THE NEED FOR MANDATORY ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING IN DAYCARE SETTINGS IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE THE HEALTH RISK FOR CHILDREN
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Assessing site-related contamination screening techniques while finding opportunities to prevent children from being exposed to harmful contaminants in child care facilitates, using publicly available data. My internship at the Agency of Toxic Substance and Disease Registry was to help support the, “Choose a Safe Place for Early Child Care Settings”, program to promote local efforts to reduce environmental exposure in early child care settings. I worked with my site supervisor, Dr. Wendel to screen 30 potential sites in Region 10 (Alaska, Idaho, and Oregon) using publicly available data to identify pathways of exposure to hazardous substance and sites and releases close to neighboring locations. Most times, the location of a daycare is not given enough consideration, and children may be at risk from contamination-left from how building or property was used in past, from naturally occurring harmful substance or nearby sites. In order to better address this issues, there needs to be policy to enforce environmental assessments in screening for daycares and to provide an overview of the screening process to enable state partners to screen facilities and enforce prior screening on potential locations to minimize the health risk for children. Based upon the research and internship, there needs to be more educational efforts to help prevent hazardous environmental exposure to children; by involving state health departments, licensing agencies, local planning, and zoning departments and other collaborates to address gaps in regulations and policies, therefore early care educational programs aren’t at risk from overexposure to chemicals and health risk.