STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF MEN
http://www.nh.gov/csm
Official Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2008 1:00-3:30 PM
Legislative Office Building Room 301, Concord, NH

These minutes were taken by Scott Garman.

Members Present: Joe Mastromarino, Larry Colby, Scott Garman, Mike Geanoulis.

Members Absent: Marshall Hickok, David Lauren, Scott Meyer.

The meeting opened with Commissioner introductions.

Secretary's Report:

Larry Colby took last month's meeting minutes and distributed copies of the May 2008 minutes draft. Larry suggested a minor wording change, and Mike Geanoulis pointed out a date typo. Mike also requested that both letters to DHHS be included in the minutes. Larry moved to accept the minutes as corrected. Scott Garman seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Web Site Update:

Scott Garman noted that the web site is in critical need of being updated and will submit a new update as soon as possible. This update will include:

- February and May meeting minutes
- Information about Dadtime meetings (Resources)
- A link to the NFI Report on the Costs of Father Absence. (Resources)

Also, Scott will request that Larry Colby's email address be added to the *csm@nh.gov* email alias.

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer's report is deferred due to the absence of Treasurer David Lauren. Larry Colby asked Joe to contact Barry Bodell and ask him if it would be possible to receive a short email update of our Treasury's status on a monthly basis. Joe agreed to make this request.

Outreach Efforts to Fathers:

Larry Colby reported that he was contacted by a father who went through a difficult separation and had a hard time staying in contact with his children. This man wanted to help other fathers remain involved with their children and asked Larry about a career change into doing fathering support work. Larry is in the process of finding resources for people who would like to find paid work in this field and will report back to the Commission on his findings.

Joe Mastromarino noted that he received an Request for Proposal (RFP) from the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for another supervised parental visitation center. After some discussion, Mike Geanoulis noted that the Commission is unable to offer any assistance on this RFP due to the fact that the Commission has insufficient resources to embark on such a project. Mike expressed disappointment about this because the program would clearly benefit New Hampshire fathers and their relationship with their children.

The One Hundred Billion Dollar Man: The Costs of Father Absence

Mike Geanoulis noted that the National Fatherhood Initiative just published a groundbreaking report estimating the costs to the state from fatherless families. This report can be downloaded as a free PDF from the following address:

http://www.fatherhood.org/research.asp

The Commission feels that distribution of this report is urgently needed to raise awareness about the social problem of fatherless families and the fiscal burden it incurs.

Mike Geanoulis requested that Joe Mastromarino forward a copy of this report to DHHS and request that they determine NH budget numbers that would correlate to the national data summarized on page 10 of this report.

Kathleen Parker Article:

Mike Geanoulis distributed copies of a recent editorial by Kathleen Parker, a syndicated columnist (Obama's Incomplete Plea on Fatherhood).

Ms. Parker wrote the editorial on presidential candidate Sen. Barak Obama's Father's Day speech. During this speech, Sen. Obama chastised fathers for too often being absent from their families. Ms. Parker's critique of this speech noted that there are many other factors contributing to fatherless families, including discrimination against men in family courts and social stereotypes that cause men to be "guilty until proven innocent" when accusations of domestic violence are made.

Clark University Study on Partner Aggression:

Mike Geanoulis submitted the following announcement to be included in these minutes:

Researchers at Clark University and Bridgewater State College are conducting a study on men who experience aggression from their girlfriends, wives, or female partners. If you are a man between the ages of 18-59 and have experienced aggression from your partner within the past 12 months, you may be eligible to participate in this study. We invite you to follow this link to the study webpage where you can complete an Internet survey about your experiences.

http://www.clarku.edu/faculty/dhines

Other Agenda Items Brought Forward at Start of Meeting:

Larry Colby moved to end Commission meetings at 3:30 PM instead of 4:00 PM, allowing for exceptions to be made for meetings which have an unusually high number of agenda items. Mike Geanoulis seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Joe Mastromarino summarized some research related to a class of chemicals known as Phthalates. Phthalates are commonly used in plastic products to increase their flexibility, and are now being studied for adverse health effects, particularly on males. See Appendix A for a summary of relevant research abstracts.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Appendix A: Phthalates Research Abstracts

One of the best overviews of this issue was published by Richard W. Stahlhut et al in Environ Health Perspect. 2007;115(6):876-882 Concentrations of Urinary Phthalate Metabolites Are Associated with Increased Waist Circumference and Insulin Resistance in Adult U.S. Males:

Obesity, insulin resistance, and type 2 diabetes are interrelated metabolic disorders whose prevalence has increased substantially in the past two decades. Corresponding increases in premature morbidity and mortality are expected (Adams et al. 2006; Fujimoto 2000; Haffner et al. 1998; Poirier et al. 2006; Zimmet et al. 2001). Insulin resistance occurs when increasing amounts of insulin are required to correctly regulate transport of plasma glucose into peripheral tissues. Although the precise mechanism is unclear, insulin resistance is commonly accompanied by central (visceral) obesity, which, by elevating levels of free fatty acids in serum, may provoke insulin resistance and disrupt lipid metabolism. Initially, the beta cells of the pancreas can fully compensate for mild insulin resistance by increasing insulin production. As the disease progresses, beta cells decompensate, resulting in elevated serum glucose levels and the subsequent development of type 2 diabetes.

Testosterone affects body fat distribution and insulin sensitivity in men. Experimental studies in males have shown that testosterone administration reduces lipid uptake by intra-abdominal fat (Mrin et al. 1996) and also reduces visceral fat and improves insulin sensitivity (Mrin 1995; Mrin et al. 1992, 1993). A 2005 meta-analysis found that testosterone administration reduces total fat mass (Isidori et al. 2005). Men undergoing androgen deprivation therapy for prostate cancer have increased serum glucose, total fat, and prevalence of metabolic syndrome (Braga-Basaria et al. 2006; Sharifi et al. 2005). Epidemiologic studies often support these findings (Ding et al. 2006; Selvin et al. 2007), but sometimes they do not (Oh et al. 2002).

Humans are commonly exposed to man-made chemicals that have the potential to reduce androgen (e.g., testosterone) production or function. One such class of chemicals is phthalates, which are used in a variety of products, including cosmetics, shampoos, soaps, lubricants, pesticides, and paints; it is also used as a softener of polyvinyl chloride. More than 75% of the U.S. population has measurable levels of several phthalate metabolites in the urine (Silva et al. 2004). Unlike polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and dioxins, phthalates are quickly metabolized and excreted (Hauser and Calafat 2005). The half-life of di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP), one of the most widely used and studied phthalates, is <

24 hr (Koch et al. 2004).

Phthalates are known antiandrogens in experimental animal models, with consistent results dating back several decades. Testicular steroid hormone synthesis and reproductive system development in males have been adversely affected by exposure, especially neonatal exposure, to certain phthalates, including DEHP, di-butyl phthalate (DBP), benzyl-butyl phthalate, and di-isononyl phthalate (Bell 1982; Fisher 2004; Parks et al. 2000).

Associations between certain phthalate metabolites and antiandrogenic effects have also been found in humans at much lower exposure levels than those used in rodent experiments. Suspected metabolites include mono-benzyl phthalate (MBzP), mono-ethyl phthalate (MEP), mono-isononyl phthalate (MiNP), mono-methyl phthalate, and mono-butyl phthalate (MBP). Urinary phthalate metabolites in pregnant women have been found to correlate with subtle genital changes in their infant males (Swan et al. 2005), and breast-milk phthalate metabolites have been correlated with shifts in reproductive hormones in infant males (Main et al. 2006).

Although fetuses and infants are thought to be more susceptible to environmental insult than adults, Duty et al. (2003) and Hauser et al. (2006) found diminished sperm quality associated with urinary phthalate metabolites in adult males as well. If their findings reflect true antiandrogenic effects of phthalates or their metabolites at current exposure levels, then one may reasonably predict that these exposures could increase the prevalence of metabolic disorders that are worsened by diminished androgen production or function.

In this study we examined the association between phthalate exposure and two key metabolic abnormalities associated with hypoandrogenism: abdominal obesity and insulin resistance. Although these conditions are closely related, they represent key precursorsalone or in combinationto the development of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (Janssen et al. 2004; Reaven 1988). Our hypothesis was that increased phthalate exposure would be associated with increased abdominal obesity and insulin resistance...

In the present study, we found that the log-transformed concentrations of several phthalate metabolites were positively and significantly correlated with abdominal obesity (MBzP, MEHHP, MEOHP, MEP) and insulin resistance (MBP, MBzP, MEP) in adult U.S. males. Categorical analysis of these metabolites by exposure quintiles yielded dose response curves consistent with this interpretation. Although wide confidence intervals preclude strong assertions, the HOMA analyses curves suggest the inverted-U shaped, nonmonotonic doseresponse sometimes seen with hormonally active agents, including phthalates (Andrade et al. 2006; Lehmann et al. 2004; Takano et al. 2006; Welshons et al. 2003)...

In conclusion, in this large national cross-sectional sample, several phthalate metabolites showed statistically significant positive correlations with abdominal obesity and insulin resistance in adult U.S. males. If confirmed by longitudinal studies, these associations would suggest that phthalates, a widely used family of chemicals, may contribute to the prevalence of obesity, insulin resistance, and related clinical disorders. Because phthalates are rapidly metabolized, unlike PCBs and other persistent organic contaminants, such confirmation could prompt effective actions to reduce phthalate exposure in the population.