WASHINGTON – The **American Public Health Association** today called on the global electronics' industry, public health officials and international agencies to step up efforts to protect workers and communities, citing well documented adverse health effects caused by many toxic chemicals used in the manufacture of electronic and electrical products worldwide.

In making its recommendations, APHA noted the increase in the production and use of electrical and electronic products, including a global supply chain that works through a complicated web of subcontractors, often located in Asia.

"Weak, or nonexistent regulations, lack of information about the chemicals to which they are being exposed, insufficient oversight, and a failure to consistently report and track disease patterns associated with the industry compound the problem in many Asian manufacturing facilities," explained Dr. Jeong-ok Kong, an occupational health physician with the **Korean Institute of Labor, Safety and Health**
in Korea, who presented data indicating high incidence of cancer among Samsung workers there. "Unfortunately the response of the industry is often to continue the harm by exploiting scientific uncertainty and promoting weak policies under the guise of 'sound science.'"

Presentations at the APHA conference documented adverse health outcomes due to exposure to hazardous chemicals in the electronics industry in China, Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, and elsewhere.

Some of the health impacts and patterns cited in the APHA resolution include cancers, lung disease, reproductive disorders, congenital anomalies in offspring and musculoskeletal problems from repetitive motion tasks.

Companies named in the resolution include **Acer**, **Advanced Micro Devices**, **Apple**, **Dell**, **AU Optronics**
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Hewlett Packard
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Hon Hai (Foxconn)
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HTC
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Intel
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Lenovo
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LG
,
Samsung
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Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company
, and
Young Fast Optoelectronics
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APHA endorsed three strategies to strengthen occupational and environmental health in the electronics industry, including the right of workers and communities to know the identities and hazards of chemicals they are being exposed to and ways to protect themselves; when the costs of chemical pollution, clean-up, and adverse health effects on individuals and communities are factored into product cost analyses, it becomes clear that the most effective way to address hazardous chemicals in manufacturing electronic products is to use safer chemical and non-chemical alternatives; APHA endorses the use of health surveillance that would include collection of data, analysis, and dissemination of information about injuries, illnesses, hazards and exposures in the electronics sector, with full access for workers to monitoring protocols and results, as well as medical records.