How We Work

To make our vision a reality in Maryland, Chesapeake PSR works alongside a broad range of medical societies; health, environmental and labor organizations; and advocates 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.
A Message From Our President

In this annual report, we outline some of our major accomplishments in 2016 and some of the challenges that lie ahead for us.

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, promote issues of social justice and advocate for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In 2016, Chesapeake PSR was an important part of several successful campaigns that remind us of the power of grassroots activism. For example, our work as part of a well-organized student movement resulted in the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) pulling the permit on the Energy Answers Incinerator at Curtis Bay. We also were leaders in the statewide Don't Frack Maryland campaign that successfully fought for the fracking ban that passed in the 2017 Maryland General Assembly session.

In these campaigns, our role was to amplify the health science voice and to energize our base of health professionals and health advocates to take action. We listened to the needs of community groups, created health and energy briefs, spoke at events organized by our coalition partners, walked the halls of our state legislature and agencies, delivered letters, participated in press conferences, testified at hearings and helped bring people out to events and protests. This is the model of organizing that we must use in the future.

These are hard times: The present administration and leadership in Congress do not appear to value scientific evidence in policy planning. We must join together through protest and advocacy to resist efforts by big corporations and wealthy individuals to use government to serve only their interests. We also must redouble our statewide efforts. Maryland's government, although generally well-intentioned, is underfunded and subject to intense political pressures.

That is why, moving forward, we need to speak together, loud and clear, in one collective voice, about the need for change. With clear goals, a clear organizing strategy and the support of community-based organizations, we can achieve a healthier, safer Maryland.

I would like to thank the Town Creek Foundation and the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation for their support over the years. What we have accomplished so far could not have been possible without their support. I would also like to thank our volunteers, activists and donors. You are the lifeblood of Chesapeake PSR. Thank you for all your work.

Warmest regards,

Gwen DuBois, MD, MPH, President

“With clear goals, a clear organizing strategy and the support of community-based organizations, we can achieve a healthier, safer Maryland.”
Banning Fracking in Maryland

We did it! In 2017, Maryland became the first state with gas reserves to ban hydraulic fracturing. This victory represented years of work. Across the state, people stood up and said no to fracking, and our elected leaders listened. Chesapeake PSR, led by Gina Angiola, MD, was a leader in the Don't Frack Maryland coalition and helped direct the campaigns that led first to a moratorium and then the ban.

Chesapeake PSR volunteers spent countless hours supporting the work of this coalition and contacting your elected representatives to voice concerns about fracking. We took a lead role in explaining and publicizing scientific studies on the health effects of fracking, and countered industry arguments that fracking was safe and that burning methane produced clean energy. We also successfully built the case against the argument that regulations could protect the health and well-being of Maryland residents.

During this campaign, over 10,000 people signed a petition organized by Chesapeake PSR to bring transparency to the oil and gas industry, and hundreds of health professionals signed a petition in support of a fracking ban.

But our work is not done. Now we must work to reduce Maryland's dependence on fracked gas from other states, oppose the development of gas infrastructure – such as pipelines, compressor stations and storage facilities in the state – and work to stop gas exports from Cove Point in Maryland.

“Our world is entering a dangerous time. We are witnessing growing international instability, sharp increases in military and nuclear spending, deep cuts in environmental and health protections and scientific and medical research, and a transfer in wealth from the poor and middle class to the wealthy. Let’s make sure we speak together to the leaders of this country to say that this is not acceptable.”

– Tim Whitehouse, Executive Director
Ending Lead (Pb) Poisoning in Children

Chesapeake PSR held two workshops on lead in children to engage a wide range of medical and health professionals in state efforts to end lead poisoning in children, and to strengthen the relationship between health, housing and community justice organizations working on this issue. The workshops, *Understanding Lead Poisoning in Baltimore and Maryland*, and *Lead and Children: Improving Public Policy and Reducing Children's Exposure*, helped groups working on ending lead poisoning in the state to develop a common agenda.

In Baltimore, lead poisoning affects thousands of children. As part of our policy work, we wondered how the blood lead levels in children in specific Baltimore neighborhoods compared to the levels of children in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties. From information provided to us by MDE, we developed a detailed map [see above] of blood lead levels in children by census tracts and found shocking disparities between blood lead levels in Baltimore City and the two counties.

In 2017, we will step up our efforts to end lead poisoning in Maryland. Our policy push will focus on passing legislation to allow for improved management and notification for elevated blood lead levels (EBL) greater than or equal to 5 micrograms per deciliter, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend, not 10 micrograms per deciliter, as is the case in Maryland law.

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**Lead (Pb) Exposure is a Public Health Crisis in Baltimore**

Comparing blood lead levels (BLL) in Children 0–72 Months in Baltimore City, Prince George’s County and Montgomery County

**What does 5μg/dL mean?**

5 micrograms per deciliter (5μg/dL) is used by the Centers for Disease Control to identify children with blood lead levels that are much higher than most children’s levels.

The effects of blood lead levels higher than 5μg/dL include:

- Decreased academic achievement
- Lower IQ scores
- Attention-related problems
- Anti-social behaviors

5 μg/dL

- Decreased academic achievement
- Lower IQ scores
- Attention-related problems
- Anti-social behaviors

- No data available

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Increasing Clean Energy

2016 was the hottest year on record, yet sound climate policy is grinding to a halt at the federal level. Chesapeake PSR’s state efforts on climate and energy matter more than ever.

Throughout 2016, Chesapeake PSR advocated forcefully for clean, renewable energy in Maryland:

- Our members testified, spoke and submitted a health professional letter in support of strengthening the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). RGGI and EmPOWER, Maryland’s energy efficiency program, are two of Maryland’s most effective programs for reducing air pollution and addressing climate change.

- We submitted a health professional letter asking the legislature to overturn Governor Larry Hogan’s veto of the Clean Energy Jobs Act. The act – which passed at the beginning of the 2017 session – increases the state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to 25 percent by 2020, up from the previous target of 20 percent by 2022. It also raises the solar energy carve-out from two percent by 2022 to 2.5 percent by 2020.

- We supported the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA), signed into law in 2016, that requires the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent from 2006 levels by 2020 and 40 percent by 2030.

- We supported the creation of a green bank to spur clean energy investment.

- We testified in support of offshore wind before the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC), which approved two major offshore wind projects in 2017.

Stopping Dirty Incineration

Incinerating garbage is a dirty, costly and inefficient way to produce energy and dispose of waste. That is why Chesapeake PSR joined a diverse coalition of students, community leaders, unions and organizations to stop the Energy Answers trash incinerator from being built in Curtis Bay near several schools. We spoke and testified on the health consequences of incinerator emissions, spoke on the radio, published op-eds and wrote letters to potential energy customers asking them not to renew their contracts with the incinerator. It all paid off. After years of protests by coalition members, MDE cancelled the permit for the incinerator in 2016.

Our 2016 annual dinner speaker was zero-waste expert Paul Connett, PhD, who spoke about how to move the U.S. toward a zero-waste future. We are now focusing our efforts on other incinerators in Maryland and on supporting efforts to apply zero-waste practices throughout the state.
Standing Up for the Rule of Law

In 2016, Chesapeake PSR and other environmental groups joined a lawsuit filed by the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for its failure to respond to our petition objecting to the air pollution permit issued by MDE for the Morgantown coal-fired power plant.

We continue to focus on reducing the state’s dependence on coal-fired power plants that emit pollutants into the air and water and contribute to climate disruption. A common misconception is that Maryland is moving rapidly away from its reliance on coal-fired power plants to generate electricity. This is not true. The latest data from MDE shows that about 40 percent of the energy generated in-state comes from coal. While we work to reduce dirty energy, we are not afraid to use the courts to ensure that regulators and companies are abiding by state and federal laws.

Advocating for Nuclear Common Sense

Going back to our roots, Chesapeake PSR will refocus in 2017 on the dangers of nuclear weapons proliferation, first-strike capabilities and the U.S. proposal to spend $1 trillion to modernize our nuclear arsenal. Along with national Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and international groups including Nobel laureates, we support international efforts to ban nuclear weapons and to remove nuclear weapons from hair-trigger alert to avoid a catastrophe of unthinkable proportions.

Building Our Communications Effort

Every year, Chesapeake PSR’s communications reach continues to grow. In 2016, our website had nearly 5,000 visits and 13,000 page views. On average, visitors stayed on our website over four minutes. Our leaders spoke on two television shows and three radio shows and appeared nine times in six newspapers, including the Baltimore Sun. They wrote and were quoted in articles, letters to the editor and op-eds. Our Facebook page reached on average about 600 people a month, with 250 comments, shares and likes. Our monthly email newsletter reached over 1,000 people per month. Our health and energy briefs reached over 5,000 people.
Reducing Toxics and Improving Health

In addition to our major campaigns, Chesapeake PSR takes on other critical health-related issues in our state. We testified in support of the Pollinator Protection Act, which passed the Maryland General Assembly in 2016, limiting the use of toxic bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides.

We also supported legislation to limit the overuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture to fight growing antibiotic resistance in humans. Chesapeake PSR also spoke out on social justice issues, such as advocating for paid sick leave for workers and transparency on solitary confinement in prisons.
Our History

Chesapeake PSR grew out of the Baltimore chapter of PSR, 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. PSR was founded in Boston in 1961 by a group of physicians concerned about the real human consequences of a nuclear war and the irrevocable consequences of using and testing nuclear weapons. PSR’s work became 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.

Where We Are Headed

As we face more extreme policies at the federal level, state and local activism on health, environment and social justice is now more important than ever. In 2017, Chesapeake PSR will continue to be a strong voice advocating for the health and safety of Maryland residents.

Please help us make our vision a reality.

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 East 25th Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

Visit our online donation page at www.chesapeakepsr.org/donate.

Volunteer with Chesapeake PSR

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

For more information, contact Tim Whitehouse, executive director, at twhitehouse@psr.org or (240) 246-4492.