Getting the Dirty Work Done:
Impact of Toxic Cleaning Products on Household Workers
The Workers that Make All Other Work Possible

- Mostly poor, immigrant women of color
  - “Invisible” workforce
  - Undocumented mothers

- Historical un-regulated work industry
  - Work-place conditions (no contract)
  - On-the-job injuries
  - Abuse at work (verbal & physical)
Who are they?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role in family income support</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary income earner</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint income earner</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support additional family abroad</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send money or packages to family in home country</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender, race and country of origin</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latina</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Born outside of the United States</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Years worked in industry</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 year or less</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years or longer</td>
<td>31%</td>
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How do chemical exposures impact these vulnerable workers?

- Cleaning Products (Wolkoff, 1998)
  - Disinfectants (i.e. Bleach)
    - Borates—toxic to reproductive system
    - Sodium Hypochlorite—corrosive; dermatitis; eye irritation
  - Surface care (i.e. “all purpose” cleaners, polishes)

- Additives & preservatives (i.e. fragrances)

They deserve the Right to Know...

- “My sinuses hurt... from the Clorox that they put, they didn't even give us masks, nothing...not even sponges.” - Household Worker, Pasadena, CA

- “My eyes burn...and I'm going blind from so many chemicals...they don't give us anything...20 dollars for two hours, for our eyes, our eyes cost more than 20 dollars.” - Household Worker, Pasadena, CA

- “I can’t use Clorox...it gives me really strong headaches, even migraines, and I get a lot of nose bleeds.” - Household Worker, Los Angeles, CA

- “My boss is very abusive, one day he threw 409 on the wall and it was in the direction that I was in and it fell on my face the 409.” - Household Worker, Westwood, CA

WORKSHOPS

- We provide a series of workshops focus on how chemicals affect health.
- Chemicals at the workplace
- Chemicals at home
- Alternatives of use
Women at a workshop
Right to Know Policy can close gaps in Prevention efforts

- Low-control over work negotiations for better working conditions; includes cleaning products
- Right to Know can help increase awareness of Employers
- Right to Know can help advocacy groups provide better recommendations and alternatives for workers
Workers’ Health is no (trade) secret...

We deserve the Right to Know how chemicals affect our health!
IDEPSCA

WORKERS HEALTH PROGRAM

HOUSEHOLD WORKERS PROGRAM

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