

## **Dear Healthcare Providers, Government Officials and The Public,**

This is to inform you about a growing world wide health crisis called Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). MCS affects as much as 30% of the population world wide, from mild to severe symptoms to even death. (1)

**MCS: A 1999 consensus stated that MCS is:**

- 1. A chronic condition**
- 2. with symptoms that occur reproducibly**
- 3. to response to low levels of exposure**
- 4. to multiple unrelated chemicals that**
- 5. improve or resolve when trigger chemicals are removed, &**
- 6. symptoms occur in multiple organ systems (2)**

**MCS is a debilitating chronic illness for which there is no known cure. It is sometimes called Environmental Illness (EI), Chemical injury (CI) and Toxic Injury (TI) or Toxicant Induced Loss of Tolerance (TILT), but it has many different names. (3)**

**The usual cause of MCS is by a single massive exposure or repeated low level of exposures to toxic chemicals and other irritants in the environment. MCS is triggered by exposures to chemicals in the environment. Reducing exposures to chemicals by trying to avoid known triggers to reactions is therefore the best way for people with MCS to considerably reduce the impact of this devastating and socially isolating illness. Some examples of triggers are car exhaust, diesel, scented air and car fresheners, gasoline, paint, newspaper ink, glue/adhesives, dryer sheets and fabric softener, synthetic chemicals derived from petroleum found in fragrances like cologne or perfume, hair spray, varnish, pesticides, solvents and many, many more. (2)(4)**

**The symptoms experienced by sufferers are unique and vary widely between individuals. Chemicals commonly found in scented and solvent based products trigger symptoms which include: migraine headache; asthma; severe fatigue; flu like symptoms, vomiting, nausea; muscle and joint aches; muscle weakness; depression; anxiety; mental confusion and inability to concentrate; mental loss; rashes; gastrointestinal distress, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS); balance problems, dizziness; loss of smell or acute sense of smell; itchy and burning throat and eyes with visual problems; sinus congestion; bladder problems; insomnia &/or sleepiness; tremors; paresthesia or loss of sensation; hypotension or decrease in normal blood pressure; chest pain &/or irregular and rapid heartbeat; fainting; seizures; and emotional disturbances such as unexplained anger and crying. (4)**

**MCS is highly misdiagnosed with psychiatric illnesses because many do not look sick with this illness. Chemicals trigger many different symptoms in the various physiological systems of the body. Consequently, MCS is also commonly misdiagnosed as Fibromyalgia (FM) or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS). (5)**

**MCS is recognized by Federal Governmental agencies, including the Social Security Administration (SSA), World Health Organization (WHO), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as other state and federal government agencies and commissions.(6)**

## **References & Resources**

1. Gibson, P. Understanding & Accommodating People with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity in Everyday Living. (2005)
2. Nethercott J.R., Davidoff L.L., Curbow, B., (1993) Multiple Chemical Sensitivities Syndrome: Toward a Working Case Definition. Arch Environ Health, 48: 19-26 Multiple Chemical Sensitivity: A 1999 Consensus. Arch Environ Health, 1999, Vol.54, No.3 pp.147-149. (89) Clinicians).
3. Miller, C.S. , Toxicant-induced Loss of Tolerance. Addiction (2001) Jan;96(1):115- 37
4. Donnay, A., MHS, What is Multiple Chemical Sensitivity. (1998), Bell, I.R. Sensitization to early life stress and response to chemical odors in older adults. Biol Psychiatry 35: 857-63. (1994) mcsrr.org
5. Gilbère, G. N.D., D.A.Hom., Ph.D., Gibson, P. R., Ph.D. Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) An Overview. (1991) ei-resource.org
6. The Washington State Proclamation for awareness of MCS for the month on May signed again by Governor Christine O. Gregoire, on January 23rd, 2007.

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