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**HARTFORD PARENTS DELIVER OVER 135,000 PETITIONS TO WALGREENS – CALL ON
RETAILER TO PHASE OUT TOXIC CHEMICALS IN PRODUCTS**

Actions take place as retailer is in process of developing chemicals policy

Hartford, Connecticut – Today Connecticut health and environmental advocates delivered over 135,000 petitions to Walgreens signed by their customers from across the country, including over 1800 from Connecticut, calling on the retailer to adopt a comprehensive policy to phase out toxic chemicals in products like cosmetics, children’s and cleaning products. Advocates have been calling on the retailer to tackle toxic chemicals in their products for nearly two years now, as part of the national [Mind the Store campaign](#).

“Toxic chemicals commonly found on retail store shelves have been linked to serious health problems that are on the rise, including cancer, learning and developmental disabilities and reproductive harm,” said Anne Hulick, Coordinator of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy CT. “We’ve been calling on Walgreens to adopt a robust chemicals policy for nearly two years now. We’re pleased they are finally beginning to develop a policy, and we want to make sure their it addresses the unique vulnerabilities facing infants, young children, and pregnant women. We are hopeful Walgreens will do what’s right for our children and families.”

The Mind the Store campaign first wrote to Walgreens in April 2013, and after a year of no response in April 2014 a broad coalition of health and environmental organizations held a national day of action at Walgreens stores in over 20 states, followed by a week of action in July. In December, Walgreens [announced](#) for the first time that they “*recently initiated organizational changes that identify this as a key component of our company’s broader corporate social responsibility program. We are in the process of developing a Chemical Sustainability Program, which we anticipate announcing in the spring of 2015. We are leveraging the expertise that our colleagues at U.K. retailer Boots can provide as pioneers in retailing, manufacturing and chemical sustainability.*” Connecticut health and environmental advocates are now calling on them to develop a chemicals policy that is comprehensive and protects their customers, especially pregnant women and children from toxic chemicals in products.

“As the nation’s largest pharmacy chain, Walgreens is in the business of health and wellness,” said Mary Jane Williams PhD, RN., CT Nurse’s Association. “They should ensure the products they sell don’t contain chemicals that may be harmful to children and pregnant women. Walgreens has an opportunity to join other big retailers in transitioning to safer chemicals and products that are healthier for our families.”

“There are other big retailers like Target and Walmart that have adopted comprehensive chemical management programs,” said Olivia Carnegie, a Community Organizer for Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice. “Both Target and Walmart have identified over 1,000 priority chemicals of concern that they’re asking suppliers to address. If they can do it, Walgreens can too.”

“In the months to come, we will be paying close attention to the chemicals policy Walgreens develops and announces,” said Mike Schade, Mind the Store Campaign Director with Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families. “We are hopeful Walgreens will develop a policy that will promote greater disclosure of, avoidance and safer substitution of hazardous chemicals in the products they sell.”

“The company Walgreens recently merged with, Alliance Boots, has developed a precautionary approach to chemicals in their supply chain,” said Susan Eastwood from Clean Water Action. “We’re happy that Walgreens is taking a close look at what Boots has done to reduce dangerous chemicals in their products. If certain chemicals have been banned in their products in Europe, they should be here as well. It’s only common sense.”

Testing in 2014 conducted by HealthyStuff.org identified chemicals of concern in a variety of products sold by Walgreens including holiday decorations, Halloween gear, plastics, household cleaners, school supplies, pet toys and other categories. Many were found to have one or more toxic chemicals. These chemicals include PVC, phthalates, organotins and heavy metals that have been linked to asthma, birth defects, learning disabilities, reproductive problems, liver toxicity, and cancer.

Since the Mind the Store campaign was launched, several major national retailers including Walmart and Target have announced significant new initiatives to disclose and limit the use of chemicals that are known hazards and appear on the Mind the Store’s “Hazardous 100+” list.

The Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut is part of the national Mind the Store Campaign, coordinated by Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, which is challenging the top ten US retailers to get tough on toxic chemicals.

The Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut is comprised of over fifty-five member organizations of health professionals, environmental justice advocates, labor groups, public health professionals, environmental experts, faith based groups, scientists and many individuals across Connecticut that are concerned about the growing body of research linking exposure to toxic chemicals with the rise in serious diseases.

The Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice brings awareness to environmental hazards that affect human health and the environment and prepares low to moderate income residents of CT’s urban areas to participate in policymaking decisions that affect where they live, work, and play.

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For more information on the Mind the Store campaign and Walgreens, visit <http://saferchemicals.org/retailers/walgreens/>

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