



## **Cell Phone Report Calls for More Responsible Management to Protect Children and Pregnant Women**

*Environment and Human Health, Inc. (EHHI) today released a new report calling for tougher standards to regulate cellular technologies—especially for children and pregnant women.*

North Haven, Conn. ([PRWEB](#)) February 01, 2012 -- Environment and Human Health, Inc. (EHHI) is releasing a new report calling for tougher standards to regulate cellular technologies—especially for children and pregnant women. This report is the first part of a project researching the health effects of cell phone use. EHHI has reviewed hundreds of peer-reviewed studies that have examined the potential health threats associated with cellular device use, along with the regulatory standards that have been adopted by the U.S. and other nations. This report provides the context for the second section of the project: an animal study designed to investigate the health effects on offspring of cell phone exposures during pregnancy.

John Wargo, Ph.D., professor of Environmental Risk and Policy at Yale University and lead author of the report, said, “The scientific evidence is sufficiently robust showing that cellular devices pose significant health risks to children and pregnant women. The weight of the evidence supports stronger precautionary regulation by the federal government. The cellular industry should take immediate steps to reduce emission of electromagnetic radiation (EMR) from phones and avoid marketing their products to children.”

EHHI President Nancy Alderman explained how pervasive cell phones are in the United States. “There are nearly 276 million cell phone subscribers in the nation today, up from 97 million subscribers in 2000,” she said. “More than 75 percent of teens own cell phones, and one third of them text more than 100 messages per day. Children between the ages of 8-18 spend an average of 7.5 hours per day—nearly half their hours while awake—on smart phones, computers, televisions or other electronic devices. Exposures to electromagnetic radiation are increasing most rapidly among the youngest in our society, as service providers focus their advertising on children and educational markets.”

Hugh Taylor, M.D., coauthor of the report, summarized his concerns regarding neurological effects from cell phone radiation. “The human brain is especially susceptible to numerous environmental insults that can produce irreversible damage during critical periods of nervous system development between conception and full maturity. A number of peer-reviewed studies reported changes in the nervous systems of rats, mice and humans following exposure to cell phone radiation. These include diminished learning, diminished reaction time, decreased motor function, reduced memory accuracy, hyperactivity and diminished cognition.”

Taylor explained differences in exposure between children and adults, “The thinner skulls of young children permit cell phone radiation to penetrate brain tissues more deeply than occurs in adults. Devices stored in pants pockets while in standby mode can expose rapidly developing reproductive organs to radiofrequency energy. Storage in shirt pockets will increase exposure to breast tissues. Children’s and fetuses’ rapidly developing nervous systems, more rapid rates of cell division, longer potential lifetime exposure, and longer average use per day all heighten their risks of adverse health effects.”

Wargo cautioned, “Cell phones have enjoyed exceptional freedom from government oversight and control to protect against health and environmental hazards before cell phone devices are marketed. There are no enforceable standards to limit human exposure to cell phone radiation. While the U.S. does not require any regulations to restrict advertising or warnings against use of cellular devices by pregnant women or children,



many other nations do.”

Cell phones emit non-ionizing electromagnetic radiation that varies in intensity by model of phone, antenna configuration, and signal strength. Most users are unaware that new phones include warnings about the need to hold devices a safe distance from the body, often five-eighths to one inch. Since intensity of exposure falls exponentially as distance between the phone and body increases, users can limit their exposure dramatically by using speakerphones.

The World Health Organization in 2011 classified radiofrequency electromagnetic fields as “possibly carcinogenic to humans,” based on an increased risk for glioma, a malignant type of brain cancer, associated with wireless phone use. Yet some types of tumors take a decade or longer to develop, and if caused by cellular devices, would only be discovered by epidemiological studies that often take a decade to resolve. Since the average useful life of any device is now two years, these findings would be irrelevant to guide management of current technologies or patterns of use.

Summarizing a growing literature in the field of psychology, Wargo explained, “Cellular devices can create feelings of psychological dependency. Common effects reported in the literature include distraction, isolation, hyperactivity, inability to focus on complex and long term tasks, and a heightened sense of anxiety.”

The most immediate threat to public health is the increasing rate of highway fatalities and injury associated with use of cellular devices while driving. The federal government reports that at any one time, approximately 11 percent of all drivers are using their cell phones. Cellular device use while driving poses a serious and avoidable threat to public health and safety. The National Safety Council attributes 23 percent of all traffic accidents to cell phone use—at least 1.3 million crashes per year. Nearly 1.2 million of these are associated with phone calls, while 100,000 are associated with texting. The authors state this loss of life is fully avoidable.

The recycling of cell phones is also a serious concern to the authors. In 2012 nearly 220 million cell phones will be discarded in the U.S., and fewer than 10 percent of these will be recycled. This waste is especially hazardous when burned because of the release of dioxins from some plastic polymers, and diverse metals that do not break down.

Nancy Alderman, president of EHHI, summarized the group’s recommendations. “The government must take greater responsibility for testing cellular technologies before they are marketed to assure their safety, their proper disposal and to educate the public about safe patterns of use.”

To download the full report, visit [www.ehhi.org](http://www.ehhi.org).

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