Independent Panel Formed to Review Safety of Vinyl Plastic Products

By ACSH Staff — February 12, 1999

The American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) today released the names of the physicians and scientists who will serve on an independent, blue-ribbon panel to be chaired by former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C Everett Koop. The panel will review the scientific research data relevant to the safety of vinyl plastic consumer products and medical devices containing the chemical components known as phthalate esters.

"I'm pleased to be working with the distinguished scientists serving on ACSH's blue-ribbon panel," said Dr. Koop. "In order to give the American public the most accurate and complete answer to the questions being raised about the safety of phthalates, we have assembled leading scientists from a broad range of disciplines."

According to ACSH President Dr. Elizabeth M. Whelan, "The distinguished scientists serving on this panel each one an expert in his or her field will provide an authoritative perspective on the safety of phthalates as used in plastic products."

Phthalate esters are added to vinyl plastic to make it flexible. Flexible plastics are used in a wide variety of consumer products, from children's toys to wall coverings, and in such medical devices as blood bags and intravenous tubing. Recent news stories and public statements by individuals associated with the organization Greenpeace have questioned the safety of phthalates in vinyl plastic consumer products, particularly toys.

Dr. Daland Juberg, a Principal with the International Center for Toxicology and Medicine, will serve as consultant to the blue-ribbon panel on phthalates and health, and will author the subsequent ACSH report on the meetings. The panelists are:

**Chairman: C. Everett Koop, M.D.**
Senior Scholar, Koop Institute, Dartmouth College
Former Surgeon General of the United States

**Robert L. Brent, M.D., Ph.D.**
Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics, Radiology, and Anatomy
Jefferson Medical College/Alfred I. DuPont Institute

**George Lundberg M.D.**
Adjunct Professor, Health Policy, Harvard School of Public Health
Former Editor, *Journal of the American Medical Association*
James C. Lamb IV, Ph.D., D.A.B.T.
Jellinek, Schwartz & Connolly, Inc.

Lois Swirsky Gold, Ph.D.
Director, Carcinogenic Potency Project, University of California at Berkeley
Senior Scientist, Life Sciences Division Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

Kimberly M. Thompson, Sc.D.
Assistant Professor of Risk Analysis and Decision Science, Harvard Center for Risk Analysis/Harvard School of Public Health

Adjunct Professor, Health Studies and Gerontology, University of Waterloo, Canada
GlobalTox International Consultants, Inc.

Paul Lioy, Ph.D.
Director Department of Exposure Measurement and Assessment, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey/Rutgers University

Morton Corn, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus, Environmental Health Sciences, Johns Hopkins University

Theron W. Downes, Ph.D.
Professor, School of Packaging, Michigan State University

Philip Cole, M.D., Dr.P.H.
Professor of Epidemiology, University of Alabama

Vincent T. Covello, Ph.D.
Center for Risk Communication, New York

Elissa Benedek, M.D.
Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, University of Michigan Medical School
Former President, American Psychiatric Association

John Higginson, M.D., F.R.C.P.
Founding Director, International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC-WHO)

Peter Guengerich, Ph.D.
Professor of Biochemistry and Director, Center in Molecular Toxicology, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Shayne C. Gad, Ph.D., D.A.B.T.
Gad Consulting Services

W. H. Konemann, Ph.D.
RIVM (Rijksinstituut voor Volsgezondheid en Milieu, the National Institute of Public Health and the Environment), The Netherlands