



Michigan Nurses Association

The Power of $>$ One
more than

TO: House Great Lakes and Environment Committee
FROM: Ken Fletcher, Associate Executive Director
DATE: December 17, 2009
RE: Support for House Bill 4699

The Michigan Nurses Association strongly supports passage of HB 4699, a bill to phase-out the use of the highly toxic flame retardant deca-BDE.

Deca-BDE's are added to textiles, foam products and plastics to make them difficult to burn.

These types of chemicals can accumulate in the fatty tissues of living organisms and has been linked to serious health effects. The levels of these chemicals in human tissue and breast milk are doubling every 2-5 years in North America. We are especially concerned about their impact on young developing children. Some of the harmful health impacts of exposure to deca-BDE include:

- **Learning and Memory:** Exposure to deca-BDE in mice and rats during brain development can give rise to irreversible changes in adult brain function.
- **Reproductive:** Rats exposed to PBDEs experienced a delayed onset of puberty and reproductive development.
- **Cancer:** Rodents who ate deca-BDE developed liver tumors, causing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to classify deca as a possible human carcinogen.
- **Thyroid:** PBDEs can disrupt homeostatic thyroid levels in mice. Decreased concentrations of the thyroid hormone can lead to decreased IQ in offspring.

The more scientists look, the more they are finding impacts even at low levels. There are safer alternatives available and many companies have already begun phasing out the use of deca-BDE. Herman Miller, Steelcase and La-Z-Boy are a few of the Michigan companies that have already stopped using deca-BDE in their products. Fortunately we don't have to choose between contaminating our bodies and our environment with toxic chemicals for fire safety.

We hope that you will join the Michigan Nurses Association in supporting HB 4699 -- which will help make Michigan a less toxic place to live and raise a family.

Thank you.

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