



MERCURY-FREE HEALTH CARE

An Initiative to Substitute Mercury-based Medical Devices Around the World.



ACTIVITIES UPDATE FOR INC2

JANUARY, 2011

ARGENTINA

With a national policy in place phasing out mercury-based medical devices in health care, HCWH has launched a campaign to ban the sale of mercury thermometers to the public while urging pharmacies adopt mercury free policies.

BRAZIL

The Health Secretariat of São Paulo State has banned the purchase of any equipment containing mercury in hospitals and other health services. In Santa Catarina State mercury thermometers are now banned in hospital systems and pharmacies.

CHILE

Nine new hospitals committed to substituting mercury, expanding the total number in the country to 25.

COSTA RICA

The number of hospitals committed to mercury-free health care expanded to 10.

INDIA

The Central Government Health Services mercury phase-out guidelines issued to all Central Government hospitals have resulted in mercury guidelines being included in the Indian Public Health Standard (IPHS) for all 30 to 500 bedded hospitals. The Central Pollution Control Board has also framed draft guidelines entitled Environmentally Sound Management of Mercury Waste In Health Care Facilities, emphasizing the collection and storage of mercury from discarded devices.

INDONESIA

In August 2010, the Ministries of Environment and Health hosted a Mercury Roundtable in which participants agreed to identify potential partners to promote a mercury-free health care sector. Subsequently, Global Initiative member BaliFokus conducted mercury assessments in 15 hospitals in Denpasar city and is working with HCWH to establish pilot hospitals there. The Ministry of Environment has also agreed to promote mercury-free health care as a component of its Hospital Proper Eco-Rating Program launched in 2010.

MEXICO

As part of its commitment to take the 31 public hospitals and 230 clinics under its jurisdiction mercury-free, the Mexico City Health Secretariat has deauthorized the purchase of mercury thermometers, blood pressure devices and dental amalgam, and is in the process of replacing these products with alternatives.

NICARAGUA

Pilots were initiated, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, in three hospitals.

NEPAL

As part of a WHO-initiated effort, HCWH members CEPHEP and HECAP have piloted mercury-free health care in three hospitals in Kathmandu, and raised awareness in several others across the country. The Department of Health Services also hosted a National Workshop on Health Care Waste Management and Mercury-Free Health Care Services in January 2011 to discuss and move forward on these issues.

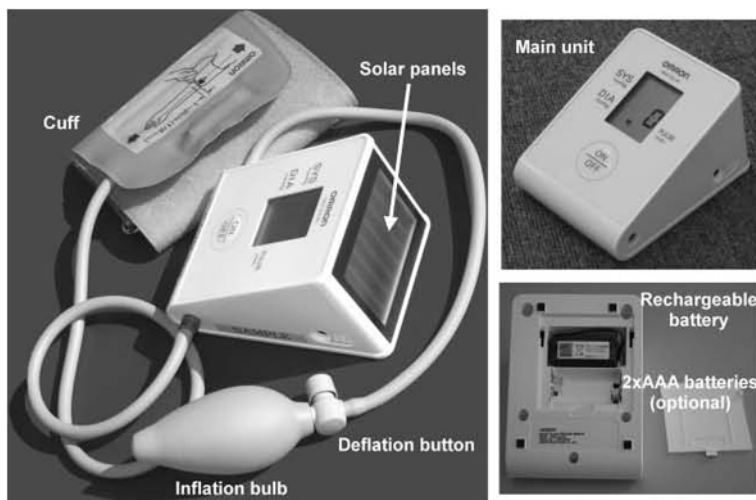
PHILIPPINES

In a survey, HCWH found that more than half of the country's hospitals have substituted mercury, in compliance with national policy. In an effort to bring the other hospitals into compliance, the Department of Interior and Local Governments (DILG) enjoined all provincial governors, city mayors and others concerned to comply to the national policy mandating gradual phase-out of mercury-containing devices.



ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY

WHO Fosters Solar-powered, Mercury-free Blood Pressure Device for Low-resource Settings. *Hypertension*, the Journal of the American Heart Association reports on the creation and field testing of this solar-powered, user-friendly, accurate, and inexpensive device for measuring blood pressure. The device will allow non-physician health workers (who are the backbone of the primary health care system in many developing countries) to participate in the diagnosis and management of hypertension. [View article.](#)



WASTE MANAGEMENT

UNDP GEF Global Health Care Waste Project Issues Guidance on Cleanup, Storage, and Transport of Health Care Mercury Waste. The UNDP GEF Global Health Care Waste Project has issued a Guidance Document on the Cleanup, Temporary or Intermediate Storage, and Transport of Mercury Waste from Health-care Facilities. As health facilities phase out mercury devices, proper methods of storage and transport are needed. [View guidelines.](#)

POLICY

European Chemicals Agency Proposes Restrictions on Mercury Blood Pressure Devices. The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has prepared a restriction report proposing to restrict mercury in several measuring devices, including sphygmomanometers. [View report.](#)

2nd Southeast Asia Conference on



Mercury-Free Health Care

March 15-16, 2011, Philippines



The WHO-HCWH Global Initiative is a component of the UNEP Mercury Products Partnership, which is led by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The Initiative's Objective is to:

By 2017, phase out the demand for mercury containing fever thermometers and sphygmomanometers by at least 70% and to shift the production of all mercury-containing fever thermometers and sphygmomanometers to accurate, affordable, and safer non-mercury alternatives.