



INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

A joint venture of McMaster University and University of Toronto



INAUGURAL WORKSHOP

SETTING PRIORITIES IN ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

BRIEFING NOTES

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

IE&H is committed to ensuring a healthy environment for Canadians. This is reflected in the goals and unique features of IE&H (see the Brochure). A guiding principle is that the approach to environment and human health issues has to be interdisciplinary and intersectoral.

IE&H has already been successful in creating interdisciplinary working groups from our two universities to undertake initial projects (see the Newsletter). A primary purpose of this workshop is to begin a dialogue with representatives from other sectors (government, industry, labour, community groups, the media) as the basis for developing intersectoral collaboration for future environment and human health activities.

As the starting point for dialogue, this workshop is designed to allow a free and full exchange of ideas from our varied perspectives about the identification and prioritization of environment and health issues. We have deliberately avoided limiting the discussion by foreclosing on a predefined set of issues. Part of the mandate of IE&H is to consult and listen to the views of other groups rather than impose its views in advance.

While the approach in the workshop will be open-ended, the intention by the conclusion is to establish a process for on-going collaboration and partnership which in the near future will translate into the formation of multisectoral project groups. In this sense, we should all view the workshop as the beginning of a series of activities.

In the workshop we will:

- o identify salient environment and health issues
- o define criteria to prioritize the issues for future collaborative projects

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Clyde Hertzman, Director of the Division of Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of British Columbia, has been asked to draw upon his extensive national and international experience in environmental epidemiology to set the stage for our workshop discussions by identifying the issues and approaches which from his perspective should have priority in the environment and health area. There will be opportunity for questions and comments in response to his remarks before breaking up into the working groups.

WORKING GROUP SESSIONS

Organization

Participants will be pre-assigned to working groups of about 10 people representing a cross-section of sectors. Each group will address the same issues. There will be a group leader and rapporteur to facilitate discussion and the recording and reporting of information.

Charge

Session I (11.15 - 12.30pm)

To compile a short list of salient environment and health issues which as far as possible represents the different perspectives of the group.

Please come prepared to voice the issues that figure as important from your perspective as a representative of your sector.

Session II (1.30 - 3.00pm)

To define criteria for prioritizing the issues identified in Session 1 and to apply the criteria to produce a preliminary list of priorities and collaborators for future projects.

COMMENTARY AND NEXT STEPS

Andy Gilman, Manager of the Great Lakes Health Effects Program, will review and comment on the working group sessions. Group rapporteurs will have the opportunity to respond. Frances Silverman and Martin Taylor, the Co-directors of IE&H, will conclude the workshop by indicating the intended next steps towards the formation of multisector working groups for collaborative projects.