Sample Letter to the Editor re: Attacks on TSCA Implementation

Dear Editor,

As a nurse, I routinely care for people with conditions linked to exposure to toxic chemicals. That’s why I was pleased to hear about passage of revisions to our nation’s outdated chemical law, the Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA). It seemed that better health through improved regulation of toxic chemicals could be underway.

Imagine my disappointment when, a year later, several regulatory decisions not only undermine the prospect of public health protections, but appear to be in violation of the new law. The final rules depart dramatically from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) original proposal, heavily reflect the input of the chemical lobby, and largely disregard comments from the public health community.

These rules signal that EPA will require little or no testing to fill significant data gaps about chemical use, exposure and toxicity; necessary elements to any comprehensive risk evaluation. Risk evaluations may contain numerous exclusions, failing to fully reflect exposure to Americans. Industry-driven language for scientific terms could limit information gathering to favor industry.

It’s not surprising, given appointment of those with previous chemical industry roles and its proposal to drastically cut the EPA’s budget by 31%, that environmental and public health protections would suffer. That’s why nurses call upon Congress to oppose any EPA budget cuts, retain important protective elements of the revised TSCA, and hold our health and the environment as among the current administration’s top priorities. Otherwise, health care costs will continue to mount, along with the toll in human suffering.