



Yves Chartier, World Health Organization
Joshua Karliner, Health Care Without Harm
WHO/HCWH Mercury-Free Health Care Partnership
c/o Salud sin Daño/HCWH International Coordination
Tamborini 2838
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Argentina

Via Email

Dear Mssrs. Chartier and Karliner,

Thank you for the invitation to join the Mercury-Free Health Care Partnership, co-led by World Health Organization and Health Care Without Harm. I write you today to accept your invitation and express our willingness to join the Partnership.

We understand that this global partnership aims to achieve virtual elimination of mercury-based thermometers and sphygmomanometers over the next decade and their substitution with accurate, economically viable alternatives.

We also understand that this initiative is a component of the UN Environment Programme's Mercury Products Partnership, which is led by the US Environmental Protection Agency. As such, this health care initiative is contributing to a broader effort to promote environmental health by reducing the amount of mercury emitted into the global environment.

Kaiser Permanente is the largest integrated health care delivery system in the United States, providing comprehensive health care services to more than 8.7 million members. Our environmental roots can be traced to the beginning of the modern environmental movement. In 1963, the environmental crusader Rachel Carson was invited to speak to Kaiser Permanente doctors in one of her last speeches. Carson warned us about the dangers of certain chemicals to human health and to the environment. We were concerned about the environment then, and we're concerned now. Forty-five years later, we are working to curb our overall impact on the environment by using safe chemicals, building greener hospitals, reducing waste and looking at new ways to use less energy. We are a non-profit organization, with the clearly-stated mission to improve the health of the communities we serve.

Starting in 1997, Kaiser Permanente began a process that has resulted in our now being virtually free from mercury. We have purged 1,400 pounds of mercury from our facilities. Our efforts have helped to create market demand for non-mercury medical devices such as blood pressure devices and esophageal dilators that meet our performance needs.

As part of the Mercury-Free Health Care Partnership we will contribute by communicating our learnings, both operational and economical, in making the switch away from mercury. We will also work to expand awareness about the impacts of mercury and the important role health care organizations can play in eliminating its use.

We look forward to collaborating with you in this most important effort.

Sincerely,

Kathy Gerwig
Vice President Workplace Safety and Environmental Stewardship Officer

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