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NEW STUDY FINDS HORMONE-DISRUPTING CHEMICAL BPA RUBS OFF ONTO DOLLAR BILLS

Hartford -- Calling it “invisible pollution that can’t be avoided even by the most conscientious consumer,” the **Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut (CSHC)** pointed to a new study released today “On The Money: BPA on Dollar Bills and Receipts” that revealed that the hormone-disrupting chemical bisphenol A (BPA) was found on 95% of dollar bills collected for a study that set out to investigate the extent to which thermal receipt paper containing BPA has permeated the market, and whether the dangerous chemical is being transferred onto money that lies close to the receipts in consumer’s wallets.

The study was completed by the nonprofit groups Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families and the Washington Toxics Coalition - results can be found at the following website: <http://blog.saferchemicals.org/2010/12/on-the-money-bpa-in-dollar-bills-and-receipts.html>.

As a result of the study, the researchers found that half of the thermal paper receipts tested had large quantities of unbound BPA, and 95% of the dollar bills tested positive for lower amounts of the dangerous toxin. BPA used in register receipts is a powdery film on the surface of the paper unlike chemically bound BPA that is used in baby bottles and other products. Data from this report indicate that this highly toxic chemical does, in fact, not stay on the paper, but rather easily transfers to our skin and likely to other items that it rubs against.

“This is a perfect example of how much our state and our nation is in need of comprehensive reform,” said **Mark Mitchell, M.D., M.P.H.**, who provided the dollar bill sample from Connecticut. Founder and President of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice and a member of CSHC, Dr. Mitchell added, “Connecticut arguably has one of the strongest BPA laws in the nation and yet consumers are still not protected. Right now, billions of dollars are being exchanged every day as holiday shoppers walk in and out of the state’s retailers, and depending on where they shop and which thermal receipts are being used – they could be exposing themselves to dangerous toxins already linked to serious health problems.”

Present in 93% of all Americans, scientists studying BPA have hypothesized the major route of human exposure is through food, as BPA is used as a liner in nearly all canned food and beverages. This study indicates that skin absorption from thermal paper receipts with unbound BPA may lead to exposure at levels equivalent to exposure from food sources.

“We’re all impacted by this hidden exposure to a toxic chemical, but we are particularly concerned about the health impacts for cashiers and other workers who regularly handle BPA laden receipts,” said **Pamela Puchalski of ConnectiCOSH**. “It’s time to take action in the workplace and start using the safer alternative to BPA.”

Produced in quantities of about six billion pounds each year worldwide, BPA is one of the most widely used chemicals of all time. During the past decade, an explosion of research has explored the connections between BPA exposure—particularly before birth and in early childhood—and the health problems that are increasingly

afflicting U.S. residents. In particular exposure to BPA before birth has been found in laboratory studies to predispose animals to cancer; alter brain development; and lead to early puberty in female animals. Male animals exposed in the womb produce less testosterone, have larger prostate glands, and make fewer sperm than unexposed animals. Studies have also shown a correlation between BPA and obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular problems.

"The more we find out about BPA the more we learn how hazardous it is. The evidence continues to mount about its dangers to all of us. We need to continue to work to protect people from its deleterious effects." state **Senator-elect Beth Bye (D-West Hartford)**

"If we are serious about breaking the cycle of BPA exposure which most scientists agree is linked to breast and testicular cancer, and also believe contributes to early puberty and obesity, then we need to address the issue in its entirety," said **Anne Hulick, R.N., Environmental Health Coordinator for the CT Nurses Association**. "We've made some great strides in previous years, but the job is certainly not done – not even close. We will continue to work with lawmakers in Hartford to ensure that Connecticut citizens are safe from dangerous chemical exposure."

Until meaningful state and federal toxic policy reform is realized, CSHC recommends that consumers use the following tips for reducing exposure to BPA:

- Refuse a receipt when you can.
- Store receipts separately, such as in a small envelope, in your wallet or purse.
- Wash your hands after handling receipts or money
- Keep receipts away from young children.

More tips on how to avoid BPA contamination are available at: <http://blog.saferchemicals.org/2010/12/bpa-tip-sheet.html>.

Highlights of Findings from the "On the Money" Report:

1. About half of thermal paper receipts are made with large quantities of unbound BPA. Receipts made with thermal paper were collected from 22 retailers in 10 states and Washington, D.C. Laboratory tests found BPA in very large quantities—up to 2.2% of the total weight—in 11 of the 22 receipts. Retailers with BPA-containing receipts included: Safeway, Shaw's, Meijer, Cub Foods, Sunoco, Kroger, Giant Eagle, H-E-B, Randalls, Fred Meyer, and the Rayburn Café in the U.S. House of Representatives. BPA-free receipts were found at Trader Joe's, Hannaford, Home Depot, Albertson's, Ace Hardware, Wal-Mart, Sears, Costco, and the Hart American Grill serving the U.S. Senate.

2. BPA transfers easily from thermal paper receipts to human skin. In tests mimicking typical handling of receipts, BPA transferred from receipts to fingers. Just ten seconds of holding a receipt transferred up to 2.5 micrograms. Researchers transferred much higher amounts, about 15 times as much, by rubbing receipts.

3. Unregulated use of BPA has contaminated our money supply. Since BPA in thermal paper receipts is present in a powdery film, we suspected it could easily travel from those receipts to other objects. BPA was found on 21 of the 22 dollar bills tested. Although the levels of BPA detected on money are much lower than those on receipt paper, the near-ubiquitous presence of BPA on dollar bills indicates that BPA is escaping from products to contaminate other materials in unexpected ways.

The Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut is made up of over 50 organizations representing healthy professionals, workers, nurses, businesses, environmentalists, occupational safety advocates, people of faith, and individuals whose health has been impacted by toxic chemicals.

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