

National Medical Association Resolution on Flame Retardant Chemicals

-Approved by the House of Delegates
August 1, 2012

Whereas, Brominated and chlorinated flame retardants such as PBDE (polybrominated diphenyl ethers), TDCP (or TDCPP, Tris dichloro propyl phosphate), and TCEP (Tris chloroethyl phosphate) are added to many consumer goods such as cars, electronics, household products, furnishings, and baby products to reduce the flammability of these products; and,^{1,2}

Whereas, these flame retardants are toxic, and widely found in U.S. households in drinking water sources and household dust, (a major source of exposure for young children), and pass across the placental barrier in pregnant women, and¹⁻⁷

Whereas, these flame retardants have been associated with lower IQ in children, developmental delays, hyperactivity, decreased fertility, and cancer of the liver, kidney, brain and testis; and,⁸⁻¹³

Whereas, these flame retardants have **not** been shown to prevent fire related death or injury as used, or even to reduce the rate of fires, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; and flame retardants have **not** been shown to significantly decrease the speed in which a fire spreads, yet, instead produce toxic fumes that contribute to lung inflammation during smoke inhalation, which accounts for 50% to 80% of fire deaths; and,^{14,22}

Whereas, African American, Latino, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Asian American/Pacific Islander communities as well as low-income white communities are disproportionately impacted by negative health effects from chemical exposure to brominated and chlorinated flame retardants, probably due to greater release of flame retardant chemicals from older furniture cushions; and,¹⁵⁻¹⁷

Whereas, a series of recent articles in the Chicago Tribune exposed the unethical behavior of flame retardant producers and industry front groups such as Citizens for Fire Safety which have been successful in recruiting organizations and legislators that represent people of color to promote these toxic chemicals in states such as California, Connecticut, and New York¹⁸⁻²¹; **Now, Therefore,**

Be It Resolved, that the National Medical Association support the phase out of chlorinated tris and brominated flame retardants at the state and federal levels; and,

Be It Further Resolved that the National Medical Association reconfirm its support of the reform of the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 to require health and safety assessments of all chemicals used in commerce and phase out of the most toxic of these chemicals; and,

Be It Further Resolved, that the National Medical Association continues to educate our members, policymakers and other people of color organizations of the dangers of these chemicals, the availability of safer alternative fire prevention methods, and the unethical behavior of the flame retardant producers.

References

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