Inaugural Plastics and Health Regional Forum: Connecting Human, Environmental, and Great Lakes Health in the Age of Plastic Pollution

CLEVELAND, Ohio — The Cuyahoga County Board of Health will host the inaugural **Plastics and Health Regional Forum** on Friday, November 6, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the MidTown Collaboration Center, 1974 E. 66th Street, Cleveland, Ohio. In-person registration closes on October 29. A free webinar option is available for those unable to attend in person.

The forum, which is open to the community, will bring together researchers, healthcare professionals, students, community leaders, and environmental experts to examine the connections between plastic pollution, ecological health, and human well-being.

The interdisciplinary forum will explore current research on plastics and human health, environmental and ecological impacts, policy responses, and practical approaches to addressing plastic pollution. Through expert presentations, a panel discussion, local artwork, and networking opportunities, participants will be able to exchange knowledge, build partnerships, and identify opportunities for action across the Lake Erie and Lake Ontario region.

“Plastic pollution is not solely an environmental concern; it also has significant implications for human health and community well-being,” said **Dr. Dafna Ben Yosef, Director of Jewish Lifelong Learning at Siegal Lifelong Learning, Case Western Reserve University**. “This forum provides a valuable opportunity to foster interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration on a pressing issue with far-reaching consequences for current and future generations. Siegal Lifelong Learning is honored to support this important initiative.”

The Plastics and Health Regional Forum is made possible through broad collaboration among organizations and programs working across public health, environmental health, research, policy, education, and community resilience.

“Plastic polymers pose a significant threat to human health. There is an even greater threat to global ecosystem health, including the atmosphere, oceans, soils, and sediments, all of which are critical for human health, commerce, industry, and survival,” noted **Robert F. Brand, Ph.D., Watershed Program Manager in Environmental Public Health Services at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health**. “Plastic pollution is a moral problem requiring a paradigm shift in ethics. It requires a fundamental shift in how we think and act with regard to the extraction of oil and the production and use of plastics.”

“We are excited to bring together leading researchers from across Lake Erie and Lake Ontario to explore how plastics affect the health of our communities and waters,” said **Mark Warman, Emerging Contaminants Specialist with Ohio Sea Grant**.

The program is offered with support from **Siegal Lifelong Learning at Case Western Reserve University**, which provides educational opportunities for adults seeking intellectual enrichment, professional development, and community engagement. Through courses, lectures, special

events, and partnerships with leading organizations and institutions, Siegal Lifelong Learning connects learners with the expertise and resources of Case Western Reserve University and the broader community.

For more information about the forum, including the call for abstracts and registration options, visit the Plastics and Health Regional Forum webpage.