Article - Health - General

[Previous][Next]

§13–1502.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Children in the State face an array of preventable exposures to environmental hazards in their schools, homes, and communities;

(2) In certain cases children are at greater risk than adults for exposure to and possible illness from environmental hazards because children:

(i) Have a decreased ability to detoxify certain substances;

(ii) Have a greater sensitivity to environmental hazards during the stages of development and growth as a result of their immature body organs and tissues and immature immune systems;

(iii) Have different exposure behavior patterns, such as hand-to-mouth behavior, spending a greater amount of time outdoors near hazards, and spending more time on the floor and on the ground where contaminants can concentrate; and

(iv) Take in a greater amount of contaminants due to their eating proportionately more food, breathing proportionately more air, and drinking proportionately more fluids than adults;

(3) Higher rates of poverty are one of the factors that place children of ethnic and minority communities at disproportionate risk for environmental exposures, due to inadequate housing, poor nutrition, and limited access to health care;

(4) Solutions to complex environmental health problems require the ongoing communication, collaboration, and cooperation of affected communities and many disciplines including science, medicine, public health, economics, planning, law, and policy; and

(5) As recommended by the Advisory Council on Environmental Justice in its report pursuant to Chapter 741 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 1997, as amended, it is necessary to assess the impacts of State policies, programs, and activities on affected communities and, in this instance, children are the affected community.

(b) (1) The General Assembly recognizes its responsibilities:

(i) To enable all children to grow up in a safe and healthy environment; and

(ii) To use its resources to ensure that every child is provided with an environmentally safe and healthy learning environment in which to grow, develop, and mature into a productive and healthy adult.

(2) The General Assembly seeks to meet these responsibilities by creating an Advisory Council to:

(i) Identify environmental hazards that may affect children's health; and

(ii) Recommend solutions to those hazards through interdisciplinary problem solving and coalition building.

[Previous][Next]