

## UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT - 5 2021

THE ADMINISTRATOR

## **MEMORANDUM**

SUBJECT: Issuance of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2021 Policy on Children's Health

FROM: Michael S. Regan Michael & Regan

TO: Deputy Administrator General Counsel Assistant Administrators Inspector General Chief Financial Officer Chief of Staff Associate Administrators Regional Administrators

Protecting children's environmental health is critical to our work at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Accordingly, I am reaffirming the EPA's commitment to protecting children's environmental health and announcing the issuance of the 2021 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Policy on Children's Health.

The 2021 policy revises the 1995 version and makes it clear that the EPA will protect children from environmental exposures by consistently and explicitly considering early life exposures and lifelong health in all human health decisions. The EPA is committed to protecting children where they live, learn, play and work by using human-health-related science, risk assessment, regulations, compliance and enforcement, partnerships, communications and research.

The 2021 policy improves the definition of children's environmental health to reflect scientific findings from the last 25 years and clarifies that childhood includes the period from conception, infancy, early childhood and through adolescence until 21 years of age. The 2021 policy also acknowledges that the effects of early life exposure to environmental contaminants may not become evident until adulthood or even later generations.

Importantly, the 2021 policy recognizes that children living in highly polluted or underserved communities may have reduced resilience and ability to recover from exposure to environmental hazards. Climate change, one of the greatest challenges facing us, also worsens the likelihood

and impacts of exposures to heat and pollutants through air, water, food and land and increases the need for safeguards for children.

I am confident that each of you will partner with me and the Office of Children's Health Protection to implement this policy that is so important to our nation's future. If you have questions or need assistance in addressing children's health issues, please contact the Office of Children's Health Protection.