed in response to public polling; it is a budget that would protect Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid; make higher education more affordable; expand job-training programs; cut taxes on the middle class; subsidize affordable housing; provide financial assistance to prevent foreclosures; raise taxes on millionaires and billionaires; eliminate unnecessary weapons systems; eliminate tax credits for the oil and gas industries; phase out the Bush tax cuts; and eliminate subsidies for new nuclear power plants. The Richmond resolution also assures a Town Hall Meeting to explain the People's Budget to city residents.

## Clinical Advocacy ...

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The Food Matters clinical education and advocacy program leverages the powerful voice of the healthcare sector to educate and activate families, new mothers, and young children around healthy and sustainable foods. The program enables clinicians to instill a new culture and value system within the hospital and medical community such that nutritious, sustainable foods are recognized as integral to a lifelong preventive health agenda.

Since 2010, we have completed three pilot clinical trainings, with three additional trainings coming up. We are distributing

8,000 Food Matters calendars to clinicians all over the country; working with Kaiser and the American Medical Association to organize a national webinar series with the Food Matters curriculum; and completing a Grand Round series at Children's Hospital in Oakland using the curriculum.

The Climate and Health Literacy Consortium and Food Matters programs thus exemplify the exciting work that SF Bay Area PSR is undertaking to educate and motivate our health professionals to become advocates for a healthier environment. For more information or to get involved in these programs, please contact Lucia Sayre, Co-Executive Director of SF Bay Area PSR at 510-559-8777. ■

**Physicians for Social Responsibility San Francisco Bay Area Chapter**

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