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# Physicians for Social Responsibility

San Francisco-Bay Area Chapter

## Environmental Work

### CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES DEHP USE IN NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNITS RESOLUTION

(Adopted March, 12, 2001)

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Whereas di-ethylhexyl phthalate (DEHP) is a plasticizer used in PVC medical devices such as IV bags, blood bags, and medical tubing; and Whereas numerous studies have found that DEHP leaches from PVC medical devices into blood, blood products, and medical solutions; [1,2,3,4] and

Whereas newborn babies undergoing medical treatment in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) are exposed to levels of DEHP as high as 10 mg/kg/day through Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN), 4 mg/kg/day through blood transfusions, and 42-140 mg/kg after 3-10 days of Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) support; [2,5,6,3] and

Whereas in-vitro, animal, and human neonate studies have shown DEHP to have an adverse effect on the tissues of the male reproductive tract, lungs, kidney, and liver when administered at levels similar to those which neonates are exposed to during medical treatment in NICUs; [7,8,9,10,12,14] and

Whereas an expert panel convened by the National Toxicology Program Center for the Evaluation of Risks to Human Reproduction expressed "serious concern for the possibility of adverse effects on the developing reproductive tract of male infants exposed to [the] very high levels of DEHP that might be associated with intensive medical procedures such as those used in critically ill infants"; [11] and

Whereas some of the documented adverse effects

include histological damage to the testes, testicular and epididymal atrophy and agenesis, respiratory distress, pathological changes to lung tissue resembling hyaline membrane disease, reduction in creatinine clearance of kidney, and hepatocellular adenoma of the liver; [7,12,13,8,14,15] and

viable  
solution



Whereas alternative, non-PVC products and PVC products that use alternative plasticizers (like citrates) are commercially available for most medical devices used in Neonatal Intensive Care Units; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That CMA strongly urges all hospitals to phase out their use of PVC products containing DEHP in Neonatal Intensive Care Units and encourages the use of commercially available alternatives; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That CMA calls upon health professionals, especially those involved in the care of critically ill infants, to encourage the institutions with which they are associated to adopt purchasing policies that will lead to the increasing use of non-DEHP medical devices in Neonatal Intensive Care Units; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the CMA urge further study of the safety of the use of PVC products containing DEHP in neonatal intensive care units; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the CMA encourages medical device manufacturers to continue developing PVC-free and DEHP-free medical devices while phasing out production of those that contain PVC and/or DEHP due to problems associated with their disposal; and be it further RESOLVED, that this matter be referred to the AMA for national action.

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**ALSO SEE:**

- Radiation, Risk, and the Community
- California Medical Association 2000 Mercury Resolution

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*The Active Conscience of American Medicine*

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