CHESAPEAKE PSR
PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Working for a Healthy and Just Maryland

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

There is nothing else like it in Maryland: An organization of medical and health professionals, and committed individuals working to address some of the most pressing issues of our time.
A Message From Our President:

In this annual report, we outline some of our major accomplishments in 2015, and some of the work that lies ahead. In Maryland, our work focuses on bringing a strong medical and health perspective to efforts to address climate change, reduce human exposure to toxic chemicals and pollutants, and promote issues of social justice.

While our work is important, and our perspective is unique, one year provides only a brief snapshot of the work that needs to be done. To make progress, organizations like Chesapeake PSR and individuals like you must continually press, year after year, for changes in the way we organize our society, value our natural resources, and treat our fellow human beings.

That is why we are fortunate that Chesapeake PSR has recently seen remarkable growth in its capacity to address some of the most pressing issues facing this state. This growth has come about because of the strong support of the Town Creek Foundation, the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation, and because of the support of a growing number of individuals and organizations who understand and value the role that medical and health professionals can play in bringing positive change to our society.

As our chapter grows, we have more minds and hands to accomplish more. For example, in 2015, we formed a Climate Health Action Team, lead by Sara Via, PhD, and Al Bartlett, MD. This team guides and manages our work on issues related to climate change and air pollution from coal-fired power plants. We also now have the people and resources to work closely with groups such as the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, that partnered with us in offering a Continuing Medical Education course on pesticides and children, and the Maryland State Medical Society, which co-sponsored with us a workshop on air emissions inventories and public health in the Baltimore area.

One of the great rewards of this job is working with people who are smart, strategic, dedicated, and passionate about making the changes that will improve the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and everyone who calls this planet “home.”

What we have accomplished so far could not have been possible without the support of our many volunteers, activists and donors. Thank you for all your work. Thank you for all you do. We are excited about what we have accomplished and what the future holds. Let’s keep the momentum moving forward, so we can bring more hard-edged, science-based advocacy for change in Maryland.

Warmest regards,

Cindy Parker, MD, MPH
President
Our Methods

To make our vision a reality in Maryland, Chesapeake PSR works alongside a broad range of medical societies and health, environmental and labor organizations and individuals that advocate to improve the laws, regulations and policies that affect the world around us. We know how to develop partnerships to drive lasting progress.

But we also play tough. We litigate and we protest. Some of our members even have been arrested for nonviolent civil disobedience. We know that improving and safeguarding human health often requires challenging traditional assumptions and power structures.

Building Our Communications Network

- Our email lists have grown to more than 5,000 people. Last year alone, more than 4,500 people opted in to receive emails from us.
- Our new website was launched in June 2015, and has had more than 3,014 visitors and 8,541 page views. By the end of 2015, visitors were staying on our website on average almost four minutes each.
- Our Facebook page reaches around 440 persons per week, with 37-76 people liking, commenting or sharing per week. We are also active on Twitter and Google+.
- Our health and environmental awareness Meetup has grown from 27 members to 207 members in a year.
- Our members wrote nine opinion pieces that were published in five newspapers in Maryland and the District of Columbia.
Some of Our **Accomplishments** in 2015

**Climate Change and Energy**

* Working with our members to introduce a successful resolution before the General Assembly of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) recognizing the seriousness of climate change and the need for increasing renewable energy use in Maryland.

* Building an effective Climate Health Action Team to advocate for strong state implementation of carbon reduction initiatives and policies.

* Supporting legislation that would:
  - Increase the amount of clean, renewable energy used in Maryland.
  - Support the development of community solar programs.
  - Change the way we consider issuing air permits for new facilities in areas that are already overburdened by air pollution.

* Requiring coal-fired power plants to install efficient technologies to remove NOx emissions, a dangerous pollutant that helps to cause ozone pollution.

* Deploying trained medical and health professionals to speak at ten events to hundreds of people about the health effects of climate change and on specific issues.

**Toxics and Pesticides**

* Supporting legislation that would place restrictions and labeling requirements on entities selling seeds, material, and plants that have been treated with a neonicotinoid pesticide.

* Supporting a law in Montgomery County that would limit the use of certain lawn pesticides that cause or are likely to cause cancer or are known endocrine disrupters.

* Conducting a Continuing Medical Education course with the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics on pesticides poisoning and children.

**Social Justice**

* Supporting legislation that would require employers with more than 10 employees to provide paid medical leave for workers.

* Supporting efforts to improve the transparency of government agencies and their responsiveness to community concerns.

**Fracking**

* Starting Concerned Health Professionals of Maryland (CHPMD) ([www.chpmd.org](http://www.chpmd.org)). CHPMD is an online resource for the public, media, policymakers and other health professionals, sharing the latest research on the health and environmental impacts of fracking and fracking-related activities.

* Supporting legislation that would require health studies and the disclosure of chemical information if fracking is allowed in Maryland.

* Authoring and promoting a No Secrets petition (9,434 signatures) that asks the gas industry to release the numbers, locations and reasons for all nondisclosure agreements signed by people who settled claims of health, environmental and property damage from hydraulic fracturing.

* Expanding our No Secrets campaign by convening a committee of doctors, medical and health professionals and policy experts to develop a detailed report on ways the industry hinders scientific inquiry and distributes misinformation about the health effects of fracking.

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*How did the legislation we support fare? To find out, visit [www.chesapeakepsr.org/position-papers](http://www.chesapeakepsr.org/position-papers)*

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CHESAPEAKE PSR  ·  ANNUAL REPORT 2015  ·  www.chesapeakepsr.org
Advocacy in Action

**Incineration.** In 2015, Chesapeake PSR was fortunate to participate in a well-organized student movement that resulted in the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) pulling the permit on the gigantic proposed Energy Answers incinerator in Curtis Bay, Baltimore. Chesapeake PSR explained to the public the health consequences of the incinerator emissions. It did so through op-eds in the *Baltimore Sun*, letters to the editor, presentations at community meetings, and by writing letters to potential energy customers asking them not to renew their contracts with the incinerator. One Chesapeake PSR board member, Gwen DuBois, MD, MPH (pictured above center), joined six activists in civil disobedience in order to get MDE to pull the company’s expired air permit. In early 2016, MDE did that, almost certainly putting an end to the unwelcomed Energy Answers incinerator plans.

**Fracking.** In 2015, Chesapeake PSR helped develop and support legislation that would establish a long-term moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in Maryland. Scientific literature now includes more than 500 peer-reviewed studies on the public health, climate, and environmental dimensions of this type of unconventional gas development. The vast majority of studies looking specifically at effects on water and air quality, or human health, suggest that unconventional gas development enabled by high-volume hydraulic fracturing poses serious threats to human health and safety. Instead of supporting a long-term moratorium, Maryland passed a law establishing a two-and-a-half-year moratorium, but the law also requires the state to publish fracking regulations by October 2016, and to allow fracking permits to be issued after October 2017. With your support, in the coming year, Chesapeake PSR will be working hard to stop fracking from happening in Maryland.

**Coal:** In 2015, Chesapeake PSR, the Sierra Club, and Earthjustice sued Governor Larry Hogan for blocking a rule that would have reduced NOx pollution significantly from coal-fired power plants. We also put the state on notice that we would sue for their failure to issue timely permits for three coal-fired power plants. These issues were not resolved in 2015.
**Financials Chesapeake PSR 2015**

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<th>Contributions, Gifts and Grants</th>
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<td>Blaustein Foundation</td>
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**Net Assets at End of Year** $81,327.00

*Does not include income managed by National PSR*

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A special thanks to the Town Creek Foundation and the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation, who generously support the work of Chesapeake PSR.

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**Donate to Chesapeake PSR**

Your support is critical to our success as an important health voice in Maryland.

Please mail your check to:
Chesapeake PSR
325 E. 25th Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

Visit our online donation page at:
https://goo.gl/HEKdu7

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**Volunteer with Chesapeake PSR**

Work with our dedicated, interested and fun volunteers to make a difference in Maryland.

For more information, contact Executive Director Tim Whitehouse at twhitehouse@psr.org or 240-246-4492.
Our History

Chesapeake PSR grew out of the Baltimore chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility, which was founded in 1982 by a group of physicians at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland. Today we are a growing and vibrant independent chapter, working to implement the ideals of PSR in Maryland.

Many of our younger members and activists may not be aware that PSR was founded in Boston in 1961 by a group of physicians concerned about the real human consequences of a nuclear war. Its mission focused on educating the public about the irrevocable consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and urging people to take political action in opposition to nuclear weapons use and testing.

PSR’s work to educate the public about the dangers of nuclear war grew into an international movement with the founding of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) in 1980. In 1985, PSR shared the Nobel Peace Prize with IPPNW for “spreading authoritative information and by creating an awareness of the catastrophic consequences of atomic warfare.”

Today PSR continues to work to oppose the spread of nuclear weapons and nuclear power. It has also added an environmental health program.

Richard Humphrey, MD, a founding member of Baltimore PSR and a current board member of Chesapeake PSR, has worked over the years to reduce human exposure to pesticides and toxic substances, to reduce gun violence, and to end the militarization of our society.

“Chesapeake PSR brings a reputation for knowledge, influence and passion to Annapolis. It has been a pleasure representing Chesapeake PSR as their lobbyist in Annapolis these past two years. There is no other group like it in Maryland.”
- Darrell Carrington