



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

## PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY WISCONSIN

PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH & ADVOCATING FOR A CLEANER, SAFER WISCONSIN IN 2022

### A CONFLUENCE OF PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHIER WISCONSIN

In 2022, **Physicians for Social Responsibility Wisconsin (PSR WI)** and our environmental arm, **Wisconsin Environmental Health Network (WEHN)**, focused on making Wisconsin a safer, cleaner & healthier place for all.

This year highlighted the importance of collaboration and partnership. We have been able to bring our resources and expertise together with partner organizations and volunteers to achieve our mutual goals of advocating for climate change action, addressing environmental toxins in our water and air, and working towards nuclear weapons abolition.

Feeling the determination and resilience of PSR WI and WEHN volunteers collaborating with partner organizations' staff and members gives me hope and energy as we close 2022.

We don't do this work alone. We receive energy and strength from the collaboration of our peace and environmental communities.

We will continue to fight for public health protections and a Wisconsin that will last for the generations to come. **You can be a part of this community for a healthier Wisconsin! Please consider making a donation to PSR WI and WEHN to support our work for 2023 and beyond.**

Sincerely,  
Hannah Mortensen  
Executive Director

### USING THE POWER OF THE LAW & COLLABORATION TO PROTECT WISCONSIN COMMUNITIES

The Community Shares of Wisconsin (CSW) Collaboration Award recognizes CSW member nonprofits who demonstrate the power of collaboration to lead impactful social justice change within our community. Wisconsin Environmental Health Network (WEHN), Midwest Environmental Advocates (MEA), and River Alliance of Wisconsin (RAW) were recognized for using the power of the law to protect the health of Wisconsin communities. MEA is participating in the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce v Department of Natural Resources lawsuit regarding the Spills Law - a bedrock environmental and public health protection - on behalf of WEHN, RAW and other individuals and organizations.

The Spills Law, critical to the health and safety of Wisconsin workers and residents, requires anyone who causes, possesses or controls a hazardous substance that was discharged into the environment to take action to restore the affected air, land and waters. This includes toxic PFAS contamination.

The legal proceedings are ongoing and our involvement will continue. To see updates and learn more, please visit > [www.wehnonline.org/pfas](http://www.wehnonline.org/pfas)



MEA representatives (left) are pictured with Dr. Claire Gervais (second from right), WEHN co-president, and Hannah Mortensen, Executive Director (far right).

“  
**Our participation in this case is about defending the legal protections that keep Wisconsinites safe from toxic contamination, especially those who are most vulnerable—pregnant women, infants and young children.**  
—Beth Neary, MD, Co-President of WEHN  
”

# PSR WI BOARD

Amy Schulz, RN  
(President)  
Ann Behrmann, MD  
(Treasurer)  
Mary Doherty  
Rebecca Patterson  
Paula Rogge, MD

# WEHN STEERING COMMITTEE

Claire Gervais, MD  
(Co-president)  
Beth Neary, MD  
(Co-president)  
Henry Anderson, MD  
Ann Behrmann, MD  
Susan Davidson, MD  
Jed Downs, MD

# STAFF

Hannah Mortensen,  
Executive Director

We welcome new faces, ideas and energy to the PSR WI and WEHN teams. If you are interested in joining our leadership teams, please email [info@psrwisconsin.org](mailto:info@psrwisconsin.org) or [wehnmail@gmail.com](mailto:wehnmail@gmail.com).



Amy Schulz, RN, (pictured far left) is joined by Tara Drozdenko, PhD, (Union of Concerned Scientists) and Paula Rogge, MD, (far right) during an interview with a local TV station about Lanterns for Peace.

## 2022 AT A GLANCE

Your donations made this possible in 2022.

**20**

mentions in news media: from interviews and press conferences to op-eds and letters to the editor

**12**

times PSR WI & WEHN members were invited to speak and share expertise

**163**

registered for WEHN's annual Health and Environment Series in February and March

**14**

organizational signatures to support legislative initiatives and expert comments led by partner organizations

**4**

meetings with senators and representatives

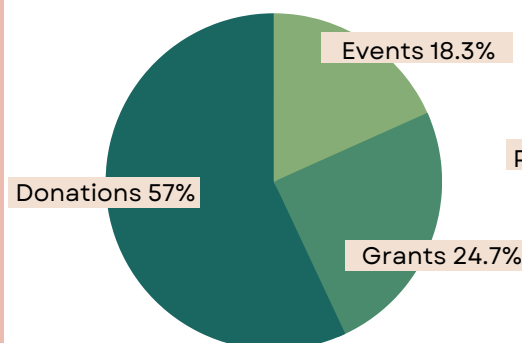
**14**

official comments submitted to state and federal agencies

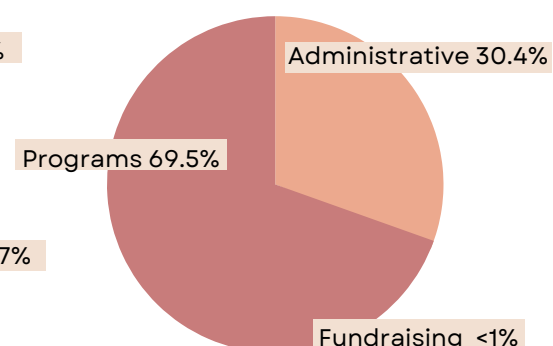
## FINANCIALS

In 2022, donations and grants funded our Executive Director at 25 hours per week as well as one paid-internship that was focused on climate change.

Income



Expenses



# SUPPORTING PEACE & NUCLEAR WEAPONS ABOLITION

PSR Wisconsin recognizes that nuclear weapons and war are a threat to the world's health. In 2022, we focused on taking action and providing educational opportunities to spark engagement.

- We collaborated with partners to host a celebratory rally for the first anniversary of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the state capitol. Speakers addressed health effects of radiation, educating younger generations about nuclear weapons, the social costs of military and weapons spending, and calling for the United States to join the treaty.
- Dr. Paula Rogge spoke with city staff, finance directors and activists across the US regarding nuclear weapons - free investment and contracts policies.
- In October 2022, we hosted Dr. Ira Helfand, internationally known nuclear weapons disarmament advocate, for a breakfast meeting with 17 members of the Madison peace and justice community. He encouraged the activists to continue working with the City Council to pass a Back from the Brink Resolution. The Resolution calls on the US government to prevent nuclear war and commits the City of Madison to nuclear weapons - free investments and contracts. We also arranged for Dr. Helfand to speak with medical students in an open public meeting and as a guest lecturer in the "Our Planet Our Health", an undergraduate course with over 200 students. Additionally, Dr. Helfand was interviewed by The Progressive Magazine.
- We created a webpage that provides education on the risk of nuclear weapons use in the war in Ukraine as well as dangers of accidents from attacks on Ukraine's many nuclear power stations.



Top: Dr. Paula Rogge, PSR WI Board member, and Steve Books, Veterans for Peace, in front of UW nuclear reactor on anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster.  
 Middle: Dr. Ira Helfand speaks with medical school students in Madison, Wisconsin.  
 Bottom: Medea Benjamin, founder of CodePink, speaks at an event co-hosted by PSR WI about the war in Ukraine.

*"There are many avenues for us to travel down to arrive in a nuclear free world. Being here with others who recognize the urgency of this matter of survival is a good place to start."  
 - Alfred Meyer, PSR WI Nuclear Weapons and Energy Working Group*



Hannah Mortensen at a press conference calling for We Energies to retire two coal plants.

## ADVOCATING FOR SAFE, CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Our future and the health of future generations depends on our transition to safe, clean and renewable energy. In 2022, we spoke up about this urgent need.

- Submitted comments to the Public Service Commission (PSC) supporting "Third Party Solar Financing" to increase the capacity of Wisconsinites to be able to have their own solar arrays.
- Submitted comments to the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) opposing the Enbridge Line 5 pipeline proposed expansion and proposed reroute.
- Submitted comments in support of the Koshkonong Solar Energy Center.
- Submitted comments to the PSC regarding the PSC's draft Strategic Energy Assessment.
- Served on two statewide coalitions calling for the halt to development of new fossil fuel infrastructure in WI, retirement of all WI coal power plants, opposition to Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline reroute and expansion, and for the advancement of solar energy and energy conservation measures in the state.
- Submitted comments to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the relicensing application for Point Beach Nuclear Power Plant.
- Submitted formal questions to the NRC concerning safety issues at the Point Beach Nuclear Power Plant.

# PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION

One of the goals of WEHN is to provide educational opportunities for health professionals, local leaders, advocates, and the general public. Below are some educational events provided by WEHN and WEHN steering committee members in 2022.



Vijay Limay, PhD, (top left) spoke about extreme heat, climate change and our health during our annual educational series.

- Dr. Beth Neary led the first ever University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (UWSPH) elective course called “Environmental Health and Advocacy” in the spring semester.
- Drs. Beth Neary, Ann Behrmann and Claire Gervais led a workshop using case studies on environmental health topics to teach UW Madison Family Medicine residents and Dr. Neary continues to meet with pediatric residents monthly on environmental health topics.
- Drs. Neary, Rogge and Behrmann presented to the Madison Public Schools Foundation on risks to children and teens with the proposed F35 fighter jet beddown at the WI Air National Guard's Truax Field.
- Dr. Gervais served as a panelist at “Solar Clinic on Clinics” event at Couillard Solar Foundation.
- Dr. Gervais gave a presentation to the Olbrich Organic Garden Club on pesticides and climate change effects on organic gardens.
- WEHN co-sponsored the “Breast Cancer and the Environment” conference hosted by Clean Water Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin.
- WEHN provided updates on [webpages](#) and social media about new health studies covering topics of energy burden, PFAS and other toxic chemicals, climate change, air pollution, extreme heat, and more.
- See page 5 for information on our annual Health and Environment education series.



Top photo: Hannah Mortensen discusses the Spills Law with partners during a radio segment on WORT.

Bottom photo: Mortensen provided public testimony at a hearing regarding the health impacts of energy burden and We Energies delay of coal plant retirements in Wisconsin.

## ADDRESSING THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL TOXINS

**We recognize that two threats to our health are climate change and the contamination of our environment. We advocate for improved health protections, a cleaner environment and immediate climate action.**

Listed below are some highlights from 2022:

- Dr. Beth Neary served as a community consultant for the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in order to develop the report called, “[Guidance on PFAS Exposure, Testing and Clinical Follow Up](#)”.
- We submitted comments and spoke to the [Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\)](#) to set PFAS (also called forever chemicals) standards for drinking water, surface water and groundwater.
- See page 3 for information on our work on safe, clean and renewable energy.
- Dr. Neary and Dr. Susan Davidson were interviewed by the media regarding PFAS. They brought attention to the serious human health effects of PFAS and the need for immediate action to prevent further exposure.
- Hannah Mortensen and Dr. Gervais met with Wisconsin and federal representatives and senators to discuss the urgent need to address drinking water quality and climate change to protect public health.
- Dr. Gervais submitted comments supporting the Environmental Protection Agency’s proposed methane leakage reduction rule.
- Dr. Gervais and Dr. Jed Downs provided comments and media interviews regarding Clean Wisconsin’s study about air pollution in Wisconsin.



Photos from the 2022 Lanterns for Peace event.

## 2022 ANNUAL LANTERNS FOR PEACE

We commemorated the lives lost in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings 77 years ago and pledged to work towards a world where such nuclear attacks never again take place.

On August 7, 2022, PSR WI hosted an annual event called Lanterns for Peace to remember the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Seventy Five participants helped create and decorate paper lanterns to float on the Tenney Park Lagoon, enjoyed music from local artists, connected with event co-sponsors, and heard a presentation by Dr. Tara Drozdenko, Director for the Global Security Program for the Union of Concerned Scientists.

“  
*I take hope because all of you are here tonight. It's going to take all of us, working together to move us to a better more peaceful future. So, thank you for being here. And, thank you for your commitment to a safer more peaceful world.*  
—”

- Dr. Tara Drozdenko,  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Guest Speaker at Lanterns for Peace

## 2022 HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT SERIES

WEHN's annual conference on health and environment was hosted virtually throughout February and March 2022. This annual educational series makes the connection between our health and environment. The series had 163 registrants. Each speaker shown below discussed their topic on separate evenings and responded to audience questions following their presentation. Our 2023 conference will be March 31st!



### FREDERICA PERERA, PHD, DRPH

Threats of Climate Change to Children's Health and Equity: Benefits of Intervention



### TRISH KOMAN, PHD

Health and chemical policy: What every health professional needs to know to make TSCA work to protect vulnerable populations



### VIJAY LIMAYE, PHD

Costs of Climate Inaction: The Health and Financial Burdens of Extreme Heat



### MARY H. WARD, PHD

Nitrate in drinking water and health



Celebratory rally at the state capitol for the first anniversary of the Treaty on the Prohibition on Nuclear Weapons. Amy Schulz, PSR WI President, pictured holding the "Hiroshima Never Again" banner in the center.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS 2023 HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERIES

WEHN's annual health and environment series will be in one afternoon on **Friday, March 31, 2023**. The event will be held in-person at the Health Sciences Learning Center in Madison, Wisconsin. A recording of the event will be available for registrants. Watch for speaker announcement and registration [information coming soon!](#)

## BACK FROM THE BRINK IN 2023

Please be on the lookout for action opportunities to get Back from the Brink resolutions passed in Madison and cities across the state! More information on our website > [www.psr-wisconsin.org](http://www.psr-wisconsin.org).



- WEHN is the environmental group of PSR WI. PSR WI is the fiscal sponsor and umbrella organization for WEHN.
- A detailed list of PSR WI activities and financial reports are available upon request.
- PSR WI is a chapter affiliate of the national organization, Physicians for Social Responsibility.
- PSR WI is a proud member of [Community Shares of Wisconsin](#).
- PSR WI is a 501(c)3 organization and registered as a charitable organization with the State of Wisconsin. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.