



377 Research Parkway, Suite 2-D
Meriden, CT 06450-7160
203-238-1207

**TESTIMONY RE: SB 16 AN ACT REQUIRING LABELING OF FOOD AND
DRINK PRODUCTS THAT ARE PACKAGED IN MATERIALS THAT
CONTAIN BISPHENOL A**

Committee on Environment
February 25, 2013

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile and esteemed members of the Committee on Environment

I am Mary Jane Williams, RN, PhD, chair, Government Relations Committee, Connecticut Nurses' Association, Member Steering Committee Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments and Professor Emeritus Central Connecticut State University. Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in Connecticut, for SB 16, An Act Requiring the Labeling of Food and Drink Products that are packaged in Materials that contain Bisphenol A. Our Association strongly supports this bill, which will provide the protection from the harmful effects of Bisphenol A.

Background: Bisphenol A (BPA) was first produced in 1891 and was rediscovered in the 1930s when it was investigated for its estrogenic properties. At about that time another compound was found to have even greater estrogenic properties, diethylstilbestrol (DES), and BPA was not used again until it was discovered it could be added to plastic to create polycarbonate plastic. BPA is now found in a myriad of products – polycarbonate plastics (like those found in some water bottles), epoxy resin linings in cans, plastic food containers, dental fillings and plastic coatings for kids' teeth. There are now over 200 studies that have implicated BPA with a variety of health effect,

they include but are not limited to, Increased risk of breast & prostate cancer, Menstrual irregularities, Genital abnormalities in male babies, Infertility in men & women, Early puberty in girls and Metabolic disorders such as diabetes & obesity

One way we are exposed to BPA is through eating canned foods. Read the report by Environmental Working Group on BPA in canned foods. In a study released in March 2011, the Breast Cancer Fund found that when families avoided canned foods or those packaged in plastic, families can reduce their BPA levels by up to 60% in just a few days (Huffling, 2011, ANHE).

Bisphenol A is now deeply imbedded in the products of modern consumer society, not just as the building block for polycarbonate plastic (from which it then leaches as the plastic ages) but also in the manufacture of epoxy resins and other plastics. Its uses don't end with the making of plastic (Our Stolen Future)

Bisphenol A has been used as an inert ingredient in pesticides (although in the US this has apparently been halted), as a fungicide, antioxidant, flame retardant, rubber chemical, and polyvinyl chloride stabilizer. These uses create a myriad of exposures for people (Our Stolen Future).

Bisphenol A-based polycarbonate is used as a plastic coating for children's teeth to prevent cavities, as a coating in metal cans to prevent the metal from contact with food contents, as the plastic in food containers, refrigerator shelving, baby bottles, water bottles, returnable containers for juice, milk and water, micro-wave ovenware and eating utensils (Our Stolen Future).

Bisphenol A contamination is also widespread in the environment. For example, BPA can be measured in rivers and estuaries at concentrations that range from under 5 to over 1900 nanograms/liter. Sediment loading can also be significant, with levels ranging from under 5 to over 100 µg/kg (ppb) BPA is quite persistent as under normal conditions in the environment it does not readily degrade (Our Stolen Futures).

Most recently the American Medical Association at its House of Delegates voted to support BPA labeling. This is a comment from their publication.

Bisphenol A: Loads of scientific studies have shown that it is an endocrine disruptor that interferes with reproductive development in infants, and more evidence shows it can have other health effects, such as triggering inflammation and heart disease. The AMA decided to accept the science and officially recognize the substance as an endocrine disruptor (prior to this meeting, the group recognized endocrine disruptors as public health threats, but it hadn't recognized BPA specifically). The delegates also decided to support bans on the sale of baby bottles and sippy cups that contain BPA and are going to start urging companies to develop alternatives to BPA-free linings for cans, which some companies and retailers are already doing. The association now supports the labeling of products that contain BPA, which will protect not only infants but also pregnant women. Most of the evidence on BPA suggests that babies are most harmed when exposure occurs in the Womb (Main).

What this all means is that most of your life, you are within arm's length or closer to Bisphenol A. We believe that knowledge gives us a reason to change our behavior and make healthier choices, in this specific case we urge your strong support of this proposed labeling legislation. The public has the right to know what they are consuming so they can make better choices. These better choices are also healthy choices and have a direct effect on the health and wellness of the citizens of Connecticut the public we serve. Thank You for your consideration of this issue .

References:

ENVIRORN, ANHE website

Colbon, Dumanowski & Meyers, Our Stolen Future

Environmental Health Perspectives

www.breastcancerfund.org

Emily Main, Rondale