



#WIGWednesdays

May 13, 2020

“The Value of Good Chemistry During Challenging Times”

Featuring:

Lucy Gettman, Executive Director, Women In Government

Tennessee State Representative Mary Littleton

Komal Jain, Executive Director, Center for Biocide Chemistries, American Chemistry Council

Lucy Gettman: Welcome to WIG Wednesday, our weekly virtual series delivering timely information to women state legislators and other policy leaders. I’m Lucy Gettman, Executive Director of Women In Government, a non-profit, non-partisan organization by and for women state legislators across the country.

WIG’s Board of Directors and our State Directors are comprised entirely of women state legislators and reflect the regional and political diversity found in state legislatures nationwide.

Today’s session will discuss the “The Value of Good Chemistry During Challenging Times.” Before we get started, we’d like to ask attendees via the poll on your screen: How many of you are still having trouble obtaining cleaning products/disinfectants/sanitizers in your communities?

Please keep in touch with WIG! Women In Government can be found on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and SoundCloud. If you aren’t already subscribed to our newsletter, please do so today on our website: <https://www.womeningovernment.org/>

Women In Government is grateful for all who support our mission to provide critical policy programs such to our women state legislators. We will have some big news to announce at the end of today’s program, so please stay tuned!

And it looks like we have our poll results. It's a pretty convincing that the vast majority of us. 75% continue to have challenges obtaining cleaning supplies, disinfectants, and sanitizers so it makes our topic today very, very timely.

Today, WIG is honored to welcome Tennessee State Representative Mary Littleton of Tennessee as moderator for this session: “The Value of Good Chemistry During Challenging Times.” Representative Littleton has been in the Tennessee House since 2013. She chairs the children and families committee. He's also a member of the Government Operations Committee and the Judiciary Committee. She’s also a business owner, and when I go to Nashville, I am always warmly welcomed by her. Representative Littleton, thank you so much for joining us today, and the virtual podium is all yours.

Representative Mary Littleton: Thank you, Lucy, for inviting me today. I was happy to listen in on a previous #WIGWednesday about the CARES Act. I found the program very informative and enjoyed the discussion among legislators during that presentation. In trying to reopen we're trying to learn everything that we can, especially for our state of Tennessee.

Before I introduce today’s speaker, I’d like attendees to be aware of how #WIGWednesdays are



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managed. All attendees are muted through the system. If you have questions or comments during the presentation, please be sure to write them in the Chat Box that can be found in the Zoom Meeting Toolbar and please make sure you have selected “To: Everyone” from the drop-down menu. If you are a State Legislator or Legislative Staff, please let us know in the body of your Chat Message who you are and from what state. Finally, all #WIGWednesday presentations will be available on the Women In Government website a few days post-event.

Now, please join me in welcoming Komal Jain who will speak about the role of biocide chemistry in helping combat the spread of COVID-19.

Ms. Jain serves as the Executive Director of the Center for Biocide Chemistries at the American Chemistry Council. She supports the Center’s work on a broad range of scientific, regulatory, legislative, legal and educational issues unique to antimicrobial pesticides. Her work involves analyzing legislative and regulatory proposals; developing and drafting regulatory comments and other communications; and working with the EPA on advancing the antimicrobials program.

Ms. Jain has a juris doctorate and spent almost 20 years in private and government practice before joining the American Chemistry Council in 2013.

Ms. Jain, welcome to #WIGWednesday and I turn the mic over to you.

Komal Jain: Thank you so much, Representative Littleton. Good afternoon to everybody on the phone. Thank you for joining this talk, “The Value of Good Chemistry in Challenging Times.” So again, my name is Komal Jain, I am the Executive Director of the [Center for Biocide Chemistries](#), and I am very pleased to speak with you today.

This is truly a unique and challenging time in human history as we battle the spread of SARS COV2, the pathogen that is causing the disease COVID-19. This is a situation that demands leadership, thoughtfulness, and care, and I'm honored to speak to a group of men and women who are providing exactly that in this country.

The American Chemistry Council Center for Biocide Chemistries is an organization of more than 50 companies that manufacture or formulate biocides, also known as antimicrobials. These chemical substances kill or slow the spread of microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, or fungi.

Many of you may not be familiar with the term antimicrobial, so let me break this down for you. The word antimicrobial was derived from the Greek words “anti” meaning against, “micros” meaning little, and “bios” meaning life. It refers to chemical substances and products that are crucial in helping to prevent and stop the spread of harmful microbes which include the pathogen causing the novel coronavirus.



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The antimicrobial family is comprised of many products that we are familiar with, including disinfectant sprays, wipes, and hand sanitizers - unfortunately, many of the products that you have indicated are hard to find right now. All of these do kill harmful viruses and bacteria. We use antimicrobials at home to keep our kitchen and bathroom disinfected.

They're even in the laundry detergents that we use to clean our clothes and linens and also in the paints we use. Outside the home, they are used on restaurant prep stations and equipment to eliminate dangerous pathogens from growing. Antimicrobials are especially important at hospitals and other health care facilities to disinfect floors, beds, and equipment to prevent the spread of disease and infections that would otherwise pose real dangers to patients and providers.

Antimicrobials are more than just disinfectants, though. They also serve as preservatives that keep everything from personal care products to building materials from decaying and breaking down. Antimicrobials contribute to sustainability by extending the lifespan of products and allowing them to be recycled and reused. The wood used to build a back porch will last many more years because it's treated with antimicrobials. Drinking water can be reclaimed treated and recycled because of antimicrobials.

They also play a key role in livestock production, oil and gas extraction, range shipping, and many, many other processes. This is why we call it good chemistry. Almost everywhere you look, antimicrobials are playing a valuable role.

As already mentioned, at the Center of Biocide Chemistries, our members address a broad range of issues nationally and internationally. We regularly engage with the US Environmental Protection Agency and state agencies in their regulation of antimicrobials. We talk with members on Capitol Hill and many of you in state houses about legislative issues, we collaborate with science and technology researchers, and we work to ensure that the public is aware of the benefits of antimicrobials.

It is important to note that antimicrobials are strictly evaluated and regulated. There are laws in place to make sure they are used safely and appropriately. We work closely with EPA and state regulators to ensure our products are tested and used safely and do what they are intended to do. For product claims on its label to eliminate pathogens like viruses, the manufacturer must share evidence with the EPA that the product can do so without causing any significant harm to people, animals, or the environment. Those that don't meet those legal standards never make it to market, and that's how it ought to be because there should never be a question about the efficacy and safety of our products.

[The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticides Act](#), also known as FIFRA, requires that EPA frequently reevaluate each pesticide registration and make sure each product continues to meet safety standards. But when it comes to the products made with biocides, manufacturers and producers are not just relying on rules and regulations. They don't believe it's exclusively up to the government to make sure the products are safe for their intended use. Our members regulate themselves by routinely monitoring, testing, and assessing their own products and taking corrective action when needed.



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So the Center for Biocide Chemistries has a very good story to tell. And it's especially important that we tell it right now because understanding how disinfectants work and how they should and should not be used is extremely important in our current situation.

It is our goal to inform the public not only on what antimicrobials are and can do but also the safe and proper way to use them to get the most value and benefit. One of our most recent initiatives is a campaign called “Good Chemistry Lives Here,” which you see on your screen. It’s an attempt to educate people on how these chemistries help every day from disinfection to material preservation to ensuring manufacturing safety.

We often emphasize that there is a difference between cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting. This is a pretty key distinction, particularly when people are desperate for information about what is effective against COVID-19. I think of it as a spectrum with cleaning on one end and disinfecting on the other.

So, as we say cleaning might pick up the physical residue of a spill, but it does not do anything to the germs except move them around a bit. Sanitizing is definitely a step up, but it only targets some microbes, and there is a chance that the sanitizer is not going to be effective at eliminating the most dangerous ones like the coronavirus. Disinfectants, however, are considered to be effective at killing COVID-19 as well as many other serious pathogens. We want people to understand that not all cleaning products are created equally and that it is important to know the difference between them.

As part of our education efforts we published a pamphlet called [“Tips That Help Stop The Spread Of COVID-19 \(And Other Tips For Staying Healthy And Happy.\)”](#) We think that this is a very useful guide that talks about how you can keep your home disinfected and how you can protect yourself and your loved ones should you have to go outside. The idea was to make something that carried valuable information about disinfection strategies but presented in a light and colorful way.

Beyond COVID-19, you see that we address some key topics like “The Best Ways To Help Stop The Spread Of Germs When You’re Home Or When You Have To Be About,” “The Top Places Where Germs Can Hide Without Knowing It,” “Ways To Make Sure You Navigate Public Spaces With Care,” and “Steps To Take If You Have Multiple People Living In Your Home.” All this information is accessible and available at our website, <https://goodchemistryliveshere.com/>

One of our most successful initiatives was launched earlier this year when the coronavirus really began. We realized that nowhere was there a list of disinfectant products that could be responsive to the pandemic. We quickly mobilized and developed a process for a manufacturer of a disinfectant to let us know and provide us the appropriate documentation that its product should be identified as a disinfectant against COVID-19 because it had the requisite approvals from EPA. I want to reemphasize that. It is only those products that have the requisite approval from EPA.



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Again, this had never been done and we cast our net wide not limiting it to just Center for Biocide Chemistries (CBC) members but anyone that had the appropriate registrations, and this also spurred EPA and others to do the same. Our first iteration of the list numbered around 200 products, but almost daily we received additional information, and that list has been updated daily as manufacturers contact us. The [list now includes more than 1,000 products](#) and is accessible to anyone via our website.

We know that schools, food establishments, transit systems, and state agencies have relied on the list. In fact, our list has been downloaded more than 7,000 times last we checked. It's been promoted and featured in mainstream media outlets such as “USA Today” as well as business and scientific press.

Now you may be wondering, how can there be more than 1,000 products that claim to kill a virus that has only been known for a few months? The reality is that we don't have direct studies on product effectiveness against COVID-19, but we do have data that all these products can kill harder to kill viruses. Thus, EPA and our members presumed based on the hierarchy based policy that if a product can kill or eliminate something harder to kill, it will be effective against a virus like COVID-19. This theory is the basis for EPA's emerging viral pathogens guidance for antimicrobial pesticides, which regulates companies that claim their products are effective against COVID-19.

Most recently, we produced some new materials reminding people that disinfectants are very effective tools against the spread of coronavirus so long as they are used the right way. We created a [Do's and Don'ts infographic](#) that provides common sense tips like always read label instructions and keep products out of the reach of children. It also offers more nuanced advice that some people might not be aware of such as don't mix disinfectants together and don't put used or spilled products back in their containers.

We also issued a [statement](#) in response to a recent set of Centers for Disease Control report that there's been an increase in accidental poisonings from cleaning products, including those containing antimicrobials. The prime message of our statement, which is always the same, is to use these products the correct way and always follow label instructions.

With so many people staying inside their homes and wondering how to keep themselves free from germs, antimicrobials can be a very big help in stopping the spread of coronavirus, but they must be used properly.

Ultimately, what I most want to convey to you is that the members of the Center for Biocide Chemistries have a role to play in this new reality and environment, and they are coming through with innovations, donations, and good faith efforts. They're using or customizing their operations and infrastructure to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and to assist those who either have the virus or are working to help those who have contracted it.

So here we see on the slide a number of actions that have already taken place, and this is just a small taste of what has happened. Clorox has contributed \$5 million in direct relief and donations to the CDC



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and the American Red Cross. Solvay has donated more than 700,000 liters of hydrogen peroxide; 16,000 liters of sanitizing gels used to disinfect; and more than 100,000 pieces of personal protective equipment. Ecolab has donated more than \$1.7 million in financial contributions and product donations.

We've also seen our members focus on their own communities, like Koppers, who partnered with the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh to launch a fund to obtain and donate essential products to underserved neighborhoods in its hometown.

Or members are uniquely positioned to be right there in the fight against COVID-19. In this time of global crisis, the chemical and industry is proud to play a role in helping keep us informed, healthy, and safe.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to talk about what the Center for Biocide Chemistry is and what we're doing. I also want you to be aware that the American Chemistry Council has pulled together a significant amount of materials related to protocols and other helpful information that you might want to refer to as your states and districts try to reopen. While that material is not available on the current copy of the presentation, we will update our presentation material, add a resource slide and make sure that's available on WIG's website.

So with that, I'm going to pause and ask for any questions.

Representative Mary Littleton: Thank you very much for this important information. This is especially timely as many of us are considering how to move forward in reopening our communities.

Right now we are going to take a little time for questions. I have one myself I'd like to start out with. Many of us tend to “stretch” cleaning products, especially now that they are so hard to find, by adding some water as they get towards the end. Which kinds of products is that ok for, and which kinds should not be diluted with water, unless the instructions say otherwise?

Komal Jain: Thank you for that question, Representative Littleton.

I understand that products are being forced to stretch thin. I do want to, however, caution that unless the product manufacturer has indicated that the product can be diluted, you in fact do not want to dilute it. The problem with dilution when it's not actually part of the product formulation is that you could actually compromise the effectiveness of the product. So, in fact, when you're using a product that wasn't meant to have any water added to it, it might not in fact be disinfecting the surface that you're trying to disinfect.

Representative Mary Littleton: That makes perfect sense. Thank you. Now we have a question. Do you have recommendations on how different surfaces can be treated - for example surfaces that have



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frequently been touched such as doors, elevator buttons, or floors that can't be cleaned frequently due to traffic?

Komal Jain: Okay, so the list of the Center for Biocide Chemistry put together, first of all, is for those that would disinfect or should disinfect hard surfaces, so that would be applicable to countertops, door knobs, elevator buttons, floors, etc.

I do want to point out that the Environmental Protection Agency does also have a list. It's not as extensive as our own, but in those instances, they've also identified disinfectants that might be or should be effective against other surfaces such as textiles.

As far as frequency is concerned, we do have some recommendations, but what we are generally saying is for folks to use their best judgment. If you are trying to disinfect a surface or a location that has high traffic, you may want to do that on a daily basis or even more frequently if possible. A door knob can easily be wiped down with a wipe or spray with a paper towel. You might want to do that in an office building that has high traffic. The protocol might be to do it on an hourly basis in your home, or it might be part of your daily ritual at the end of the day.

So there is no strict answer. We're just suggesting that people use good judgment.

Representative Mary Littleton: Thank you. Well, what about air sprays for sanitizing airspace? Are they effective in the elevator and things like that?

Komal Jain: So, spray disinfectants are meant to be directed - at least the ones that we promote - to be sprayed to a hard surface and then typically wiped clean. If you're talking about like a Lysol air spray, I actually do not know whether that would do anything to neutralize any of the pathogens that might be hovering in the air. It's a good question, and we can probably look into it.

Representative Mary Littleton: Thank you. There are products that steam clean using distilled water. Is their data on whether steam can kill COVID-19?

Komal Jain: So I am not familiar with any data that suggests that pure steam would in fact kill the virus.

Representative Mary Littleton: Okay, thank you. One last question. How could legislators work with their constituents to source the products they need to reopen safely?

Komal Jain: So we do understand that there has been some limitation on the availability of those products. We have, as the Center for Biocide Chemistries as well as the American Chemistry Council, been working with several states to try to ease supply chain constraints. What I would say is that we are trying to help facilitate that, and if there are specific problems, we at American Chemistry Council would be happy to hear about it and see what we can do to assist.



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Representative Mary Littleton: Thank you. Do you have any closing remarks that you would like to make?

Komal Jain: No, other than to say that I greatly appreciate this opportunity. I hope that you found this information to be helpful and better understand what antimicrobials can do. I know that as many of you work to reopen the economies of your state, there could in fact be difficulties, and many, many questions.

Please do not hesitate to whatever degree if I or my colleagues can be of help. We're more than happy to do so. I appreciate the work that each of you are doing and just want to express my thanks.

Representative Mary Littleton: Well, I certainly want to thank you again for being on WIG Wednesday today. It was very informative, and I did learn a lot. I'm one of those that puts the hand sanitizer on my hand before I get in the elevator and when I get out. I guess we're all a little bit wary of some of these things, aren't we? Thank you again for joining us, and it was most informative and appreciated.

Please join us for these upcoming #WIGWednesdays - May 20th's session is "Update on the COVID-19 Outbreak: Understanding the Impact of Diagnostic Testing Modalities" and May 27th's will be "Mental Health Resources for You and Your Constituents in the Time of COVID-19."

[Registration](https://www.womeningovernment.org/) and [resources](https://www.womeningovernment.org/) for all WIG Wednesday events can be found at <https://www.womeningovernment.org/>.

WIG is happy to announce live to our audience today that we are hosting a Virtual Summit Series. Keep your eyes peeled on your inboxes tomorrow for the Women In Government's "WIG At Work Newsletter" for more details!

Thank you again for joining us, and stay safe!